

## **2022 Fall CAMPUS Study Abroad Program Reflection (From Waseda University School of International Liberal Studies, Japan to Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)**

### **Before Study Abroad:**

Having lived in the Philippines for 18 years, as a Japanese, the difference in social class is evident. However, this was the norm for me. While visiting Japan every year, I realized that inequality is less evident than in the Philippines. After observation, I concluded that the difference between the developing countries of Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines, and the developed country of Japan is that they have different concepts of the public and society. In the Philippines, family and community hold a prominent position in their culture, as do the public and society. Jobs, education, and medical treatment vary depending on each class. The higher social class a person is in, the better treatment and advantage they receive than any other social class through these connections. Simultaneously, the government is deemed corrupt and unreliable, which makes communities and families support and fend for themselves to retain their rights. Thus, to eliminate any unfamiliarity, the upper and lower social classes only limit themselves to interacting with their familiar community. This leads to Filipinos becoming more alert to their surroundings and the division of social classes becoming irrepressible.

On the other hand, Japan values the concept of the public and society more. Unlike the Philippines, Japanese people from the lower to higher social classes ride public transportation together. This made me realize that with the normality of the equality of social classes in Japan, the Japanese have a mindset to treat others equally and not fear interacting with one another. While in Japan, there has been a rise in the number of Japanese living alone, which is a rare scene for Filipinos. This could be because the Japanese believe that the government provides and protects their rights. This can be seen through the rights of education, medical treatment, and even job recruitment. Rather, in Japan, having connections like in the Philippines is seen negatively and emits covetousness. I have pondered upon this difference between Japan and the Philippines all my life; I have never concluded the root cause and reason for this gap between social classes despite being on the same continent. This also leads to the question, "Why does Japan highly value society and the public?" As I have a strong affiliation with both East and Southeast Asia, I believe that the CAMPUS Asia study abroad program is the best program for me to investigate this question I propose. Knowing that Singapore has similar qualities to the Philippines, such as its diverse community, colonized history, and developing economic history, studying at Nanyang Technological University will allow me to connect Southeast Asia's social relations and

societal issues. Hence, this program will help me find the root cause of corruption and economic inequality in the Philippines. I also believe there is more to learn about Asia. The CAMPUS Asia Study Abroad program and Nanyang Technological University will let me delve deeper into sociology and find the answers to the catalysis of inequalities in Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines.



Orientation for exchange students



The Hive building at NTU



National Day



Engineering building at night



Nanyang Arts Ensemble club



NTU Chinese Heritage Centre

**Study Plan:**

At Waseda University's School of International Liberal Studies (SILS), I have created a strong base for my knowledge. In high school, I strengthened my knowledge of Mathematics, English, Foreign languages, History, and even Visual arts. At SILS, I had the opportunity to strengthen my knowledge of subjects such as economics, religion, media studies, and cultural studies with professors such as Professor Trenson, Professor Law, and Professor Kim. Though having a base knowledge of important topics such as economics and cultural studies is vital, I want to enhance my current knowledge and utilize the skills that I learned in my past two years at Waseda University's School of International Liberal Studies. The best way I could enhance this is to study in Singapore, specifically at the Nanyang Technological University's Social Science department under the sociology program. Within the social sciences, sociology is known to be the broadest subject. As sociology is the study of social relations, every topic and subject relates to sociology. One's cultural upbringing, economic status, and inequality in a country are subjected to be tied and analyzed by sociology. With the base knowledge of economics, religion, culture, and even history that I could learn at Waseda University, I would like to utilize this to learn about sociology in Southeast Asia from a university based in Southeast Asia, Nanyang Technological University. As a student born and raised in the Philippines, I would like to analyze what can shape the conditions of developing countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines, versus the developed countries of Southeast Asia, such as Singapore. This means learning more about poverty and inequalities, the ties of politics and social relations, racial relations, and even religious differences. Some professors I am excited to learn from are Professor Laavanya Kathiravelu and Professor Premchand Dommaraju. As a 'third culture kid,' Professor Laavanya Kathiravelu's research on migration and citizenship has resonated with me. Identity and citizenship are topics that have weighed on my mind since I was younger. Professor Laavanya Kathiravelu has conducted research from 2019 to 2024 on "Does Citizenship Matter? Second generation Immigrant Integration in Singapore and Qatar". The Philippines also has a high immigrant rate, with Filipinos wanting to immigrate to countries in the West for better opportunities and livelihood; I want to be able to learn under Professor Laavanya Kathiravelu to find the social relation and underlying root cause of this revelation. Is it merely due to poverty and political reasons such as corruption? What is the implementation of different ethnic groups with the reason to immigrate? By studying under Professor Laavanya Kathiravelu, I believe that I can get closer to the answers to these questions while understanding more about topics such as migration and overseas workers. Professor Premchand Dommaraju has been researching "Understanding Changes in the Marriage Systems in Southeast Asia: A Cross-National Comparative Approach." Knowing that the Philippines is one of the two nations where divorce is illegal, I would like to know more about Professor Premchand Dommaraju research on the effects on social relations and the social sphere of what this could mean to the Philippines. Secondly, as Professor Premchand Dommaraju has

