

# The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

## Subject Description Form

*Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.*

<b>Subject Code</b>	ENGL2BN24
<b>Subject Title</b>	<b>Signs and Space: Semiotic Landscapes around the World</b>
<b>Credit Value</b>	3
<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion</b>	None. [Remarks:ENGL students may take this subject]
<b>Cluster Area</b>	Please check the box(es) below to indicate the cluster area(s) the subject contributes in a major way: <input type="checkbox"/> Human Nature, Relations and Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community, Organization and Globalisation <input type="checkbox"/> History, Cultures and World Views <input type="checkbox"/> Science, Technology and Environment
<b>Requirements intended to fulfil</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>China-Study Requirement (CSR)</b> - More than 60% CSR-related content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Eligible for “English Writing” (EW) designation</b> - include an extensive piece of writing (1,500 - 2,500 words) <b>AND “English Reading” (ER) designation</b> - include a reading of an extensive text (100,000 words or 200 pages) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Eligible for “Chinese Writing” (CW) designation</b> - include an extensive piece of writing (2,000 - 3,000 characters) <b>AND “Chinese Reading” (CR) designation</b> - include a reading of an extensive text (100,000 characters or 200 pages) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Others</b> _____
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	Please check the appropriate box: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese <input type="checkbox"/> Putonghua <input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please specify: _____)
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Focusing on such public artefacts as institutional signage, notices, brand logos, graffiti and emoji, this subject aims to enrich students’ knowledge of signs and equip them with the 21<sup>st</sup> century practical skills of effectively navigating through and interpreting signs as encountered in the material world. Semiotics, i.e. the study of signs and of their meaning and use, is an important academic field in contemporary society where signs permeate every aspect of life worldwide in growing numbers and languages, and in increasingly complex and interactive forms both online and offline. Drawing on the analysis and discussion of a wide range of real examples of signs collected from around the globe in different cultural, social and physical settings, this subject aims to raise students’ critical awareness of the close relationship between the meaning-making resources used in signs in shaping and organising the semiotic landscape and the community interacting with the space.</p> <p>Specifically, the subject is designed to achieve the following objectives:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to encourage students to explore and interact with semiotic landscapes around the world through the study of signs;</li> <li>2. to equip students with the core concepts needed to examine signs in the semiotic landscape;</li> <li>3. to provide students with the basic analytic tools to understand the range of meaning-making resources used in signs to define places and communities;</li> <li>4. to raise and nurture students' critical awareness of the relationship between the semiotic choices made in the landscape and their context of use;</li> <li>5. to develop in students an informed understanding of the multiple voices present in the planning, design, production, consumption and evaluation of signs and the possible driving forces behind a changing landscape; and</li> <li>6. to cultivate and promote a sense of community belonging in students through a deeper understanding and active participation in the creation of the unique semiotic landscape of Hong Kong.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b></p> <p><i>(Note 1)</i></p>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. demonstrate an understanding of the types and forms of semiotic resources used in signs in the material world and their communicative functions;</li> <li>b. identify, classify, and analyse the common semiotic resources used in the semiotic landscape;</li> <li>c. discuss the relationships between the choice of semiotic resources and space, identity and community;</li> <li>d. explain the heteroglossic nature of signs and trace the development of signs in the semiotic landscape;</li> <li>e. appraise and discuss the different variables which may lead to changes in the semiotic landscape;</li> <li>f. apply the knowledge gained from the course to better understand, appreciate and shape the semiotic landscapes of Hong Kong and beyond.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</b></p> <p><i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<p>Topics include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to sign and landscape Signifier – signified; icon, index, symbol; common meaning-making resources in the landscape</li> <li>2. Forms and functions of signs in the semiotic landscape Forms (written, spoken, still image, moving image, etc.); Functions (informational, commercial, regulatory, transgressive, etc.)</li> <li>3. Language in signs: Textual semiotics in the landscape Language features such as word choice, grammatical structure and spelling; associated orthographic features such as font style and size; language choice such as preference and arrangement</li> <li>4. Sound in signs: Audio semiotics in the landscape Phonological features such as pronunciation and accent; associated prosodic features such as speed, rhythm and tone; other resources in the soundscape such as music and other non-musical sounds</li> <li>5. Image in signs: Visual semiotics in the landscape Who are represented in the image; how true is the image; in what way is the image organised</li> <li>6. The interactive meaning of signs in the landscape The interactions among different semiotic resources such as language, image and sound in signs, and between signs and the physical environment</li> <li>7. The life of signs The birth, development and death of signs</li> </ol>

