

GECW4021: College Project Course Description

Version 07 / Created on 29 August 2023 / GECW4021 D1-Course Description.docx

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Out of 123 units for a four-year curriculum, there is a General Education (GE) requirement of 21 units, of which 6 units will be provided by the College. This will consist of the following courses:

Year 1	GECW1010 University and Society	3 units
Year 2, 3 or 4	GECW4010 Senior Seminar*; or GECW4021 College Project; or GECW4022 College Project (Service)	3 units

*GECW4010 will no longer be offered as from 2022–23, but is retained in this document for students in the pipeline who have already taken GECW4010. GECW4021 and 4022 have been offered since 2022–23 to replace GECW4010.

In addition, there will be non-credit-bearing components such as the following:

Orientation

There will be an extended orientation for new students, to cover the non-academic elements of adjustments to university life, such as time management, stress management.

Service

There will be a *voluntary* service component, which may optionally be connected with GECW4022 College Project (Service), with the latter consisting of the theoretical and reflective components.

1.2 Course design and implementation

The course *design* (Sections 2 to 4), once approved, will be broadly binding on the teacher(s) and should remain largely stable from year to year. The course *implementation* plan (Section 5) only illustrates one possible approach, and can be varied from year to year according to the preference of the teacher(s) concerned.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES, LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT

2.1 Course description

GECW4021 is a student-orientated course for College students in Year 2, 3 or 4 (but with initial preparation in the preceding spring term, and most of the work done in the summer, or earlier), in which students in small groups will select a topic ideally of interdisciplinary nature, and conduct field, survey or literature research. Each group will make an oral presentation and submit a written report in Term 1, in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of study.

2.2 Goals and learning outcome

GECW4021, taken in the second, third or fourth year of attendance, is part of the *capstone* experience in which students have the opportunity to synthesise their academic skills beyond the limits of the major programme, engage with a real-life issue of relevance to society, analyse the factors, constraints and options, and present their findings in a cogent, reasoned and persuasive manner. The expected learning outcomes are

- (1) An appreciation of some of the wider issues in society (either local, regional, national or global), and an interest and ability to engage with these issues in a mature and scholarly manner (V, K)
- (2) A rudimentary ability to conduct research on such broad issues not related to the major subject, and basic knowledge of research methodology (S, K)
- (3) The willingness and ability to work in a team with members drawn from different backgrounds (V, S)
- (4) An appreciation of plural values and conflicting choices in society, and a recognition that all choices involve consequences (V)
- (5) The ability to collect and analyse data, to synthesise ideas and to present arguments in both oral and written forms, at a level appropriate to a university graduate (S)

K = knowledge; S = skill; V = value

2.3 Learning activities

The learning activities will consist of three parts

- in the preceding term (Y1/2/3, T2): a small number of lectures on methodology; formation of teams; selection of topics; preparation and submission of project proposals for approval
- in the summer: conducting research and prepare progress report
- in the relevant term (Y2/3/4, T1): oral presentation; tutorial participation and preparation of written report

2.4 Assessment

Project proposal	10%
Research progress [1, 4]	10%
Oral presentation [2]	20%
Tutorial participation [2, 3]	10%
Written report [4]	50%
Peer Assessment	±10%

- [1] This component is intended to assess the progress by stages, whereas the outcome of the research will be assessed through the oral presentation and written report.
- [2] These components will be graded on an individual basis, whereas the other components will be graded principally on a group basis, although there may be minor individual adjustments if there are significant differences in the quality of the work of the different team members.
- [3] This component refers to participation in the tutorial discussions in those sessions when the student in question is not in the group that is making the presentation. The assessment will not be based simply on the degree of participation, but on its quality and contribution.
- [4] These components will be graded first on a team basis, and then adjusted individually on the basis of each student's contribution.

3. COURSE ORGANISATION

3.1 Year and term

Students will register for the course in Y2/3/4, T1, though they should pre-register in the preceding term (Y1/2/3, T2) and carry out much of the work in the intervening summer.

Students enrolled in programmes that require more than four years (e.g. BEd, MBChB, BChiMed) should normally follow the same schedule and register for the course not later than the 4th year of study. Students who for valid reasons such as exchange or internship need flexibility of arrangement should obtain prior approval from the Course Coordinator.

3.2 Units and hours

The course will carry 3 units. There will be

- not more than 2 lectures (up to 3 hours each) in Y1/2/3, T2
- at least two individualised consultation sessions for each team during the summer
- 6 to 8 weeks of tutorials (up to 3 hours each) in Y2/3/4, T1 (each team is only expected to attend one of these tutorials)

3.3 Class size

The lectures will be delivered to ~75 students in one class (together with GECW4022). The class will be divided into sections consisting of ~4 project teams of ~4 students each, possibly mixed with teams from GECW4022.

3.4 Formation of teams

Each team should normally consist of four members, who must contain at least one member from each of the following groups of faculties:

- Arts, BA, Education, Law, Social Science
- Engineering, Medicine, Science

Where possible, upper-year incoming exchange students expected to be in the College in T1 should be encouraged to join these teams, provided they can arrive in the summer, or if they can participate via internet in a project that is of interest to them.

