

Edukasang Kristang

Conceptualising A First Pathway for the Tertiary-level Study of Kristang and Eurasian Language, Culture and Identity in the Singapore Education System

Kevin Martens Wong

Kabesa / Leader of the Kristang People

Omimerliang / Merlionsman of the Republic of Singapore

Tigrisoneru / Dreamtiger of the Republic of Singapore

& *Makaravedra Hierosa* / Dragon Reborn of the Holocene

1. Overview

This short paper sketches a hypothetical overview and first structure of a possible pathway for the teaching of the Kristang language, culture and identity within the Singapore Education ecosystem: a hypothetical undergraduate major in Kristang & Eurasian Studies in the National University of Singapore. The paper is therefore both very much speculative and also simultaneously grounded in presently available real-world resources, information, data and tools that could be used to generate the Kristang & Eurasian Studies major and the curricula proposed within it; the topics, focuses of study and developments are starting points that actually could be concretely undertaken by the Singapore state and/or any university in Singapore today with arguably relatively little effort.

The broad impetus for this paper, and for presenting a pipeline and pathway for the development of Kristang and other minority communities and languages in Singapore should be clear: there is strong rising interest in the reclamation of culture, heritage and positive and non-traumatic approaches to mental health and ways of being, both in Singapore and elsewhere around the world (Chong 2019, Sim & Chow 2020, Wong 2022, Lam 2023). Additionally, there is (and always has been) tremendous economic potential in the preservation and revitalisation of Singapore's indigenous cultures and ways of being, as opposed to their erosion, erasure and destruction that previously appears to have been wilfully engendered by the government of Lee Kuan Yew, in the same vein as how other elements of Singapore's built heritage have become new nodal points for community regeneration such as the Rail Corridor (Lim 2017); an extant Kampong Serani and Theatre Royal, for example, would have been able to provide so much space and centralising opportunity for new and dynamic sectors of tourism and

urban regeneration in the heart of the Central Business District, and much-needed jobs and economic opportunities for Kristang and Eurasian (and non-Kristang and non-Eurasian) people in Singapore that today are very much lacking. **No other culture anywhere in the world is like Kristang, and it is something that is unique to and still very much a part of contemporary Singapore:** the utility of celebrating its unique potential, rather than trying to destroy, malign and corrupt what it means to be Kristang, should be straightforward, basic and fundamental logic that should be obvious to any policymaker anywhere.

Education is one of the primary vehicles through which such a renegotiation of the place of Kristang and Eurasian culture, identity, heritage and language can and should be invited; it should also take place in parallel with larger shifts in how Singapore in general responds to the needs and interests of millennials, Generation Z and Generation Alpha, especially with regards to the articulation, negotiation and negation of the trauma and abuse in much of Singapore's elided history, the recognition, validation and institutional protection of Singaporean LGBTQ+ identities and ways of being, and the overturning of outdated and sterile ways of being Singaporean and developing what it means to be a Singaporean nation that today continue to stymie and impede the growth of the collective.

2. A hypothetical Bachelor of Arts in Kristang & Eurasian Studies programme

The speculative Bachelor of Arts in Kristang & Eurasian Studies programme is thus presented as an example of one new form of creole, indigenous and minority language education in the following manner based primarily on reference points and contexts I am most familiar with at time of writing in July 2024 (e.g. the choice of NUS as the host university in this exercise is largely because I am a graduate of NUS and am familiar with their systems and processes the most out of all the universities). The programme is presented as a full undergraduate major in parallel to and in dialogue with the other area studies programmes that NUS currently offers, especially for the three supraethnic categories of Chinese, Malay and Indian: Chinese Studies, Malay Studies and South Asian Studies, with a much stronger focus on the latter two since Kristang is also a minority culture and identity. The proposed programme name is double-barrelled, with Kristang preceding Eurasian, since Kristang culture and identity is arguably the most substantial core of contemporary Eurasian culture and identity in Singapore today, to the extent that Kristang is now more or less identified as *the* Eurasian mother tongue in government material showcasing the various cultures of Singapore (e.g. Somaiah & Zhuang 2024); at the same time, there are elements of Eurasian culture that go beyond Kristang, and which also merit scholarly analysis and exploration. Table 1 overleaf consolidates the proposed list of modules that would form the Bachelor of Arts in Kristang & Eurasian Studies programme.

