

CAMPUS Asia Study Abroad Photo Journal

2024/2025 at Nanyang Technological University

Introduction



I had the incredible opportunity to study abroad in Singapore as a CAMPUS Asia exchange student at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU). I am deeply thankful to the CAMPUS Asia Program for giving me this unforgettable experience that has broadened my perspective both academically and personally.

Through this photo journal, I'd like to share what it was like to be a CAMPUS Asia student in Singapore. From my daily campus life and academic experiences to moments of cultural discovery and reflection, I hope to give you a glimpse into the journey that shaped me in so many ways.

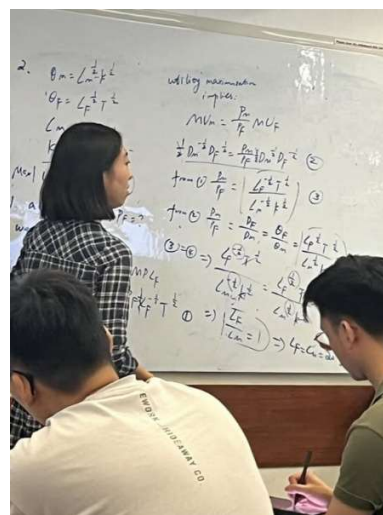
Academics

At Nanyang Technological University (NTU), I was enrolled in the School of Social Sciences, where I did my studies in Political Science and Economics.

Courses and Credits

Throughout the academic year, I completed 40 credits across 10 courses, each worth 4 credits. One of the highlights of my academic experience was the wide variety of subjects I was able to take. My coursework ranged from political science and economics to language, marketing, and sociology, offering me an interdisciplinary and well-rounded education.

One of the most valuable experiences was taking Politics and Government in Southeast Asia, which gave me in-depth insights into the political systems, historical legacies, and current challenges faced by neighboring countries in the region. As someone interested in comparative politics, this course helped me understand how geography, history, and social structures shape governance in Southeast Asia. I wrote a paper about influence of politics on Indonesian economy.





I also took International Economics, Principles of Economics, Statistics and Analysis, and Financial Management, which strengthened my grasp of both macro- and microeconomic theory. I took these courses to continue studying my major. Since the content is similar to what I learn in Waseda, I could see the difference of teaching style. While lecture is quite similar to the one in Waseda, all the NTU courses have tutorial class with it. In tutorial, I could ask questions directly to the professor and deepen my understanding.

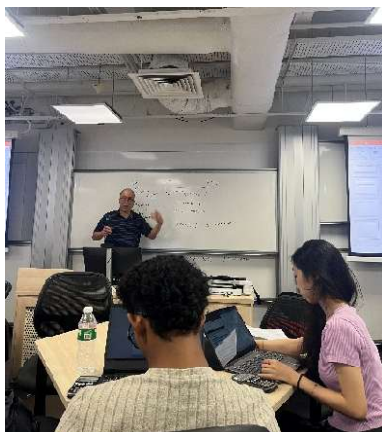
NTU also offered space for critical reflection. Critical Perspectives on Education was particularly memorable—it challenged me to think deeply about the role of education in society and how systems of power and inequality are reproduced through schooling. The course included thought-provoking readings and class

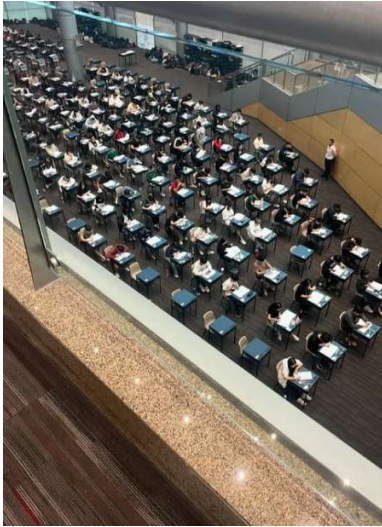
discussions that made me reflect not only on Singapore's education system but also on Japan's and my own learning experiences.

One of the highlights of my academic year was Luxury Marketing. Though it falls outside my core major, it offered a fascinating look into consumer behavior, branding, and cultural values in the luxury industry, especially in the Asian market. It was eye-opening to see how marketing strategies intersect with identity, status, and social trends—topics that actually connect well with political economy. The course included some field trips to visit some boutiques and offices of luxury brands. The visit to AP house in the raffles hotel was the most memorable experience.

My interest in language and regional culture led me to take two language courses: Chinese Language Level 4 and Thai Language Level 1. These classes helped improve my practical communication skills and deepened my appreciation for regional diversity. Learning Thai as a complete beginner was challenging but also a lot of fun. I visited Bangkok after taking this course, so I could use the language in real life.

Lastly, Food and Society offered a unique sociological lens to examine the cultural, political, and economic meanings of food. It was a refreshing course. We learned how to cook not only Singaporean dishes but also some Southeast Asian dishes. I remember talking to Indonesian classmate about how tolerance to spiciness varies greatly from country to country.