3.5 Project proposal

Each team must submit the project title and then the project proposal for approval before the end of Y1/2/3, T2.

The following factors will be considered in vetting the projects for approval.

- The project should not require so much specialised subject knowledge that it would not be accessible to fruitful discussion in tutorials. Ideally, the project should make good use of the interdisciplinary expertise in the team, and a good report is one that is able to view an issue from multiple perspectives.
- The project should have an element of novelty (at least a novel perspective even if the issue itself is familiar).
- The subject chosen should encourage a rational and open-minded discussion, and the eventual report should demonstrate a fruitful process of academic enquiry that has fairly considered alternate points of view.
- Projects involving field research outside Hong Kong will require special approval.
- If data are to be collected from identifiable individuals or organisations, the usual ethics approval for social science research will apply.

3.6 Tutorial organisation

In each tutorial session, one team will make a presentation on its project. The time allotted is specified separately and may vary slightly from year to year, depending on the number of teams etc.

Suitable AV material (presentation slides or video) should be used to support the presentation, but the development of technically fancy material for its own sake is not necessary, and to the extent that it will not earn extra credit, not encouraged.

3.7 Written report

A group report is required, of approximately 5,000 to 7,500 words in English or, for particular topics and upon prior approval, 6,000 words to 10,000 words in Chinese. A reasonable amount of appendices may be attached, but anything beyond 10 pages should be included only in an electronic format.

The report should be a piece of *academic* writing (not merely thoughts, opinions and reflections) with its usual expectations as to objectivity, rigour, evidence, even format, and of course, originality and academic honesty. The report should present the findings, including data and evidence to support the findings, as well as evidence that alternate points of view have been fairly considered.

The goals of the report are (a) to demonstrate and record the research process; (b) to present the findings in a cogent manner; (c) to present data and evidence to support the findings; and (d) to provide an occasion for training in writing, in a team, an extensive research paper at a high level.

Students must understand the principles and conditions for the use of Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) and follow the instructions and required steps when such tools are used. Refer to the document *Use of Generative AI in Final Report* (GECW4021 D6a-GAI.docx).

The report must declare originality in the usual way, and must be submitted to VeriGuide.

A unified format and style will be prescribed, so that the papers could be collated into a collection in the manner of the Proceedings of a conference, and placed in the College GE Archive. Students must release copyright to the College for this purpose.

3.8 Language

The vision of CW Chu College includes *internationality*, and the College expects to enrol more than the average percentage of students from outside Hong Kong. This capstone College course should have the function of integrating students from different backgrounds into working teams, mimicking the multinational environment in the future workplace or in postgraduate studies. With this in mind, the default language for the presentation and the report should be English. However, in cases where the project topic is principally of local relevance, and/or where the data and primary source material are available mainly in Chinese, the team may apply, ¹ at the time of project proposal, to make the presentation and write the report in Chinese. Approval will only be given if the language chosen (including the dialect in the case of Chinese) is accessible to all members of the team. It is expected that by the final year, even international students will have enough access to Chinese at least to take part in the tutorial discussion, even where the presentation is in Chinese.

3.9 Staffing requirement

- 1 to 2 teachers to give a total of 2 x 3 hours of lectures on methodology
- Each section will be led by one teacher, who will be responsible for the 4 to 6 teams within the section, consider and approve their project proposals, and supervise their research. It is expected that each team will meet the supervisor at least once and ideally twice during the summer, so the contact hours may be about 10 in total.

4. INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the first few offerings, several categories of projects were allowed: investigatory (most common), service-related (now split off to GECW4022), creative (a few in previous years). A new category was added in 2018, to be called innovation and entrepreneurship, for which the team may propose some innovation and/or start-up enterprise. The Report should be a feasibility study plus a business plan. Subject to College agreement, there can be very modest funding (e.g. HKD2,000) to seed implementation (say upon proposal being approved), and the College will also try to link the projects to external funding opportunities (probably 10 times larger). The impetus to this initiative comes from two directions. First, the University in its Academic Development Proposal is encouraging this element. Second, the College has had an approach, through a CWC alumnus (first cohort) who now works for a venture capital firm, to help both with connections and possible funding via a related company.

¹ Not merely that the issue is a local one, but that no international reader is likely to have any interest.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A *possible* implementation plan is described in this Section for *illustration* only. The actual implementation is to be decided each year; moreover, any student or team who for valid reasons such as exchange need to adopt a different schedule (even though registered for the same term) should obtain written approval at the time of the project proposal.

Possible schedule

Preceding academic year (Y1/2/3, T1–T2)	
Oct/ Nov	Initial briefing
Jan	Form teams and select topics
Feb–Mar	Meet supervisor and prepare project proposal
Mar	Submit project proposal
Apr/ May	Proposal approved
Summer	
Summer	Carry out research and prepare progress report
Year of formal registration(Y2/3/4, T1)	
Sep	Prepare paper and presentations
Oct–Nov	Presentations and discussions at tutorials
Dec	Submit written reports

6. DESCRIPTION FOR CUSIS

*A brief bilingual description is required for entry into CUSIS*².

