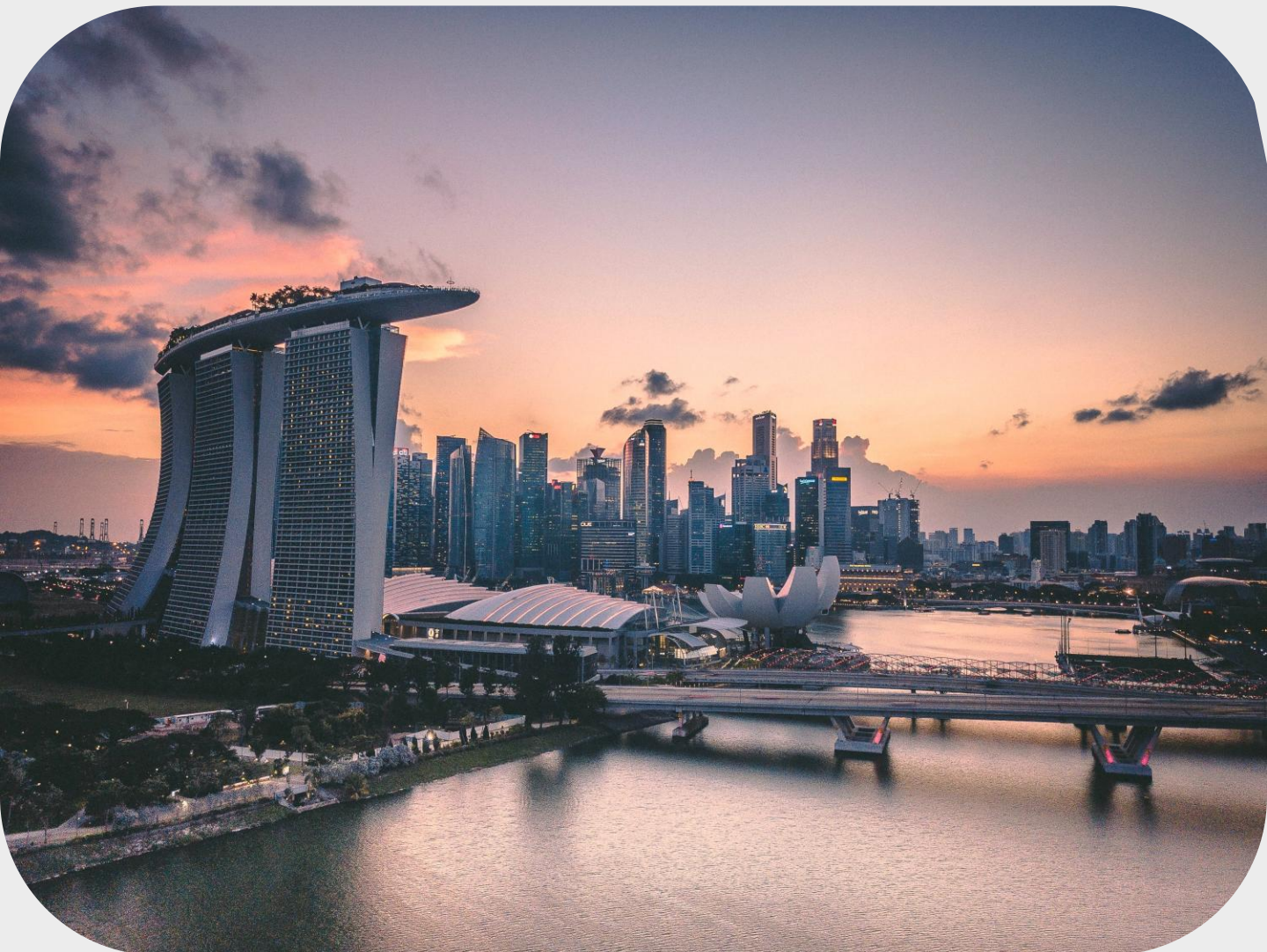


ASIA BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS

9 – 13 MARCH 2026



PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

COURSE SYNOPSIS

Asia is the largest and most diverse continent in the world. Business strategies need to be adapted to differences across the geographic and cultural context.

This course has two main, interconnected aims. First is to introduce basic concepts of international business, which relate to how firm strategy varies across geographic contexts. Second is to introduce the diversity of business environments in Asia—a range as diverse as exists in the world.

It is expected that students will learn a basic set of descriptive facts about countries and top businesses in the region. Instead of looking for one “right” answer, however, this course encourages debates and discussions. Instead of being overly structured in teaching, we attempt to leave some rooms for ambiguities that encourage students to take a more proactive approach to their own learning.