Professors and Students

One of the most inspiring aspects of my exchange at NTU was the learning environment—both inside and outside the classroom. NTU students were highly motivated and passionate about their studies, which I believe is closely tied to the strong emphasis placed on GPA for job opportunities in Singapore. Their dedication created an atmosphere of academic focus that challenged me to stay engaged and work harder.

The campus was also incredibly diverse. Many of my classmates were full-time international students from across Asia, and there were also numerous exchange students from all around the world. The classroom composition varied greatly—some courses were filled with exchange students, while in others, I was the only one. Regardless, my classmates were always friendly, open-minded, and willing to help, which made it easy for me to feel included and supported throughout the semester.

I was also impressed by how confident and efficient Singaporean students were when it came to presentations. Many of my classes required frequent group or individual presentations—something I wasn't very familiar with before coming to NTU. I was surprised by how quickly and professionally local students could prepare and deliver their presentations. It was sometimes challenging for me to keep up, but it also became one of the most valuable learning experiences of my exchange.

The professors at NTU were equally welcoming and diverse, with many having international academic backgrounds. While I initially struggled with English academic writing—especially when faced with multiple paper assignments—I felt comfortable asking for help. Professors were approachable and always willing to provide support and guidance. I particularly appreciated one of my marketing professors who organized several field trips to Singapore's city center. These excursions not only enhanced our understanding of real-world marketing but also gave us the chance to bond as a class and explore the city together in a fun and engaging way.

This supportive academic community made a huge difference in my exchange experience. It gave me the confidence to actively participate in class discussions, complete challenging assignments, and grow both intellectually and personally.



Student Life

Chinese Dance CCA

One of the most unforgettable aspects of my exchange at NTU was joining the Chinese Dance CCA (co-curricular activity). As the classes were conducted entirely in Chinese, it was a perfect opportunity for me to improve both my language skills and dance technique at the same time. The members were incredibly welcoming, and we worked hard together to prepare for performances. The highlight of my year was performing in the Chingay Festival, Singapore's largest multicultural parade. Dancing on such a grand stage, surrounded by people from various cultural backgrounds, was an unforgettable experience that made me feel deeply connected to the local community.



Multicultural Celebrations

Another aspect of student life in Singapore that I truly appreciated was the opportunity to experience the country's rich multicultural celebrations. As a society made up of multiple ethnic and religious communities, Singapore celebrates many major festivals throughout the year—and as an exchange student, I was fortunate to be part of them.

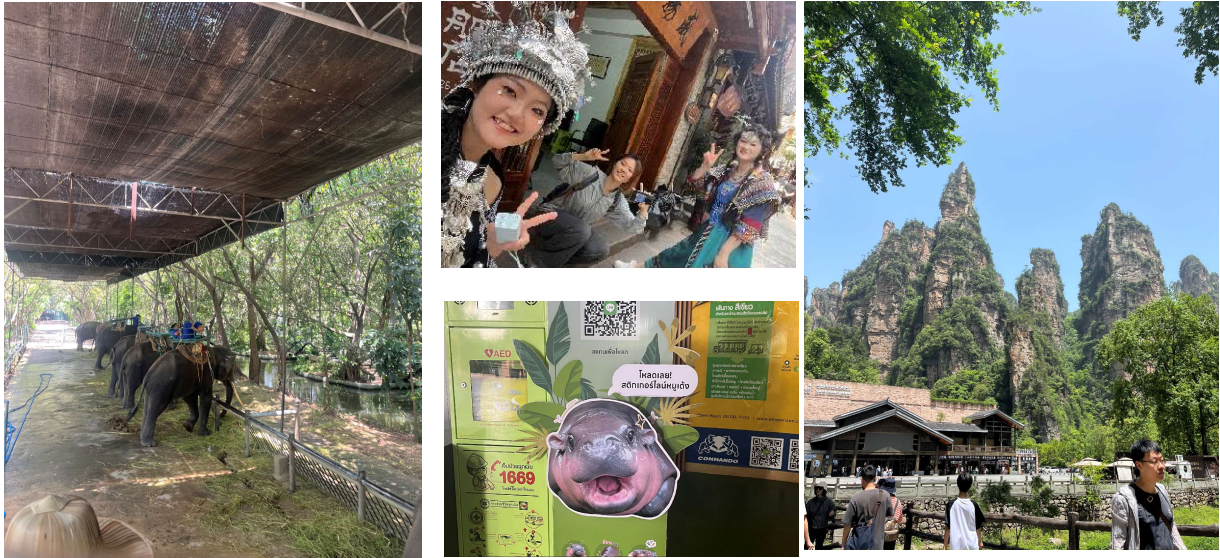
During my stay, I experienced the Mid-Autumn Festival, Deepavali, Lunar New Year, and Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Each celebration brought a unique atmosphere not only to the campus but to the entire country. The streets, shopping malls, and neighbourhoods were beautifully decorated, and there were cultural activities held across the city.