been researching other Southeast Asian countries' marriage systems, I would like to investigate what the Philippines would look like when implementing the different marriage systems in other Southeast Asian countries while considering the Philippines' societal conditions. I have only mentioned these two notable professors at Nanyang Technological University; however, I hope to be able to learn from other notable sociology professors as I believe that they will also deepen my knowledge of my other interests, such as pop culture, digital media, and mental health.

To conclude, my studies at Waseda University have allowed me to deepen my introductory and advanced knowledge of subjects such as economics, religion, and culture. It has been an honor to learn about these subjects that I have always had an interest in but had no opportunity to learn about or study on a whim, which became an asset of knowledge for me. Now that I have this knowledge, I would like to set foot in Singapore at Nanyang Technological University to learn how to analyze the Southeast Asian region's cultural development in relation to different societal dilemmas. I would also like to explore the different ethnic groups and cultures in Singapore personally. Studying and working with students and professors from different backgrounds and with different specialties will allow me to understand more about sociology while implementing my own ideas.



Entrance at NTU



NTU Hall 3 (one of the student dorms)



Masjid Sultan at Kampong Glam



Promotion for the TEDxNTU event at NTU

## Career Plan:

After graduating from Waseda University's School of International Liberal Studies (SILS) and finishing my study abroad at Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) School of Social Science Sociology program, I will gain an extensive amount of knowledge about sociology, Singapore's nation and culture, Japan's livelihood, and the Southeast Asian nations. In Japan, I would like to work at a diverse and international company catering to Japanese and international employees, especially in Asia. I have always had a passion for working within a marketing department since I was in high school. I believe that marketing to cater to an international market does not only mean understanding marketing strategies or business lingo but also understanding the global culture, different ethnic relations, and cross-cultural communication. Hence, physically going to an Asian country outside of Japan and the Philippines will allow me to have first-hand experience with the differences in culture and values between Singapore and other ethnic groups. I want to contribute to shaping a Japanese company into a more open-minded and globalized corporation. With the knowledge that I will gain from studying at NTU, I would like to contribute new ideas and solutions to the growing Japanese society. By learning about different countries' economies, global practices, international relations, and many more, I am able to shed new light on corporations that are especially in dire need of opinions from someone with a different perspective. I would like to be the voice to show these countries' different cultural values and practices and utilize this to market a product to a bigger audience. At the same time, if the

Japanese company has an office abroad, I can help the company prosper. I will be able to combine what I have learned from the SILS, NTU's sociology program, and my knowledge about developing Southeast Asian countries. Not only will I be able to contribute to this cross-cultural knowledge, but at the same time, I could teach companies to support the community and individuals around them.



Greenery at NTU



Farwell event for exchange students



NTU Sports and Recreation Centre Hall

**Completion Report: Specify the social issue(s) in Asia you were aware of prior to studying abroad.**

Some social issues that I was already aware of before going to Nanyang Technological University are the issues regarding citizenship and migration. As I have lived in a country where people are constantly leaving their own country to work overseas for better opportunities and where terms such as “Overseas Filipino Worker” (OFW) exists, it was a norm to hear topics such as ‘citizenship’ and ‘migration’. I was most familiar with female Southeast Asians moving to other countries, such as Singapore, as domestic workers or Filipinos migrating to the United States or Canada to pursue their medical careers. People who immigrate to other countries tend to do so for a better life for themselves and their families. At the same time, it helps the economy and labor force of the countries that are receiving migrants. However, this consequentially creates other issues, such as family dynamics, race, and citizenship issues, for these immigrants once they migrate to countries that they are unfamiliar with. Migration in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia, has been driven by various factors such as trade, labor demand, and colonization. In Japan, a lot of migrant workers are usually

tasked to supply for jobs that Japanese people do not usually gravitate towards. Usually, they are tasked to do work that requires long hours while being physically strenuous. In Singapore, domestic work is largely supplied by other Asian countries, especially within Southeast and South Asia, due to the socio-economic situation of Singaporeans. Some migrants might see other countries as glamorous and with infinite opportunities, which people take advantage of this mindset. As mentioned, various social issues can arise from one issue. While migration has economic opportunities and increases cultural diversity, we cannot negate the negative outcomes created by globalization and capitalism, which affect migration, immigration, and citizenship.



