GLOBAL SUMMER PROGRAMME 2027

MGMT 247 THE BUSINESS OF FUN: DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATIONS THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARITY

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The term "Business of Fun" refers to the industry and practices involved in creating, managing, and marketing entertainment experiences and leisure activities designed to provide enjoyment and pleasure to consumers. It encompasses a variety of sectors, including theme parks (e.g. Disneyland), amusement parks (e.g. Legoland Resort Malaysia), leisure facilities (e.g. Gardens By The Bay), entertainment venues (e.g., Esplanade), and other recreational enterprises (e.g., Sentosa Development Corporation). In essence, the *Business of Fun* is about creating and managing environments that bring joy and entertainment to people, while also being commercially successful and sustainable.

This new course offers an interdisciplinary perspective of the business of fun based on an in-depth exploration of selected key business aspects that are critical for the successful development, management and operation of theme parks and major tourist destinations. Students will gain insights into how these varied organisational and business elements drive the success and sustainability of the tourism and entertainment industries.

Key topics include:

- **Sustainable Destination Planning:** Analyzing case studies of leading theme parks and tourist destinations from an interdisciplinary perspective to understand strategic planning processes, including market analysis, innovation, and operational efficiency while balancing sustainability and commercial objectives.

- **Guest Experience Management:** Sustainability is critical in crafting meaningful guest experiences to ensure that visitors have a memorable and enjoyable experience. This involves aspects such as sustainable customer experience, excellent customer service, park layout, queuing systems, and the overall atmosphere.

- **Human Capital in Service Business Operations:** Understanding the role of workforce planning, talent development, and employee engagement in creating memorable visitor experiences. Emphasis is placed on talent attraction, upskilling and customer service leadership training, as well as ESG onboarding and performance management to build a skilled and motivated team.

- **Sustainability and Stakeholder Engagement:** Examining methods for effectively identifying and managing relationships with diverse stakeholders, including government entities, local communities, suppliers, business partners, and guests/visitors. Exploring strategies for integrating sustainability practices and community involvement into destination management, ensuring long-term viability

and positive societal impact. Students will learn why effective stakeholder management is vital for aligning interests, enhancing operations, maintaining a positive brand image, innovation, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

- **Social Media and User-Generated Content in the Branding and Marketing of Places:** Examining how the brand of a place and destination is personified and develops a relationship with its visitors and online users. Exploring strategies to excite and motivate "Instagram-ability" in destination marketing through experience sharing via social media platforms.

Through a combination of lectures, case studies, site visits, and hands-on projects, students will develop the skills necessary to manage complex operations and foster collaborative relationships in the dynamic world of theme parks and tourist destinations. The course will prepare students for careers in tourism management, hospitality, entertainment, and sustainability, emphasizing the importance of an inter-disciplinary approach in managing service operations, stakeholder engagement, guest experience, and sustainability in achieving strategic objectives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and identify key aspects in developing and delivering memorable and enjoyable guest/visitor experiences that are sustainable
- Examine methods for effectively identifying and managing relationships with diverse stakeholders for sustainability, including government entities, local communities, suppliers, business partners, and guests/visitors
- Analyse case studies of leading theme parks and tourist destinations to understand strategic planning processes, including market analysis, innovation, and sustained operational efficiency
- Develop strategies for integrating sustainability practices and community involvement into destination management, to ensure long-term viability and positive societal impact.

PRE-REQUISITES / REQUIREMENTS / MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S)

None

ASSESSMENT METHODS

There is **no final examination** in this course.

Cumulative assessment (CA) constitutes 100% of the final grade, consisting of:

Individual Assessments: 60% of total, consisting of:	Class participation	10%
	In-class quiz	20%
	Individual reflection assignment	30%
Group Assessment: 40% of total, consisting of:	Group research project / presentation	40%

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

The course approach is based on both analytical rigour and the practical utilisation and application of concepts and principles. During the course, a variety of teaching and learning techniques will be employed to enable students to think critically and imaginatively about the various implications of the

topic. To realise the goal of a shared learning experience between students and instructor, the course is aimed at integrating real-world destination challenges, practical placemaking experiences, interaction with practicing placemakers and destination managers, individual/group projects, and critical reflection on the various course materials.

CONSULTATIONS

Appointments for consultations to be made via email or appointment schedule link.

RECOMMENDED TEXT AND READINGS

Berrozpe, A., Campo, S., Yagüe, M. J., (2017). Understanding the identity of Ibiza, Spain. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 2017. Vol. 34, No. 8, 1033-1046.

Bitner, M. J., Ostrom, A. L., Morgan, F. N., (2008). Service Blueprinting: A Practical Technique for Service Innovation. California Management Review. Vol. 50, No. 3. Spring 2008.

