PPOL 5560
Governing Global-City Hong Kong

This two-credit elective takes a practitioner-oriented view of governance and public policies in Hong Kong, one of Asia's leading global cities. The course will comprise two parts. In the first half, we will examine key concepts in governance and economic development and situate Hong Kong in these contexts. Students will be required to write a reflections essay or newspaper commentary discussing Hong Kong's evolution and the prospects for change/reform in one of the areas covered in this part of the course.

In the second half of the course, we will explore some of the key policy challenges the city currently confronts, e.g., housing and transport, healthcare, a rapidly ageing population combined with relatively weak social security. In this part of the course, students will work in groups of 2-3 to write a policy brief on a contemporary policy challenge, highlighting the competing objectives and dilemmas the HKSAR government faces. Alternatively, students can work individually to write a commentary comparing Hong Kong to another Asian global city (i.e., Tokyo or Singapore).

Students who take this elective are required to take PPOL 6200: Study Visit to an Asian Global City. This is a self-paying study trip to another Asian global city, specifically Tokyo (currently scheduled on 1-4 December 2026) or Singapore (likely to be in second week of June 2027).

Assessments

- Reflections essay or newspaper commentary (1,000-1,500 words; due before class on 30 Oct): 25%
- Mid-term quiz (Sat, 7 Nov): 25%
- Group/Individual presentation (10 minutes per group. 27 Nov): 10%
- Final paper: Policy brief (no more than 2,500 words; in groups of 2-3 students) or Individual commentary (around 1,200 words); Due on 11 Dec: 25%
- Class participation: 15%

Time: Fridays, 2 Oct – 27 Nov, 09:30 – 12:20
Classroom: The Millennity 30/F, Room 1
Instructor: Prof Donald Low, Senior Lecturer and Professor of Practice, PPOL
Email: donaldlow@ust.hk
Class hours: Wednesdays, 14:00-15:00, Rm 4616F

Class schedule and readings

Seminar 1 2 Oct	**What is governance or political development? What is the relationship between governance and economic development?** • Francis Fukuyama, "Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy", Ch 1, 13, 35 • Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, "The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty", Ch, 2, 4, 5 • The Economist, "A winner has emerged in the old rivalry between Singapore and Hong Kong", 11 May 2023 • Donald Low, "Why Singapore's government and economy are outperforming Hong Kong's", *Jom media*, 21 Apr 2023

Seminar 2 9 Oct	**How is the governance of Hong Kong exceptional? Is Hong Kong exceptionalism over? (Prof Anthony Cheung)** • Anthony Cheung, **"**Can Hong Kong Exceptionalism Last? Dilemmas of Governance and Public Administration over Five Decades, 1970s–2020", Introduction, Chapters 10-12 14:30-16:00: Visit to ICAC. (Meet at ICAC, 303 Java Road, North Point at 14:20.)
Seminar 3 16 Oct	**The East Asian development model and where Hong Kong fits** • Joe Studwell, *How Asia Works,* Introduction and Part 2: The Victory of the Historians • The Economist, "*Special Report: Asian Tigers*", 7 Dec 2019 • The Economist, "For Asia, the path to prosperity starts with land reform", 12 Oct 2017 • Donald Low and Tang Heiwai, "Hong Kong's axing from Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom rankings a gift that will keep on giving", *South China Morning Post*, 14 Mar 2021 • Donald Low, "Hong Kong's economy needs reinvention to become more than just China's super-connector after a lost half decade", *South China Morning Post*, 18 Feb 2024 • Ningrong Liu, "Why Hong Kong's elites must become risk-takers again", *South China Morning Post*, 2 Aug 2026
Seminar 4 (online) 23 Oct	**The social contract and inequality in Hong Kong** • "Piketty in 8 minutes", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhHGjjtkalY • Bo Rothstein and Eric M. Uslaner, "All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust", *World Politics*, Vol. 58, No. 1, Oct 2005, pp. 41-72 • He, A.J., "Public Satisfaction with the Health System and Popular Support for State Involvement in an East Asian Welfare Regime: Health Policy Legitimacy of Hong Kong", *Social Policy & Administration,* Vol. 52, No. 3, May 2018, pp. 750–770 • Donald Low, "Why Hong Kong and Singapore should tax wealth more", *South China Morning* Post, 11 Mar 2019 • Donald Low, "How Hong Kong's budget deficits can be a catalyst to restructure the economy", *South China Morning Post*, 1 Mar 2025 11:00 – 12:20: **Health financing in Hong Kong (Prof Alex He)** • He, A.J. (2019), "Healthcare policy and reforms in Hong Kong", W. Dong (eds). *Social Policy in China: From State-led to Market-led Economy*, Oakville, Canada: Rock's Mills Press, pp. 211-224

