The exchange program at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) was a marvelous experience. The education system in HKUST was somewhat new to us because it follows the US system of teaching whereby professors do the lectures and Teaching Assistants do tutorials in contrast to our British system in Singapore where all is done by Professors. It is also a more independent system because we were only lectured on the basic principles and theories and were required to do a lot of self-study in order to understand the materials. We were given strong practical exposure to our courses through the challenging projects that we did. The course assessment focused more on monthly assignments and projects rather than final examinations. The professors and the students are all very friendly and helpful and we greatly appreciated their guidance. We made quite a lot of friends among the Hong Kong students and other exchange students from USA, Europe and China. It was a very enriching experience because we learned and exchanged cultures from each other. It is through such an inter-cultural exchange that we are able to interact and get closer to the local people and understanding their lifestyles. During our exchange period in Hong Kong, we visited many places of interest such as, Ocean Park, Lantau Island (Temple of Buddha with a Thousand Hands), Shenzhen (for cheap shopping), Macau (for mouth-watering Portuguese egg tarts) and many more. Hong Kong is actually similar to Singapore because of its high-rise buildings that are rather close to each other. However their way of life is very different, for example their habit of walking in the streets until very late at night, and their dislike of spicy food. They are always in a rush when walking from one point to another, whereas in Singapore our pace was more "relaxed".

The two most popular activities are karaoke and betting on horses. I would recommend visiting the Happy Valley Race Course for just an eye opener. I was also quite surprised that even though they were a British colony for 150 years, the use of English language in business and at home is still, in general, uncommon. Fortunately, coming from a Cantonese family I had no problems in communicating. I think it is a good idea for anyone intending to stay there to pick up a little bit of Cantonese first. In conclusion, I would say that I had a very enriching and valuable experience in Hong Kong and can strongly recommend Hong Kong as a destination to all exchange students.

---

Lai Ping Cheong
EEE 3