

When Teeth Blend into Culture



What do most non-dental students or practitioners think about the study of dentistry? “Most of them may think dentistry is a boring and bloody subject,” described Dr Andy Yeung, Tutor in Radiography of Applied Oral Sciences & Community Dental Care.

In a bid to improve public perception on dental studies, Professor Bornstein, former Clinical Professor in Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology,

proposed a course “Smile! Teeth and Society”. Dr Mike Leung, Associate Professor in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Dr Andy Yeung, Dr Pradeep Singh and Dr Marlene Grillon from Applied Oral Sciences & Community Dental Care teamed up to further realise the course.

Dr Leung recounted that the initiative of this course was to share the fun part of dentistry related topics



From left: Dr Andy Yeung, Dr Pradeep Singh and Dr Marlene Grillon

to non-dental university students. The course covers a wide aspect of knowledge from basic dental knowledge and anatomy to the concept of beauty and aesthetics. “We hope to share some concepts related to dentistry that are also useful in broadening the knowledge of the holistic university education,” said Dr Leung.

In 2019/2020, “Smile! Teeth and Society” became one of courses under Common Core Scientific and Technological Literacy, with the course code (CCST9072). “We were impressed to see the extraordinary interest for our courses and that more than 100 students have decided to participate. We registered students of diverse educational backgrounds, but all united by the same interest for dentistry,” mentioned Dr Grillon.

Course Co-ordinator cum lecturer, Dr Andy Yeung, guest lecturers from diverse backgrounds and tutors - Dr Singh and Dr Grillon aimed to guide students to explore how literature, cinema, history, biology, anatomy, pathology, catastrophic events, and cultural diversity have been shaped or driven by teeth, face and smile.

Dr Yeung believes the course is a good channel to promote oral health among undergraduates across HKU. It also allows them to “know more about the interesting side of dentistry, so that they can better relate dentistry to the world,” he said.

Know more about the interesting side of dentistry, so that they can better relate dentistry to the world

- DR ANDY YEUNG

Dr Singh and Dr Grillon prepared study material, presentations for the tutorials, organised tutorials and taught the basic concepts of dentistry, responded to course related queries, evaluated assignments etc. “The tutorials are opportunities for students to express themselves in a collaborative environment,” said Dr Grillon.

Approaching the end of the course, lecturers and tutors gave freedom to students to present their thoughts on how the society or culture have been shaped by teeth or smile. The individual reflective project could be presented in comic, magazine, song, poster etc. “Creativity and knowledge assimilation are good for their study, regardless of their background,” cited Dr Yeung.

THINK OUT OF THE BOX

Top six assignments were selected and posted on webpage commoncore.hku.hk/sif1920s2/ccst9072/



FACULTY HIGHLIGHT



Above: Jonah Ng,
Biomedical
Sciences student



Comic: **KNOCKOUTS**

It was created by Mr Jonah Ng. As a Biomedical Sciences student, he would like to pick a course related to science. Later he found that this course looked at more than just the biological aspect of dentistry. He appreciated the teaching methods which approach the subject from different angles and bring a lot of depth to it. It has changed his preconceived notions of dentistry and teeth. "We also approached the topic on teeth by looking at art, cinema, literature, sociology and forensics sciences. Through these angles, I was able to learn about and see teeth and dentistry in a whole new light," he mentioned.

He was thankful to have different knowledgeable lecturers who not only trivialized the many complicated concepts introduced in each lecture, but also helped make each lesson engaging.

Regarding his idea on creating a comic as assignment, "I was inspired by some of the comics that I have read during my free time, mainly Jojo's Bizarre Adventure..... I tied in the storyline with some of the concepts I learnt in this course," he explained. The comic is a story set in the 1800s, with information on teeth anatomy, various types of teeth and their function. With his passion on comic, he was determined to draw all the frames and art by hand. He managed to finish a page every week, starting a month before the deadline. His effort paid off.



It reminded me of the popular Japanese manga, One-Punch Man. The idea of a tooth hunter in boxing games is very interesting. – Dr Yeung



A well depicted story set in the 1800s, with information on teeth anatomy, different types of teeth and their function, and additional facts. A wonderful piece of artwork, graphics, story-telling skills combined with the dental information. – Dr Singh

To view his project, please visit:
drive.google.com/file/d/1ya1LfiOFjosOfE3ILSibDmnS7p5baEyw/view



Magazine: SMILE

It was produced by Architecture student, Ms Nicole Wong. She found the course description interesting and decided to give it a try. Luckily the description was not just promotional lines. Instead, the course provides basics information of tooth (anatomy, functions, types, maintenance, etc.), allows exploration of healthy and aesthetic teeth and covers mythologies and films about the typical stereotypes in dentistry.

She recommended others to take the course. "The lectures are enjoyable, and the tutorial sessions are fun and interactive. Dr Andy Yeung was kind and humorous. We were also lucky to have different guest speakers every week to cover various topics. The concepts are easy to understand, and you can even have the chance to watch videos of the surgical process of dental treatments."

For the assignment, she chose to create a magazine to cover all her points. She interviewed her friends on their experience with tooth braces and expressed her thoughts through the editor's letter.



