



**SSC251**  
**Religion in Contemporary Societies**

**Tutor-Marked Assignments 01-02**  
**January 2017 Presentation**

## SSC251

### *Tutor-Marked Assignments 01-02*

There are 2 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) for SSC251. TMA01 and TMA02 are each worth 25% of the overall assessment score. Together, they constitute 50% of the final mark (the End-of-Course Assessment constitutes the other 50%).

#### **TMA Due Dates**

**Please upload this assignment to Turnitin by:**

TMA01: Tuesday, 7 February 2017, 11:55pm

TMA02: Tuesday, 28 February 2017, 11:55pm

Resubmissions are allowed before this cut-off time.

It is strongly recommended that you make an early submission to check the originality report and, if necessary, make amendments to your document for resubmission. Note that the Turnitin report is usually generated immediately after the first submission, however, subsequent reports may take up to one day to generate. Do note that Turnitin will not accept any further submissions **AFTER** the cut-off time. There is a 12-hour grace period after the cut-off time, which is not an extended deadline but solely meant for solving any technical problems that you may encounter while attempting to make a submission before the cut-off time. Please email Canvas Support immediately (with relevant screenshots and your TMA attached) and follow up with Canvas Support first thing in the morning to ensure that the problem is resolved before the grace period is over.

One late submission is allowed only if no prior submissions were made before the cut-off time. Do note that the Canvas system will automatically deduct penalty marks for every day that your assignment is late. With this automatic deduction, there will be no need to request for extensions from your tutor because your tutor does not have the mandate to over-ride the Canvas system settings. You will need to form your own judgement as to how many marks you are willing to forego for each extra day that you gain to work on your assignment.

Take care to ensure that you upload the **correct TMA document** to the **correct folder** of the **correct course**. Requests to transfer incorrectly uploaded documents to the correct folder will require an official appeal (and an administrative fee).

Backup your TMA at all times. Once you have uploaded your TMA (in Word document format only), retain the Turnitin digital receipt as evidence of a successful submission. View your submission to ensure that the entire document has been uploaded successfully.

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#### **Plagiarism and Collusion**

The assignment is to be completed on your own. You may discuss the TMA with your course-mates; however, the assignment must be written independently. Do not share your notes, draft or final TMA with anyone before the marked TMAs are returned to you.

Avoid plagiarism by giving yourself sufficient time to research and understand the material so that you can write up your assignment in your own words. Quotations should be used sparingly. Simply citing the source of 'copied' chunks of text does not excuse it from plagiarism. Do ensure that any paraphrasing is done appropriately, even if you use text from your own work that you have submitted as part of another assignment for the same or another course.

The University takes a very serious view of plagiarism (passing off someone else's ideas as your own, or recycling of contents from your own earlier marked TMA from the same course or another course) and collusion (submitting an assignment which is the same or very similar to another student's). Both are very serious academic offences. Please refer to the Student Handbook on the penalties of plagiarism or collusion. You are strongly advised to submit your TMA early, check the plagiarism report yourself, and if needed revise and resubmit your TMA before the submission deadline.

## ***TMA01***

This tutor-marked assignment comprises ONE (1) 1,500-word essay (excluding bibliography/references) which is worth 25% of the final mark for SSC251 Religion in Contemporary Societies. Please indicate the word count at the end of the TMA. Marks will be deducted for essays that exceed the word limit.

Please upload this assignment to Turnitin by **Tuesday, 7 February 2017, 11.55pm**. Resubmissions are allowed before this cut-off time.

Remember to provide in-text citations as well as a list of references at the end of the essay. Please note that up to 10% of your marks go to accurate and coherent writing, and appropriate citation and referencing.

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### **Question (100 marks)**

Visit the Loyang Tua Pek Kong Temple (<http://lytpk.org.sg/index.htm>). The Loyang Tua Pek Kong Temple is home to Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist deities and a Muslim karmat (shrine) within its premises.

Reflect upon your visit and critically analyse how the visit questions your understanding of the practice of race and religion in Singapore. In doing so, explain the concept of inter-faith tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Singapore, apply relevant concepts and theories covered in the course.

### **Student Notes**

You may visit the site on your own, with a friend and/or classmate, or in groups of three, but you will ultimately be responsible for producing your own essay based on your experience. Before the actual visit to the site, visit the temple website for background knowledge and acquaint yourself with temple-going etiquette e.g., as dress codes. Be sure to take notes during your visit or snap a few photos of what you found interesting (if photography is allowed at the site).

At the field site, observe the social rituals and behaviours that are connected to religious worship.

