

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 科目簡介

COURSES FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

SOC501 Social Policy Analysis: Comparative Perspectives (3 credits)

This course consists of a weekly lecture and tutorial (3hrs), which explore the field of ‘social policy analysis’. Social policy analysis can be broken down into five key areas: (1) ageing, families and the life course; (2) education, employment and life-long learning; (3) health, well-being and social care; (4) housing, spatial differentiation and urban planning; (5) welfare regimes and governance. The analysis of each of these key areas comprises three constituent elements dealing with distinct but related tiers of knowledge: the broad macro-level context (such as the changing structure of society, globalisation, and new forms of governance,); the micro-level implementation level of policies (i.e. how policy is formulated and delivered by individuals); and the meso-level dealing with structures and processes sitting between the macro- and micro-levels (e.g. political institutions, policy networks, and policy learning).

SOC502 Comparative Social Policy Research Methods (3 credits) (deleted from 2021-22)

This course begins with a broad overview of the reasons why we might want to compare social policy, how we might compare its key pillars, such as education, employment, social security, housing and health care and the problems that can occur when we do. The remaining sessions are then based around a consideration of comparative data provided by international organisations, including OECD, World Bank, UNESCO offering students the opportunity to explore the mixed economies of these pillars and the key structural changes occurring in the context of increasing internationalisation through ‘hands on’ exercises.

SOC503 Understanding Social Indicators and Social Policies (3 credits) (deleted from 2021-22)

A good understanding of the nature, measurement, and limitations of major social indicators used internationally is crucial for one to be able to comprehend and assess social policies. Students will learn to apply these indicators in understanding and comparing social policies cross-nationally.

SOC504 Comparative Social Policy in Greater China and East Asia (3 credits)

This course introduces students to social policy concepts and theories, with particular attention given to the comparison of the social, economic, demographic changes taking place in the Greater China and East Asian regions. More specifically, this course critically examines major social policy challenges confronting societies in Greater China and Asia, examining how governments, markets and civil societies in the region respond to such challenges in adopting social policy policies appropriate for managing rapid changes. One major feature of this course is social policy issues are addressed through case examples and accompanied by concrete analyses based on policy practices of societies in the region. Adopting a comparative approach in analysing policy formation and implementation, together with the collaborative learning activities, this course will enable students to understand the most recent developments related to poverty alleviation, education, health, social security, and housing policies in Greater China and East Asia.

SOC505 Globalisation, Policy and Society (3 credits)

This course focuses on several key topics in social development in East Asia and the rest of the world, with particular reference to analyse how education and social policy have been affected by the growing trends of globalisation. The course takes an explicitly comparative approach with each of the issues examined through case studies of societies located in East Asia like Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China, Japan, Korea and Singapore, critically examining how the globalising economy and the growing tide of neo-liberalism have affected educational social policy change. Largely student-centered, the course is structured around student-guided discussions of assigned readings, with the goal of encouraging the drawing of conclusions about important social issues from the comparison of different cases, such as the massification of higher education, youth unemployment, youth transitions and social mobility. Through preparation for discussions, organising group presentations and completing written assignments, students will develop independent inquiry skills to explore the interrelationships between education and social policy and social phenomena.

SOC506 Policy Research and Evaluation Design (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the role of research in evidence-based policy and practice. It gives an overview of the use of research in different stages of the policy process and explains the fundamental elements of a robust research design. Students will learn about the rationale of different research methods and their applications in policy research and evaluation in promoting social change.

SOC601 Governance, Management and Delivery (3 credits)

This course is designed to explore how the nature of governance, management, and delivery differs across the globe and how such differences shape the policy making process. Much of the teaching in this course will be based around the analysis of case studies and the assessment builds directly on these.

SOC602 Dialogue with Policy Practitioners: Theory and Practice (3 credits)

This course provides opportunities for students to dialogue with policy practitioners with expertise in a few major social and public policy areas, namely, education, health, housing and social security. Special lectures, class discussions, field visits, seminars will be organised for students. More specifically, students will be engaged in field observations and field visits to related government offices, political parties, research and policy institutes, NGOs and other economic and social organisations, including the Central Policy Unit, the Committee of Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, Hospital Authority, Eldly Commission, and Hong Kong Council of Social Service. In addition, the course will also invite some experts in social policy to give lectures about their studies. Senior retired government officials or key chief-executives of NGOs will be invited to share their management experiences in social/public policy.

**SOC603 Regional Policy Study and Visit in Greater China and East Asia (3 credits)
(deleted from 2019-20)**

In collaboration with major universities in Taiwan, Mainland China, Macau and East Asia, special lectures and class discussions, professional visits and cultural tours will be organised for students. In selected Asian societies, students will be engaged in field observations and field visits to develop a more critical understanding of development, policy and governance issues through their active participation in and personal experience and critical reflection. More specifically, this course is an intensive and experiential unit, which provides a platform for students to study Greater China and East Asia beyond classroom. Through critical examination of different groups' and individuals' experiences (such as urban poor/working

poor, migrants, women, university students and elderly people) under rapid socio-economic and institutional changes and how these groups react to and interact with different institutions (such as governmental departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, and interest groups, etc), student learning experience will be enhanced through theory-field experience integration and reflection.

SOC604 Asia Pacific Comparative Development and Policy Symposium (3 credits)

Each year the IMCSP programme offers its students an opportunity to join an international academic policy symposium in the Asia Pacific in collaboration with its local and international partners. While the exact theme of the symposium may vary, this course will engage students to examine social and public policy, management and governance issues and allow them to actively enhance their learning and research experiences. Throughout the symposium, which usually last between 2-3 days, students will have the opportunity to engage with essential methodological, theoretical as well as practical lessons from leading researchers in comparative social policy, development, and governance. Besides attending the symposium, student learning will be facilitated in several accompanying special seminars asking students to summarise the major points that they have learned during this international event, to improve their academic writing and literature search skills, and to reflect on how the themes learned from the international symposium are connected to their chosen research projects/interests.

SOC605 Comparative Social Policy Research Project (6 credits)

This is an individually supervised and executed research project where students will demonstrate their knowledge, skills and analytical abilities in the area of comparative social policy through the execution of a research topic of their choice. The report produced should observe standards and requirements of academic writing and style.

SOC606 Comparative Social Indicators and Research Methods (3 credits)

This required course begins with a broad overview of the nature, measurement, and limitations of major social indicators used in comparative social policy analysis. Students will then learn to apply these indicators by ‘actively comparing’ data provided by international organisations, including the United Nations, OECD, World Bank, UNESCO. As such, the course is underpinned by a series of interrelated ‘hands on’ data workshops that require students to explore and interpret social indicators relating to social policy. Weekly exercises will allow students to test the validity of arguments put forward by key theorists in comparative social policy analysis and to explore some of the methodological difficulties involved in conducting comparative research.

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