Above: Nicole Wong's magazine



An exemplar magazine. Great piece to be read at beauty salons. – Dr Yeung



I must say a good editor in making. A very well structured, edited, organised, and beautifully presented magazine. – Dr Singh

To view her project, please visit:
facdent.hku.hk/courses/2019/CCST9072/Nicole_Magazine.pdf



Article: **TEETH AND SMILE IN ANCIENT CHINA**

It was written by Biomedical Sciences student, Ms Yeung Tsz Yi, who enrolled in the course with the vision to broaden her horizon on dentistry. “On the academic side, e.g. anatomy, prosthodontics and odontology, there were topics I have rarely or never touched on. On the other side, I got to know more about the literature analysis of dentistry and teeth, and most surprisingly: the teeth of dinosaurs. It reminded me of the importance of thinking out of the box. Learning about medical related topics can be fun and enriches our knowledge,” said Ms Yeung.

According to her, the teachers and tutors were enthusiastic about introducing dental knowledge and answered their every question in great details patiently. She was especially impressed by the guest lecture on prosthodontics. Dr Adrian Hon’s interactive lecture video with the unforgettable Tom Cruise teeth shifting was one of the many reasons why she enjoyed the course so much. “The learning activities are more interactive and creative than other common cores..... the coursework is not burdensome but rewarding and relaxing. I had fun finding and learning more about certain topics chosen by myself”, she added.

Being a Chinese history lover, she combined her interest and dental history in her assignment. In

ancient time, Chinese did not cut their hair as an expression of filial piety, so they might not have a barber who also acted as a dentist as in western society. Hence, she tried to find out what jobs and occupations in the past took care of people’s teeth. She found compelling facts regarding dentistry in China, including the fact that Confucius had bulk teeth and the presence of amalgam filling techniques. She turned the research into an article.



An amazing piece of work. A fusion of language, history and science.
– **Dr Yeung**



A comprehensive research about smile and ancient Chinese culture compiled in a well-structured, superbly written and beautifully presented article.
– **Dr Singh**

To view her project, please visit:
drive.google.com/file/d/1BB89fYh_8CdMrAcdoqL5cwpoq3a2eHF/view



Above:
Yeung Tsz Yi,
Biomedical
Sciences student



Colgate®



2 Weeks
Helps Reduce
Gum Bleeding*

Biofilm Control
Gum Natural Defense
Technology



*Caused by plaque

Dual-Zinc + Arginine Technology Breakthrough

Poster-Song: **THE GOLDEN PROPORTION**



A musical, in the poster form, depicting the characteristics of a beautiful smile by Ms Choy Yan Kiu, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.



A marvelous song for revision. Energising! – **Dr Yeung**



It's a unique blend of artwork poetry. A musical, in the poster form, depicting the characteristics of a beautiful smile. – **Dr Singh**

To view her project, please visit:
drive.google.com/file/d/12zwwg_WhVixKbS--yHBZWf5CYvjkyVa9J/view



Poster: **A BRIEF HISTORY OF TEETH AND BEAUTY**

A brief history of teeth associated cultural practices in different civilizations, by Ms Leung Angie Lok Sze, Bachelor of Dental Surgery.



A wonderful piece of poster/leaflet. Ready to be distributed with a global focus. – **Dr Yeung**



This poster is a very good example to showcase the detailed research and the hard work that takes to make an attractive and informative poster. – **Dr Singh**

To view her project, please visit:
drive.google.com/file/d/1_On8w4niYdzzNPEGLR1WL8ELO6cg-a40/view



Poster: BRUSH AND FLOSS OR PREPARE FOR LOSS

A poster illustrating the importance of proper brushing and flossing technique by Ms Lau Nga Yee, Bachelor of Dental Surgery.



Catchy poster with nice graphics. Great for oral health promotion to kids.

– Dr Yeung



A simple poster with a powerful impact illustrating the importance of proper brushing and flossing technique.

– Dr Singh

To view her project, please visit:
drive.google.com/file/d/1h0WwoXDZwEJvpxspCn_hvqhxYqhKVU0/view



“Throughout the tutorials the students have demonstrated great motivation, dedication and we could clearly see the group improving their knowledge in dentistry. The top six assignments are a testimony to the students’ creativity,” mentioned Dr Grillon.

Dr Singh stressed that there were several projects that deserved to be showcased at the Common Core Student Festival, however due to the limited number of entries, they could only select just six. He summed, “The exemplary work shown by the students from diverse educational backgrounds testifies the interests and the understanding towards the subject.”

SEE YOU IN SPRING

The course concluded with positive feedback. Dr Singh stated that there were few students enrolled within this course not only from different educational background but also with special educational needs, “they are motivated to learn

about smile and teeth. Making the subject enjoyable and easily understandable to those students through online teaching was the most memorable encounter,” he said.

“When students learn that the white colour of barber’s pole represents the tooth pulling service provided by barbers during the Medieval period, they were pretty amazed,” smiled Dr Yeung. The only blemish was that they were unable to take a group photo since classes were conducted via zoom due to COVID-19.

The next course will be in 2021 Spring, with a wish of face-to-face teaching and learning. If you are interested in the course, don’t miss it! The team cannot wait to meet every one of you.

To learn more about the course, please visit:
commoncore.hku.hk/ccst9072