COURSE DETAILS

CLASS DATES	9 – 13 MARCH 2026 (5 DAYS)
LEVEL	MBA
MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION	ENGLISH
CLASS CONTACT	39 HOURS

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

ASSESSMENTS	
Class participation	30%
Group project & presentation	40%
Final quiz	30%

The above breakdown is only indicative.

GRADING	COMPLETION
Distinction (DT) Merit (M) Pass (P) Fail (F)	Each participant will receive: • Certificate of Participation • Statement of Result

ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Ishtiaq Pasha Mahmood is a Strategy Professor at NUS Business School. He is a member of the World Economic Forum’s international panel of experts. His work looks at the interface between innovation and strategy in the context of emerging markets. He won the Haynes Prize by the Academy of International Business. In 2014, he also won the Aspen Award for promoting sustainable business models in his research and teaching. His recent case on bKash, a fintech firm in Bangladesh, won the bestselling case award in 2021 from Ivey Publications. Pasha’s research has been published at leading management journals. Prior to joining academia, he was a management consultant for Gemini in Chicago.



Ishtiaq Pasha Mahmood

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Program fee is waived.
- Students have to arrange their own flights, accommodation, transportation & meals/refreshment that are not provided.
- There are no on-campus housing available for the week.
- Students need to take care of applying for your own travel visa, if required. Please click [HERE](#) to review the entry visa requirements and determine whether you require one for entry into Singapore.
- Having sufficient insurance coverage is highly recommended.
- More details will be provided to students who are nominated by their school to participate in this program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

KEY COORDINATORS

PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

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Course Outline

Course Title : Asia Business Environments
Class Date : From 9/3/2026 To 13/3/2026
Semester : Semester 2, Academic Year 2025/2026
Faculty : Professor Ishtiaq Mahmood
Department : Strategy & Policy
Email : bizipm@nus.edu.sg
URL : <http://bizfaculty.nus.edu/faculty-profiles/32-ishtiaq-p>
Telephone : 6516-6387

Overview

This course has two main, interconnected aims. First is to introduce basic concepts of international business, which relate to how firm strategy varies across geographic contexts. A key concept in the course is that an understanding of doing business in a specific country involves consideration of two separate levels of analysis: the country perspective and the firm perspective. While these two levels of analysis significantly influence one another, it is important to consider them separately and acknowledge how they differ from one another. Second is to introduce the diversity of business environments in Asia—a range as diverse as exists in the world. There is no single Asian business environment, but instead many different environments, each of which has different implications for business strategy. It is expected that students will learn a basic set of descriptive facts about countries and top businesses in the region. Instead of looking for one “right” answer, however, this course encourages debates and discussions. Instead of being overly structured in my teaching, we attempt to leave some rooms for ambiguities that encourage students to take a more pro-active approach to their own learning.

Course Objectives

Some students enter business schools hoping to quickly pick up the tricks of the trade, without spending too much energy on the laborious task of thoroughly understanding organizations and their environments. Often, tools and techniques are more highly valued than developing a strategic problem-solving ability. However, this may lead to superficiality as there are no short-cuts to learning to think strategically. Within the field of strategy there are many contradictory paradigms. Frameworks that fit one firm may be useless for another. In this course, the emphasis is not on filling in frameworks and applying standard recipes. On the contrary, students will be expected to challenge recipes, question received wisdom, and exhibit unconventional thinking. These are objectives set for this course:

- Knowledge. To encourage the understanding of the many, often conflicting, schools of thought and to facilitate the gaining of insight into the assumptions, possibilities and limitations of each set of theories and tools;
- Skills. To develop the student's ability to think strategically, understand the language of business, craft strategies on paper and verbally in class discussion, critically reflect on existing theories and tools, to creatively combine or develop frameworks and tools and use them where useful;
- Asia – focus. To provide insights into strategies of Asian companies through cases, in-class examples, where appropriate.

Course Format and General Standards

The format of the course is based on a mixture of lecture, cases, and readings. It is my belief that understanding both practice and theory, and acquiring the skill to apply one to the other, should be the core of this course. Classes will not be used to review readings (students should prepare readings before coming to class), but will be employed to give clarifying examples, and discuss salient questions in management.

- *General standards:*
 - Active participation from students is a condition for the success of the course.
 - All course assignments will be automatically checked for plagiarism.
 - Feel free during the semester to e-mail me or approach me if you have any questions on the topics discussed in class, your individual performance, or if you would like to give feedback on the course.

Assignments

Assignments would include a combination of class participation, group project and presentation, and a final quiz.

Assessment

The final grade for this course will be computed based on the following:

Assessment Components	Weightage
Class participation	30%
Group project & presentation Final	40%
Quiz	30%

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty are essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubts, you should consult your instructor.

Additional Guidelines

- [Administrative Policies](#)
- <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>