Bryson, J. M. (2004). What to do when stakeholders matter: Stakeholder identification and analysis techniques. Public Management Review. Vol. 6 Issue 1 2004: 21-53

Columbia Business School (2021). A Business Definition of Fun. Columbia Business School, Dec 20, 2021. https://business.columbia.edu/marketing-press-releases/cbs-press-releases/business-definition-fun

Manning E. W., Dougherty T. D., (2000). Planning Sustainable Tourism Destinations, Tourism Recreation Research, 25(2), 2000, 3-14.

McKinsey (2024). What AI means for travel – now and in the future. McKinsey & Company, November 2023.

Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Clark, T., (2010). Business Model Generation: A Handbook For Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers. Strategyzer series. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9780470876411.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx.

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LESSON PLAN	
LESSONS	**TOPICS**
LESSON 01	**Introduction to the "Business of Fun" and Sustainable Placemaking** Learning Objectives: • Overview of the programme • Understand the "Business of Fun" within and beyond the tourism, leisure and entertainment industries • Understand the constituents of Sustainable Placemaking and what makes a place sustainable Amirzadeh, M., Sharigi, A., (2024). The evolutionary path of place making: From late twentieth century to post-pandemic cities. Land Use Policy 141 (2024) 107124. Lau., C., Lo, Y., (2019). Analysing the effects of an urban food festival: A place theory approach. Annals of Tourism Research 74 (2019) 43-55. PPS, (2022). Placemaking: What If We Built Our Cities Around Places? Project for Public Spaces Inc.: https://www.pps.org/product/placemaking-what-if-we-built-our-cities-around-places, 2022.
LESSON 02	**Developing a Sustainable Placemaking Strategy** Learning Objectives: • Understand the concept and role of "authenticity" in placemaking • Explore "fun" as a "product" in placemaking • Develop a sustainable placemaking strategy using the **Business Model Canvas** • Appraise the sources of capital investment and financing placemaking projects Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Clark, T., (2010). Business Model Generation: A Handbook For Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers. Strategyzer series. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9780470876411. Prajogo, D. I., Oke, A., (2016). Human capital, service innovation advantage, and business performance. International Journal of Operations & Production Management. Vol. 36 No. 9, 2016. pp. 974-994. Tan, S. K., & Tan, S. H. (2023). A creative place-making framework - Story-creation for a sustainable development. Sustainable Development, 31(5), 3673-3691. Disney's Business Model: A Scalable Dream Factory, (n.d.). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqakc-VuKjs
LESSON 03	**Real-world Application of the Business Model Canvas: Visit to Sentosa and meeting Sentosa's sustainability placemakers (TBC)** Learning Objectives: Using Singapore's resort island, Sentosa, as a real-world application of the Business

	Model Canvas: • Understand the "One Sentosa" business strategy • Appraise how Sentosa engages with its employees and stakeholders to deliver the "One Sentosa" promise • Identify, analyse and map Sentosa's **Business Model Canvas** Ministry of Trade & Industry, (2024). Speech by MOS (Minister of State) Alvin Tan at the launch of One Sentosa Transformation and Equipping Platform. 04 Jul 2024. https://www.mti.gov.sg/Newsroom/Speeches/2024/07/Speech-by-MOS-Alvin-Tan-at-the-launch-of-One-Sentosa-Transformation-and-Equipping-Platform Osterwalder, A., Pigneur, Y., Clark, T., (2010). Business Model Generation: A Handbook For Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers. Strategyzer series. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9780470876411. Straits Times, (Jul 4, 2024). 15,000 Sentosa workers to undego upskilling under new framework to lift tourism sector. https://www.straitstimes.com/business/15000-workers-in-sentosa-to-go-through-upskilling-development-under-new-framework TTG Asia, (12 Nov 2024). All Sentosa hotel rooms to achieve sustainability certification by 2025. https://www.ttgasia.com/2024/11/12/all-sentosa-hotel-rooms-to-achieve-sustainability-certification-by-2025/ Travel and Tour World, (Feb 14, 2025). Sentosa rises as Asia's leading sustainable MICE destination with green values. What you need to know? https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/sentosa-rises-as-asias-leading-sustainable-mice-destination-with-green-venues-what-you-need-to-know/
LESSON 04	**Engineering Guest Experience through Storytelling & Service Blueprinting** Learning Objectives: • Identify and integrate a destination's differentiating assets with its location, social, cultural, historical and natural assets through stakeholder engagement • Analyse what makes a destination's story compelling, memorable and enjoyable • Develop a **Service Blueprint** that delivers an authentic story while encouraging guest co-creation and self-discovery using **Bitner's Service Delivery Blueprint** Bitner, M. J., Ostrom, A. L., Morgan, F. N., (2008). Service Blueprinting: A Practical Technique for Service Innovation. California Management Review. Vol. 50, No. 3. Spring 2008. Campos, A. C., Mendes, J., Om do Valle, P., Scott, N., (2016). Co-Creation Experiences: Attention and Memorability. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 33:9, 1309-1336. Prosperi, L., (2019). The Imagineering Toolbox: Using Disney Theme Park Design Principles to Develop and Enhance Your Technical Communication Projects. The Digital Travel Expert (2024). Authentic Travel Storytelling For Good Tourism: 4 Insights. https://digitaltravelexpert.com/authentic-travel-storytelling/
LESSON 05	**Social Media and User-Generated Content in the Branding and Marketing of Places**