In this student-orientated course, each small group will select a topic ideally of interdisciplinary nature; conduct field, survey or literature research. With preparation in the preceding term and most of the research work done in the summer (or earlier), each group will make an oral presentation and submit a written report in the first term, normally in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of study (or as suitably adjusted in the case of students admitted with Advanced Standing, variations to be approved by the Course Coordinator).

Advisory:

1. Students must have taken GECW4010 OR GECW4021 OR GECW4022 before they can graduate. Students are advised to inform the College Office of their plans as early as possible. (Note: GECW4010 will no longer be offered from 2022–23 onwards, but is written into the above condition to cater for students in the pipeline who have already taken GECW4010.)
2. Students enrolled in programmes that require more than four years (e.g. BEd, MBChB, BChiMed) should normally follow the same schedule and register for the course not later than the 4th year of study. Students who for reasons such as exchange or internship need flexibility of arrangement should apply to the Course Coordinator for approval.
3. Students should pre-register with the College in the preceding term, and conduct most of the research project required in the summer.

² This section was updated in August 2023 for clarity of presentation, taking into account the flexibility of arrangements within the latest course structure (since its transition from GECW4010 to GECW4021/ GECW4022). While relevant descriptions on CUSIS will be updated in due course, students considering alternative schedule/ arrangements should consult the Course Coordinator if in doubt.

4. Since the course can be taken in Y2, Y3 or Y4, time-tabling conflicts with outbound exchange or term-time internship should be avoidable. In those rare cases where difficulties arise:
 - a. Students on exchange or internship in Term 1 may still join teams to do their projects in the preceding summer. These students must make normal contributions, and the whole team's Final Report must still be submitted in Term 1, by the usual deadline.
 - b. For the presentation, approval should be sought for one of the following arrangements.
Scenario 1: The rest of the team will register and make presentations in Term 1 as usual, but the student(s) on exchange or internship in Term 1 will register and make presentations in Term 2; or
Scenario 2: Even better, the student(s) concerned will make presentations at the same time in Term 1 with the rest of the team, online if abroad on exchange, or in person if in a local internship.
 - c. These students will formally register and receive their grades in the term when they return from exchange or internship.
 - d. This arrangement is available only to students on approved exchange or internship in Term 1, and subject to individual approval at the time when project teams are formed (normally in the beginning of Term 2, or earlier). For other administrative difficulties that require special treatment, the Course Coordinator should be consulted.

Students pre-assigned to this course are advised to pay special attention to the latest information and arrangement of the course via the mass email and Blackboard messages issued by the College.

本科目以學生為本，學生編成小組，選擇適當課題，進行實地、調查、或文獻研究。課題以跨學科為宜。學生須在前一學期先作準備，在暑假進行主要研究工作，其後在二、三或四年級上學期作口頭匯報及書面報告（高年級入學學生因應修業安排作調整，有關安排須經科目主任批准）。

參考意見：

1. 學生必須於畢業前修讀 GECW4010、GECW4021 或 GECW4022。書院建議學生盡早告知有關修讀科目的計劃。（備註：2022 至 23 學年後將不再提供 GECW4010 科目。2022 至 23 學年前已修讀 GECW4010 的學生，則按此規定自動滿足有關畢業要求。）
2. 若報讀的課程需多於四年時間完成（如教育學士、內外全科醫學士、中醫學學士），在一般情況下同學仍需依從上述安排，即須於第四個修業學年或以前報讀此科。同學如因參加交流計劃或實習而需其他安排，必須事先獲科目主任批准。
3. 學生應在前一學期預先報名備案，並利用暑假時間，完成主要研究項目。
4. 由於學生現時可於二、三或四年級修讀本科目，學生即使參與海外交流或實習計劃，亦應能預早安排，在預期的時間選修此科。學生如有特殊情況而未能作出相關安排，可考慮以下方案：
 - a. 需在上學期參與海外交流或實習計劃的學生仍可組隊報讀此科，在暑期參與研究項目。有關學生必須參與正常的小組討論及準備工作。小組必須如常於上學期的指定日期前提交報告。
 - b. 有關匯報的安排，學生及小組可考慮以下其中一個情境，並預先提交特別申請予書院批核。

情境一：其他小組成員如期於上學期報讀此科及作匯報，而參與海外交流或實習計劃的同學則於下學期報讀此科及作匯報；或

情境二：更妥善的安排是讓所有小組成員同時進行匯報，即讓於海外交流的學生於網上參與匯報（與在港的其他小組成員同時進行），或讓參與本地實習計劃的學生與其他小組成員如常進行匯報。

- c. 有關學生將於完成海外交流或實習計劃後的首個學期修讀本科及獲發成績。
- d. 此方案只適用於已經核准在上學期參與海外交流或實習計劃的學生，並且必須於編成小組的時候（一般為下學期開首或以前）提交個別申請予書院批核。學生若因其他情況需要特別安排，須與科目主任聯絡。

有關科目的基本資料，建議註冊本科目的學生留意由書院發出的電郵及中大學生學習平台 (Blackboard) 的通告，以獲取更新資料及科目安排。