In your answer, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- What is the significance of housing the various faiths in one shared location?
- Who leads the religious activities and how is the worship of the various religions organised?
- What are some of the practices and behaviours you observed for each worship and distinguish what are some of the similarities and differences noted?
- Who visits the temple and do they restrict themselves from worshipping the deities from their own faith or do they also worship deities from the other faiths?
- In your discussion, you may also want to examine the relationship between the Singapore state and religion and what are the various initiatives undertaken in Singapore with regards to religion and worship.

- Another interesting point you may wish to consider is in the era of religious fundamentalism, racial and religious intolerance, how may inter-faith initiatives like the Loyang Tua Pek Kong Temple promote a more cordial relationship among practitioners of various faiths?

Although this is primarily field research and based on firsthand observations, you will need to refer to secondary sources, such as media articles, for background information on the temple. Ensure that you include references **and** provide a bibliography of the cited sources in your assignment.

**Write your answers in not more than 1,500 words. Please remember to provide the word count, and list of references.**

## **TMA02**

This tutor-marked assignment comprises ONE (1) 1,200-word essay (excluding bibliography/references) which is worth 25% of the final mark for SSC251 Religion in Contemporary Societies. Please indicate the word count at the end of the TMA. Marks will be deducted for essays that exceed the word limit.

Please upload this assignment to Turnitin by **Tuesday, 28 February 2017, 11.55pm**. Resubmissions are allowed before this cut-off time.

Remember to provide in-text citations as well as a list of references at the end of the essay. Please note that up to 10% of your marks go to accurate and coherent writing, and appropriate citation and referencing.

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### **Question**

Download and read the following articles from Factiva:

Youth in Singapore Shunning Religion, *The Straits Times*, 21 March 2016  
<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/youth-in-singapore-shunning-religion>

Fewer Singapore Residents Identify as Buddhists or Taoists, *The Straits Times*, 21 March 2016  
<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/fewer-singapore-residents-identify-as-buddhists-or-taoists>

Time to Engage the Non-Religious in Dialogue, *The Straits Times*, 15 Mar 2016  
<http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/time-to-engage-the-non-religious-in-dialogue>

The Department of Statistics General Household Survey 2015 report indicated that those who said they had 'no religion' comprised 18.5% of the resident population, up from 17% indicated in the previous survey in 2010.

- (a) Explain what respondents mean when they declare that they do not belong to any religion? Are they atheist or do you think they subscribe instead to a civil religion, a new age or post-modern religion or are they attracted to other religions (religions they were not born into) or even have a different approach to life such as humanism? Why so? Discuss.  
(60 marks)
- (b) Describe and explain what constitutes the religious landscape in Singapore society. Why do you think the religious landscape in Singapore has changed over the years? How do you think the religiously-involved and fervent group may co-exist peacefully with the non-religious minority?  
(40 marks)

## **Student Notes**

This assignment assesses your understanding of the meaning of religion to the younger, educated demographic living in a globalised world where notions of civil religion, new age religions, secularisation exist in societies dominated by multiculturalism and religious cosmopolitanism where religious (or non-religious) behaviour is considered to be the choice of an individual and what are the available choices in the religious marketplace. In doing so, this assignment requires to explore what religion means to people on a personal as well as a social level as well as to assess to what extent ethnic identities in Singapore's multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, are indeed religious in nature. This assignment also requires you to consider the impact of these trends: how does Singapore society need to understand what constitutes religion and religious identity, and more importantly, how may the non-religious minority synergise with the religious majority in the changing religious landscape and what might be their response to global debates about the role of religion in human life in secular societies. In doing so, you are required to consider how these developments influence our conception of religious identities.

To answer the TMA question, you should refer to relevant materials from the course e.g., the relevant portions of the study guide and course readings such as Szonyi (2009), Esposito et al (2008), Mitchell (2006) and McFaul (2006). In addition, you should locate sources external to the course by conducting your own research through UniSIM's online library resources (including media articles and journal articles) and incorporate insights or data from these into your essay.

Please ensure that your answer applies specific, relevant social sciences concepts (e.g., secularisation, multiculturalism, identity, civil religion, religious marketplace, choices of individuals, new age religions, post-modern religions, religion and globalisation, etc.) and perspectives covered by the course. Your essay should demonstrate competence in the perspectives on religion offered by the course, where relevant (e.g., sociology, anthropology, and/or history of religions).

You should address each part of the TMA question in a single continuous essay with a good introduction and conclusion – utilising sub-headers where necessary to help you organise your arguments.

**Write your answers in not more than 1,200 words. Please remember to provide the word count, and list of references.**

— End of TMA —