	Learning Objectives: • Understand how **Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism** is used in developing the branding of places and destinations • Explore the role of user-generated content in experience sharing and reinforcing visitor or user relationship with places • Develop social media sharing opportunities or "Instagram-ability" in the Business of Fun Berrozpe, A., Campo, S., Yagüe, M. J., (2017). Understanding the identity of Ibiza, Spain. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 2017. Vol. 34, No. 8, 1033-1046. Gartner, W. C., (2014). Brand equity in a tourism destination. Place Branding and Public Diplomacy (2014) Vol. 10, 2, 108-116. Lam, J. M. S., Ismail, H., Lee S., (2020). From desktop to destination: User-generated content platforms, co-created online experiences, destination image and satisfaction. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management 18 (2020) 100490. Kapferer, J. N., (1992). Strategic brand management: New approaches to creating and evaluating brand equity. New York, NY: The Free Press. Nguyen, T. T. T., Tong, S., (2023). The impact of user-generated content on intention to select a travel destination. Journal of Marketing Analytics (2023) 11:443-457.
LESSON 06	**One-to-one with 'Fun-makers': meeting and chatting with cultural precinct stakeholders at Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India, Bras Basah-Bugis and Singapore River (TBC)** Learning Objectives: • Identify and analyse challenges facing the rejuvenation and development ambitions in Singapore's cultural precincts • Identify the cultural, historical and socio-demographic distinctiveness of these cultural precincts Singapore Tourism Board, (30 Nov 2023). Rejuvenating Smith Street to Enhance Inclusiveness and Vibrancy of Chinatown. https://www.stb.gov.sg/content/stb/en/media-centre/media-releases/rejuvenating_smith_street_to_enhance_the_inclusiveness_and_vibrancy_of_chinatown.html Straits Times, (Jul 10, 2023). Five-year plan launched to energise Kampong Glam, attract more visitors. https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/five-year-plan-launched-to-energise-kampong-glam-attract-more-visitors Straits Times, (Aug 16, 2023). More state properties to be used as co-living spaces as SLA awards Little India tender. https://www.straitstimes.com/business/property/more-state-properties-to-be-used-as-co-living-spaces-as-sla-awards-little-india-tender Straits Times, (Apr 08, 2025). New outdoor performance theatre in Prinsep Street

	among slew of changes in Bras Basah-Bugis district. https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/new-outdoor-performance-theatre-in-prinsep-street-among-slew-of-changes-in-bras-basah-bugis-district Straits Times, (Oct 11, 2024). New mixed-use development with condo, retail and office spaces near Singapore River by 2029. https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/new-mixed-use-development-with-condos-and-retail-spaces-near-singapore-river-by-2029 **In-Class Mid-Term Quiz**

LESSON 07	**Stakeholder Identification, Mapping, Engagement & Involvement in Developing 'Fun'**
	
	Learning Objectives:
	
	• Using the **Stakeholder Identification and Mapping** framework:
	  ○ Identify the service business's key stakeholders: Who will be most impacted by the service business; and, who will exert the greatest influence on the service business
	  ○ Analyse the impact of the service business on stakeholders and local communities
	• Develop strategies to involve and engage with stakeholders and local communities in planning, managing and operating a place of interest
	
	Bryson, J. M. (2004). What to do when stakeholders matter: Stakeholder identification and analysis techniques. Public Management Review. Vol. 6 Issue 1 2004: 21-53
	
	Nvido, R. M., Cantoni, L., (2016). Rethinking local community involvement in tourism development. Annals of Tourism Research 57 (2016) 234-278.
	