Seminar 5 30 Oct	***Reflections essay <u>or</u> Newspaper commentary due before class*** **Hong Kong during and after the pandemic** • Donald Low, "In chasing zero Covid-19 infections, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and others have become trapped by their own success, *South China Morning Post*, 8 May 2021 • Donald Low, "Hong Kong can break free from its zero-Covid corner. Here's how", *South China Morning Post*, 20 Aug 2021 • Donald Low, "Omicron shows Hong Kong can't maintain 'dynamic zero-Covid'. It's time to learn to live with Covid-19 and open up to the world", *South China Morning Post*, 7 Feb 2022 • Donald Low, "Hong Kong's zero-Covid policy risks becoming a trap if no lessons are learned from this tragedy", *South China Morning Post*, 16 Mar 2022 • Donald Low, "Why Hong Kong's 'political taboos' shouldn't hinder an independent pandemic inquiry", *South China Morning Post*, 18 Mar 2023 • The Economist, "The battle between Asia's financial centres is heating up", 29 Jun 2022 • Channel News Asia, "Hong Kong's fate and the Greater Bay Area", https://www.channelnewsasia.com/watch/insight-2024-2025/hong-kongs-fate-and-greater-bay-area-4439606 • Stephen Roach, "It pains me to say Hong Kong is over", *Financial Times*, 12 Feb 2024 • Stephen Roach, "How my views on Hong Kong's future have evolved", *Financial Times*, 12 Jun 2025 • Stephen Roach, "Yes, the Hong Kong of old is over", *Project Syndicate*, 23 Jul 2026 14:00 – 15:30: **Walking tour of Admiralty and Central** (Meet at 14:00 at Admiralty station, Exit B)
Seminar 6 6 Nov	**Managing transport and housing challenges (Prof Anthony Cheung)** • Donald Low, "Why Hong Kong cannot copy Singapore's public housing success", *South China Morning Post*, 19 Dec 2019 • Francis Neoton Cheung, "Hong Kong needs regenerated districts, not piecemeal renewal", *South China Morning Post*, 6 Aug 2026 14:00 – 15:00: **Walking tour of Tseung Kwan O public housing**
Seminar 7 (rescheduled to Sat, 7 Nov 10:00 – 12:30)	***Mid-Term Quiz (40 mins)*** **The 2019 Protests and their Aftermath** • Donald Low, "The Hong Kong protests are a political crisis – and a huge opportunity for the government", *South China Morning* Post, 31 Aug 2019 • Donald Low, "Could psychology have helped Carrie Lam avoid Hong Kong's extradition bill fiasco?", *South China Morning Post*, 7 Jul 2019

Seminar 8 20 Nov	**Reinventing Hong Kong (Prof Anthony Cheung, others TBC)** • Anthony Cheung, "Forget past glories, Hong Kong must find relevance in a changing world", *South China Morning* Post, 7 May 2024 • Jane Lee, "To lead Greater Bay Area integration, Hong Kong can look to San Francisco", 5 Aug 2026
Seminar 9 27 Nov	**Group/individual presentations of policy briefs/commentaries**

About Prof Anthony Cheung

Prof Anthony CHEUNG Bing-leung was until recently, Research Chair Professor of Department of Asian and Policy Studies at The Education University of Hong Kong. He was formerly Secretary for Transport and Housing of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government from July 2012 to June 2017, overseeing a large policy portfolio covering housing, transport (land, seaborne and aviation), port and logistics. Major achievements during his tenure include the formulation of the 2014 Long Term Housing Strategy, the launch of the 2014 Railway Development Strategy, the approval in 2015 of the implementation of the Three-Runway System for the Hong Kong International Airport, the establishment of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board in 2016, and the completion of the Public Transport Strategy Study in 2017. Prof Cheung was also a founding director of the Hong Kong Policy Research Institute (1995-2012) and founding chairman of SynergyNet, an independent policy think-tank (2002-05).

As Secretary, he was Chairman of the Hong Kong Housing Authority, Chairman of the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board, Chairman of the Hong Kong Logistics Development Council, as well as member of the Board of Directors of The Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation, The Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited and Hong Kong Airport Authority. Before he joined government, Prof Cheung was the President and Chair Professor of Public Administration at The Hong Kong Institute of Education (now The Education University of Hong Kong) from January 2008 to June 2012. Under his leadership, the then Institute set out the blueprint for achieving University title under the "Education-plus" vision and strategy, by diversifying its education-related humanities and social sciences discipline base and growing its postgraduate and doctoral programmes. He also set up the Centre for Governance and Citizenship. Prof Cheung graduated from The University of Hong Kong in 1974 with a BSocSc (Hons) degree in Sociology and Economics. He was awarded MSc degree in Public Sector Management (with credit) by the University of Aston, UK in 1983 and PhD degree in Government by The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK in 1995. He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science by Aston University in March 2016 and an Honorary Doctor of Education by The Education University of Hong Kong in November 2017.

After leaving ministerial office in 2017, Prof Cheung was appointed Chairman of the Task Force on Review of Self-Financing Post-secondary Education (from 19 October 2017) as well as Chairman of the Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (from 1 November 2017), and in his latter capacity, ex-officio member of the Education Commission and University Grants Committee.