	<p>8. Semiotic choices and voices: Space, identity and community The relationship between choices in signs and the associated contextual factors</p> <p>9. The changing semiotic landscape Globalised signs, mobile signs, digital signage, etc.</p>																																																						
<p><b>Teaching/Learning Methodology</b> (Note 3)</p>	<p>The subject will utilize interactive lectures, student-led seminars or group discussions, fieldwork and online sessions. Fieldwork will involve interviews, the use of technology and photography to capture and document the semiotic landscapes examined and the views of members of the community interacting with the space.</p>																																																						
<p><b>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes</b> (Note 4)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Sign analysis (written paper, individual work)</td> <td>30%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Project: Fieldwork portfolio (group work)</td> <td>20%</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Project: Sign creation (oral presentation, individual work)</td> <td>30%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. In-class participation</td> <td>20%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>100 %</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Assessment 1: Students will produce individually a written analysis of a sign in the landscape based on the concepts and analytic tools learned in the first half of the subject.</p> <p>Assessment 2: Students will carry out a project that requires them to create a sign to address a particular issue (e.g. hygiene, safety, accessibility, etc.) in their community. To achieve this, they need to first conduct some fieldwork in groups in the community concerned to define the problem, to identify and to understand the stakeholders concerned. The fieldwork portfolio documents the groundwork they have done in this respect and may include interview transcripts, photographs and survey results carried out to understand the space, the landscape and the community under investigation.</p> <p>Assessment 3: Following their fieldwork in Assessment 2, students will then individually propose an appropriate solution through the development of a sign. In the form of an oral presentation, each student will introduce their creation, explain the developmental processes and argue how they have put the sign to effective use in the space concerned in its actual implementation.</p> <p>Assessment 4:</p>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						a	b	c	d	e	f	1. Sign analysis (written paper, individual work)	30%	✓	✓	✓				2. Project: Fieldwork portfolio (group work)	20%			✓	✓	✓		3. Project: Sign creation (oral presentation, individual work)	30%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4. In-class participation	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>						
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	Throughout the semester, students will participate in a number of in-class activities, mostly in the form of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions completed via digital technologies, to demonstrate their understanding of the topics covered in the subject.	
<b>Student Study Effort Expected</b>	Class contact:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lecture</li> <li>▪ Seminar</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">26 Hrs. 13 Hrs.</p>
	Other student study effort:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparation for seminars and lectures</li> <li>▪ Preparation for assignments</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">28 Hrs. 52 Hrs.</p>
	Total student study effort	119 Hrs.
<b>Reading List and References</b>	<p><b>Required reading</b></p> <p>Graddol, D. 2013. <i>Profiling English in China: The Pearl River Delta</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Scollon, R. &amp; Scollon S. W. 2003. <i>Discourses in place: Language in the material world</i>. London; New York: Routledge.</p> <p><b>Further reading</b></p> <p>Blommaert, J. 2010. <i>The sociolinguistics of globalization</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Cook, V. 2015. Meaning and material in the language of the street. <i>Social Semiotics</i> 25: 81–109.</p> <p>Graddol, D. &amp; Danielewicz-Betz, A. 2015. Borderland English: Signs of transition across the expiring China-Hong Kong border. <i>Asian Englishes</i> 17: 3-28.</p> <p>Gorter, D. 2006. Introduction: The study of the linguistic landscape as a new approach to multilingualism. <i>International Journal of Multilingualism</i> 3: 1–6.</p> <p>Jaworski, A. &amp; Thurlow, C. (eds.) 2010. <i>Semiotic landscapes: Language, image and space</i>. London; New York: Continnum.</p> <p>Jaworski, A. &amp; Yeung, S. 2010. Life in the garden of Eden: The naming and imagery of residential Hong Kong. In E. Shohamy, E. Ben-Rafael &amp; M. Barni (eds.) <i>Linguistic Landscape in the City</i>. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters. 153-181.</p> <p>Lai, M. L. 2013. The linguistic landscape of Hong Kong after the change of sovereignty. <i>International Journal of Multilingualism</i> 10(3): 251-272.</p> <p>Lam, P. W. Y. &amp; Graddol, D. 2017. Conceptualising the vertical landscape: The case of the International Finance Centre in the world’s most vertical city. <i>Journal of Sociolinguistics</i> 21(4): 521-546.</p> <p>Landry, R. &amp; Bourhis, R. Y. 1997. Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. <i>Journal of Language and Social Psychology</i> 16: 23–49</p> <p>Shohamy, E &amp; Gorter, D. (eds.) 2009. <i>Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery</i>. London; New York: Routledge.</p>	