	Saito, H., Ruhanen, L, (2017). Power in tourism stakeholder collaborations: Power types and power holders. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 31 (2017), 189-196
	
	URA, (2022). Key Tenets of Stakeholder-led Placemaking and Capitalising the Value of Art, Culture and Heritage. Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore: https://www.ura.gov.sg/Corporate/Resources/Ideas-and-Trends/Key-Tenets-of-Stakeholder-Led-Placemaking, 19 April 2022

LESSON 08	**Shared Value Opportunity: Doing Good vs Doing Well** Learning Objectives: Analysing a real-world leisure and recreation business such as Gardens By The Bay and/or Mandai Wildlife Group: • Appraise the **Shared Value Opportunity** between being social and environmental contribution and achieving financial gain and commercial viability • Understand what makes these places of interest unique, beyond the thematic

	built environment • Appreciate how these places of interest balance between sustainability and commercial objectives Porter, M. E., Kramer, M. R., (2011). Creating Shared Value: How to reinvent and unleash a wave of innovation and growth. Harvard Business Review, January – February 2011. Spiliakos, A. (2018). What does "sustainability" mean in business? Harvard Business School Online, 10 October 2018. https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-sustainability-in-business Straits Times, (Nov 14, 2023). Gardens by The Bay plans to add new attraction in 3 years, host Monet exhibition in mid-2024. https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/gardens-by-the-bay-plans-to-add-new-attraction-in-3-years-host-monet-exhibition-in-mid-2024 Mandai Wildlife Reserve (n.d.) The Mandai Rejuvenation Project. https://www.mandai.com/en/about-mandai/mandai-rejuvenation-project.html
LESSON 09	**Sustainable Destination Planning Workshop** (Part 1) Learning Objectives: • Identify and analyse the distinctive and meaningful assets of the assigned/chosen location (natural, cultural, historical, socioeconomic and demographic) • Identify, map and analyse the assigned/chosen location's key stakeholders • Identify and analyse the intended target markets for the assigned/chosen location (resident and tourist visitors) • Develop a compelling 'story' or 'stories' for the assigned/chosen location • Identify the human capital, locational and operational resources required to deliver this 'story' Manning E. W., Dougherty T. D., (2000). Planning Sustainable Tourism Destinations, Tourism Recreation Research, 25(2), 2000, 3-14. Risteski, M., Kocevski, J., Arnaudov, K., (2012). Spatial planning and sustainable tourism as basis for developing competitive tourist destinations. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 44 (2012) 375-386. Waligo, V., Clarke, J., Hawkins, R., (2015). Embedding stakeholders in sustainable tourism strategies. Annals of Tourism Research, 55 (2015), 90-93.
LESSON 10	**Human Capital in Service Business Operations** Learning Objectives: • Understand the concept and origins of human capital and how and why it is important in the "Business of Fun" • Appraise talent recruitment and selection techniques • Understand the importance of onboarding and orientation in employee

	retention and performance • Recognise the importance of continuous learning and development • Design training programmes that enhance service quality and experience delivery Kwon, K., Rupp, D. E., (2013). High-performer turnover and firm performance: The moderating role of human capital investment and firm reputation, Journal of Organizational Behavior, January 2013, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 2013), pp. 129-150. Menkhoff, T., Cheong, K., (2022). Enhancing the Sustainability DNA of Singapore's Gardens by the Bay through Induction Training. Centre for Management Practice, Singapore Management University. https://cmp.smu.edu.sg/case/5326 Parker, S. K., Andrei, D. M., Van den Broeck, A., (2019). Poor work design begets poor work design: Capacity and willingness antecedents of individual work design behavior. Journal of Applied Psychology, 104(7), 907–928.
LESSON 11	**Future Trends in the Business of Fun** Learning Objectives: • Explore emerging trends and technologies for service businesses • Identify the future of work in service businesses **Sustainable Destination Planning Workshop** (Part 2) Learning Objectives: • Analyse the impact of megatrends on the assigned/chosen location, its managers and employees, guests/customers, and, stakeholders • Develop a Brand Identity Prism for the assigned/chosen location • Identify opportunities and develop strategies to use technology to inspire, inform, engage and maintain connection with tourism stakeholders Jaiswal, A., Arun, C. J., Varma, A., (2022). Rebooting employees: upskilling for artificial intelligence in multinational corporations. The International Journal of Human Resource Management. 2022, Vol. 33, No. 6, 1179-1208 McKinsey (2024). What AI means for travel - now and in the future. McKinsey & Company, November 2023. Mistillis, N., Buhalis, D., Gretzel, U., (2014). Future eDestination Marketing: Perspective of an Australian Tourism Stakeholder Network. Journal of Travel Research, 2014, Vol. 53(6), 778-790. Tufft, C., Constantin, M., Pacca, M., Mann, R., Gladstone, I., de Vries, J., (2024). The state of tourism and hospitality 2024. McKinsey & Company, May 2024.
LESSON 12	**Group Project Presentations**