Single Major (BA (Hons)) in Kristang & Eurasian Studies

Pass at least 60 units of KE or KE-recognised courses (including Kristang language courses coded LANnnnn), which include

1. KE1101E and KE1102E
2. a minimum of 36 units at level-3000 or higher with
 - a. a minimum of 20 units at level-4000 or higher
3. a maximum of 8 units of Kristang, Malay, German or French language courses offered by CLS

Level	Code	Title	Credits	Strand	Remarks
1000	KE1101E	The Spice of Life: Building Blocks of the Eurasian Experience	4	Eurasian	Exposure module, compulsory
	KE1102E	Ardansa: An Introduction to Kristang Studies	4	Kristang	Exposure module, compulsory
	LAN1201	Kristang 1	4	Kristang	Language module
2000	KE2210	Lower Six & Upper Ten: Class in Eurasian Society	4	Eurasian	
	KE2211	Eurasian Music: Genres, Styles, Performers	4	Eurasian	
	KE2212	Sports in Eurasian Culture	4	Eurasian	
	KE2213	Introduction to Eurasian Literature	4	Eurasian	
	KE2214	Pidih kung Deus: Eurasian Religion and Spirituality	4	Eurasian	
	KE2216	Eurasians in the World Wars	4	Eurasian	
	KE2217	Eurasian Families: Home is Where the Heart Is	4	Eurasian	
	KE2221	Playing Portuguese: The Core of Kristang?	4	Kristang	
	KE2222	Kristang in the Nusantara: The Malay Substratum	4	Kristang	
	KE2223	The Kristang 17th century	4	Kristang	
	KE2224	Korpu, Mulera, Korsang & Alma: Well-Being and the Kristang Quaternity of Personhood	4	Kristang	
	KE2225	Kristang Art and Performance	4	Kristang	
	KE2911	Kumih Bong-Bong: Introduction to Kristang and Eurasian Cuisine	4	Both	
	LAN2201	Kristang 2	4	Kristang	Language module

Level	Code	Title	Credits	Strand	Remarks
3000	KE3210	The Political Life of the Eurasians	4	Eurasian	
	KE3211	Eurasians in the Public Sphere	4	Eurasian	
	KE3212	Eurasian Neighbourhoods of Singapore and Malaya	4	Eurasian	
	KE3213	Rex Shelley: Works and Ways of Becoming	4	Eurasian	
	KE3214	Eurasian Literature since the 1990s	4	Eurasian	
	KE3219	The Eurasian Diaspora: Roots, Reach and Relevance	4	Eurasian	
	KE3221	Introduction to Uncertainty Thinking	4	Kristang	
	KE3222	Dreamfishing: Theory & Praxis	4	Kristang	<i>Prereq:</i> LAN1201 and EL1101E
	KE3223	Kristang Approaches to Logic and Mathematics	4	Kristang	<i>Prereq:</i> Pass in GCE O-Level Additional Mathematics and/or Physics
	KE3224	Time and Space in Kristang: An Introduction to Kristang Metaphysics	4	Kristang	<i>Prereq:</i> Pass in GCE O-Level Physics
	KE3225	Portuguese Creoles and Creole Cultures of Asia and Southeast Asia	4	Kristang	
	KE3226	The World(s) of Padri sa Chang: Exploring the Portuguese Settlement of Melaka	4	Kristang	
	KE3227	Discourses of Kristang Revitalisation	4	Kristang	
	KE3660	Creative Work in Kristang for Revitalisation	4	Kristang	ISM-coded
	KE3911	Macanese Culture, Identity and Language	4	Both	
	KE3912	Portuguese Influence in Timor-Leste: Past, Present and Future	4	Both	
KE3913	Speculative Eurasian Futures	4	Both		

Level	Code	Title	Credits	Strand	Remarks
4000	KE4211	Others Was Once A Race: Othering in Kristang and Eurasian Traditions	4	Eurasian	Compulsory module for Honours students
	KE4212	Kristang and Eurasian Festivals and Festivities	4	Both	
	KE4221	Trauma, Abuse and the Postcolonial in Kristang	4	Kristang	
	KE4222	Semantics in Kristang	4	Kristang	<i>Prereq: KE3222</i>
	KE4223	Roda Mundansa: The Kristang Wheel of World Movement	4	Kristang	
	KE4224	The Kristang Body	4	Kristang	
	KE4225	Neurodivergence and Mental Health in Kristang	4	Kristang	
	KE4880A	The Devil and the Infernal in Kristang	4	Kristang	
	KE4880B	Kristang and Eurasian Gender and Sexuality	4	Both	
	KE4401	Honours Thesis	8	Both	
	KE4600	Independent Study	4	Both	

Table 1: Speculative programme requirements for a Bachelor of Arts in Kristang & Eurasian Studies programme at the National University of Singapore

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