Lee Wee Nam Library at NTU



Lecture classrooms at NTU



School of Art, Design and Media

**Describe what you learned/discovered regarding the social issue(s) you mentioned above.**

Through NTU's School of Social Science, I learned more deeply about migration and immigration. One topic that specifically piqued my interest and coincided with the topic I was most familiar with is "Inter-ethnic relations: minorities at risk." We learned about the meaning of ethnicity and how it is a socially constructed meaning and concept. Ethnicity also ties in with race, but they do not only refer to minority groups. In Singapore, Race is seen as a product of power relations and can be seen as a divider in society, which is ironic as it is created and utilized by the state. Race also has a long history with colonialism, mostly used for the benefit of economic progression, exploiting the minority race. In Singapore specifically, certain races and ethnicities are legally eligible to work for certain jobs. For example, domestic work is reserved for females,

and the largest nationalities that occupy this are Southeast Asian women, such as Filipinos, Malaysians, and Indonesians. I was able to learn that this is called “gendered contours.” Most migrant women are concentrated in jobs typically considered “female.” These jobs generally have poorer pay and poor conditions. Though these women are exploited by their employers, it is hard to escape from this as the labor laws for domestic workers are not as clear and concise as other conventional jobs that migrant workers mostly occupy. A large reason why women are confined to jobs such as domestic work is due to the transnational transfer of reproductive labor. Women are tasked to do jobs that pertain to housework and children. When women are also needed in the workforce, they do not have time to complete household tasks, which the migrant domestic workers fulfill these job scopes. Migrants being confined to certain jobs by legal law created stereotypes in society. This can also be seen with predominantly men-related jobs in Singapore, such as construction work. South Asian men from India, Bangladesh, and Nepal are profiled to fill strenuous jobs such as construction work due to the visa they are permitted to work with in Singapore.

Overall, I learned that there are deeper conundrums with migrant work, especially in Singapore, which contribute to issues such as family dynamics, gendered issues, and human rights. Immigration issues do not only affect migrants; rather, they are the most emotive in contemporary societies. They affect anyone of any status and citizenship.



Gaia – Nanyang Business School



NTU Campus Map



College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

**Describe how the prescription in CAMPUS Asia has contributed or will contribute to your future career.**

As my initial plan, I still aspire to work in Japan. I believe that CAMPUS Asia and Nanyang Technological University have opened my eyes to various social issues and opportunities. Singapore has shown me what living in a truly diverse and multicultural society is like. Just on campus at NTU, I could meet people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Especially during group discussions or group projects, each student has different opinions, and we are able to collaborate on projects cohesively. It is interesting to hear how other students, especially from varying countries, view Singapore and what they say about our classes. I was fond of the sociology classes I took, especially those pertaining to Singaporean society and global issues. I learned that global issues could seep into local issues and simultaneously cause societal issues. Specifically, through the CAMPUS Asia program, I have been inspired to give back to the community that has shaped my identity. Through working in Japan, I intend to help the Asian community, especially the Southeast Asian community. I would like to help them acclimate to the Japanese community while being aware of the social issues that come with living in Japan as a foreigner, especially when it comes to issues pertaining to migration and female issues. I believe that the CAMPUS Asia program has opened my eyes to how global issues translate to local issues and vice versa. I would like to communicate with people from various communities and critically think about prominent issues in their community. It is very easy for people to look at issues in hindsight, which creates stereotypes and prejudice. When people are educated about the issues in their community and the root problem, they can create sustainable solutions and be aware of their surroundings rather than ridicule them. As for myself, through the CAMPUS Asia program, I was able to delve deeper into issues that are especially prominent within Asia, such as gender issues. Japan is known for its issues pertaining to domestic work and females in the workforce. However, this isn't an issue unique to Japan and has not stemmed alone. Through my experience and education in understanding different social problems, I would like to look closely at how globalization has shaped these issues and sustainable ways to combat this. Overall, I would like to be a helping hand to the community that I grew up in, hopefully being able to transnationally bridge different nations to think critically about the social issues that exist in their community.