Interview with Dr. Gilbert Yeoh

When and what prompted you to start using video and audio elements in your teaching?

For GEK2020, I have used video and audio elements from the very start, since the course is on film. Using audio-visual elements in this sense is not a choice. In my course, I hope to make students appreciate better how the medium of film--its visual and aural elements--can be used intelligently, imaginatively and creatively.

Does the use of video and audio elements meet your expectation in terms of conveying your message?

Yes, it does. Students find visual elements more accessible so it is easier to convey the points I wish to make about these visual images. When I teach a course on literature, I find that it is slightly more difficult to convey the points that I wish to convey since the verbal text is more abstract and less immediate.

Does it increase students' interest in the subject?
Again, yes. Using visual images does increase the students' interest in the subject. Visuals are very helpful in eliciting the interest of the students.

What are the pros and cons in their usage?

The pros about accessibility and stimulating interest have been stated above.

In terms of the cons, it is possible that visuals tend to simplify the message. For example, when I teach a literature course and when I use a film adaptation of a novel, I find that the film tends to simplify and dilute the original novel. The film tends to simplify the ideas in the novel. So I tend to hope that students, after having their interest sparked by the film, will then go on to explore how the ideas in the film are actually presented in a more complex form in the novel.

In your opinion, what can be done to further improve your teaching experience? (E.g. environment, technology or any other elements)

I feel that the support that I have in terms of the IT and technological equipment is currently good and sufficient. I don't have any major wishes except perhaps that the lecture timetable will allow students to arrive at lecture punctually. I generally find students who walk into the LT late, after the lecture has started, to be disruptive (both to my train of thought and to the students' attention). This is a minor point regarding the teaching environemnt.

I also feel that students should be doing only 4 modules per term. The lighter workload will allow them to concentrate more on the modules they are taking.

These are minor points and overall I believe most of the elements are adequately in place to support teaching in NUS.