I especially remember visiting Little India during Deepavali, where I saw dazzling light displays, bustling night markets, and traditional music performances. It felt like the whole neighbourhood came alive with festive energy. For Hari Raya, I volunteered at a local mosque, which gave me a meaningful glimpse into the traditions and warmth of the Muslim community. Participating in these celebrations helped me better understand the cultural diversity of Singapore and reminded me how festivals can bring people of different backgrounds together.

These experiences outside the classroom were just as valuable as what I learned academically—they deepened my appreciation for cultural harmony and opened my eyes to the richness of everyday life in a multicultural country.

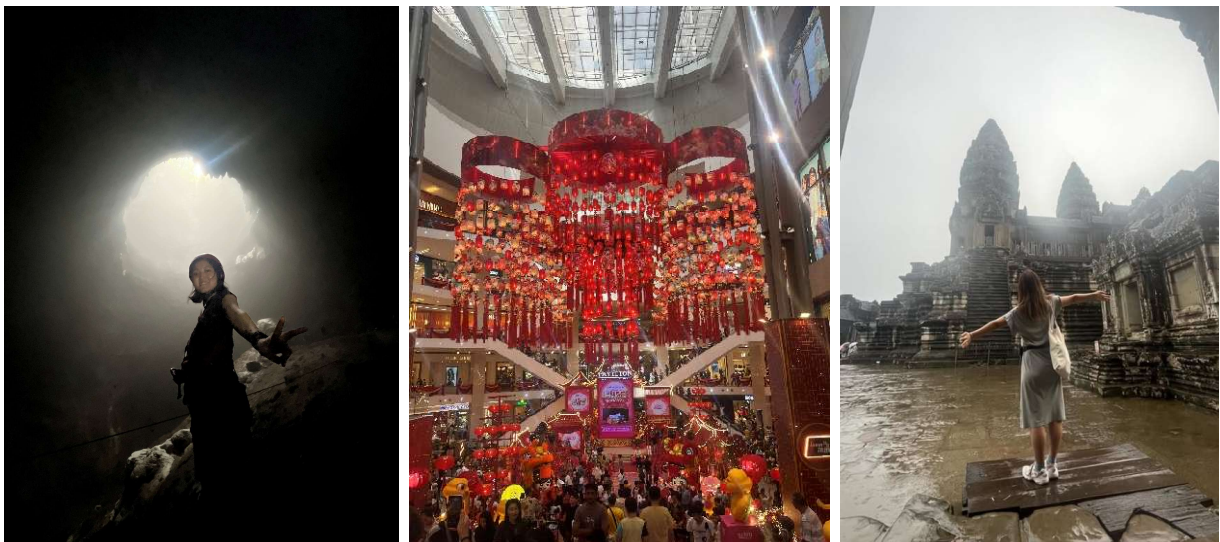




Trips

Outside of campus life, I also took advantage of Singapore's strategic location in Southeast Asia to travel to nearby countries during weekends and semester breaks. I visited Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Bahru in Malaysia; Yogyakarta in Indonesia; Siem Reap in Cambodia; Bangkok in Thailand; and even Hunan in China. These trips gave me the chance to explore diverse cultures, try new cuisines, and meet fellow travelers from around the world—especially while staying in hostels, where conversations with strangers often turned into shared adventures.

Traveling while studying abroad added another layer to my exchange experience. It helped me broaden my worldview, reflect on social and cultural differences, and form memories that I'll carry with me for a lifetime.



Social Issues

Social Issues in Asia I Was Aware of Before Studying Abroad

Before participating in the CAMPUS Asia program, I was aware of several social issues surrounding education in Asia. One particularly pressing issue is the intense examination culture and the growing dependence on private tutoring, especially in countries like South Korea, China, and Singapore. These practices contribute to educational inequality, as students from wealthier families can afford better resources and support, while others are left behind. This not only reinforces socioeconomic divides but also creates immense pressure on young learners.

What I Learned or Discovered Regarding These Issues

During my exchange, I had the opportunity to take a course titled *Critical Perspectives on Education*. This class deepened my understanding of how education systems reflect and reproduce social inequalities. Through lectures, discussions, and comparative case studies, I explored how policies and cultural values in different Asian countries shape educational outcomes. I learned that while countries like Singapore have achieved impressive results on international assessments, they still face challenges in promoting equity and reducing reliance on high-stakes exams and shadow education. Hearing local perspectives also helped me understand how students personally experience these systems—both the benefits and the burdens. The class was quite small with only 20 students. We all went through different education paths.

How Participation in CAMPUS Asia Has Contributed or Will Contribute to My Future Career

Participating in the CAMPUS Asia program has sparked a deeper interest in the intersection between education and economic development. Through academic coursework and real-world observations in Singapore, I began to see how education systems deeply contribute to national economic growth. Singapore's investment in high-quality education and talent development, for instance, has played a crucial role in its rapid economic transformation. Inspired by this, I plan to pursue research on how education policies and structures influence long-term economic outcomes in different countries. The CAMPUS Asia program has provided me with a strong foundation—both intellectually and experientially—to explore this path and contribute to future policy design that promotes both equity and growth.

