

Course Title	:	Social Policy Analysis: Comparative Perspectives
Course Code	:	SOC501
Recommended Study Year	:	Taught Master Year 1
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture and Group Seminar
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	:	MSocSci in Comparative Social Policy (International)
Discipline	:	Sociology and Social Policy
Prerequisite(s)	:	N/A
Co-requisite(s)	:	N/A
Exclusion(s)	:	N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	:	N/A

Brief Course Description

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).

Aims

1. To introduce the key concepts, techniques and theories employed in the social policy and the policy process literature, respectively; and
2. To apply this knowledge to specific challenges and dilemmas facing social policy in comparative perspective.

Learning Outcomes (Los):

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Be familiar with the key concepts and ideologies of social policy;
2. Understand the role of economic, political, and social factors shaping social policy in different countries;
3. Identify the complex issues surrounding the formation, implementation and evaluation of social policies across the globe;
4. Appreciate the institutional and organizational contexts that shape the process by which social policies are made in comparative perspective.

Indicative Contents

- 1.1 What is social policy analysis?
- 1.2 Political economy of social policy
- 1.3 The productive and protective dimensions of social policy
- 1.4 Institutions and institutional change
- 1.5 Governance
- 1.6 Policy Networks
- 1.7 Policy Learning
- 1.8 Policy implementation
- 1.9 Policy Evaluation

Teaching Method

One weekly lecture and tutorial (3hrs)

Assessment

Practice Essay	10%
Group Presentation	30%
Essay	60%

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Practice Essay 10%	<p>Students will be asked to complete a short practice essay following the open book approach (i.e. students will be allowed to refer to their class notes, textbooks, or other approved “memory aids” while answering questions). The practice essay is designed to provide formative feedback.</p> <p>Grading of the practice essay is based on the marking rubric provided on <i>Page 4</i> of this course outline.</p>
Group Presentation 30%	<p>In weeks 7-12, lectures are followed by group presentations. Students will be asked to present summaries of two key readings provided to them in advance. They will also be asked to complement these readings with their own peer-reviewed case study materials. Presenters are asked to speak for around 20 minutes, to use visual aids where appropriate and to provide a brief hand-out (one or two sides of A4) summarising the key points of their presentation.</p> <p>Grading of the group presentation is based on the marking rubric provided on <i>Page 5</i> of this course outline.</p>
Essay 60%	<p>Students are required to complete one essay of no more than 4,000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices). Essay questions will be provided to students in advance and cover key theories and literatures discussed over the course of the module.</p> <p>Grading of the summative essay is based on the marking rubric provided on <i>Page 4</i> of this course outline.</p>

<i>Assessment</i>	LO1: Understand the key concepts and ideologies of comparative social policy	LO2: Understand the role of economic, political, and social factors shaping social policy in different countries	LO3: 3. Identify the complex issues surrounding the formation, implementation and evaluation of social policies across the globe	LO4: Appreciate the institutional and organizational contexts which shape the process by which social policies are made in comparative perspective
<i>Practice essay (10%)</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>		
<i>Group presentation (30%)</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Summative essay (60%)</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>

Readings

The key text for this course is Hudson, J. and Lowe, S. (2009) *Understanding the Policy Process: Analysing Welfare Policy & Practice* (Second Edition, Bristol: Policy Press). It contains chapters relating to all of the weekly sessions and we recommend that students read the whole book during the course.

Other academic texts on policy analysis on the course reserve list include:

- Birkland, T. (2010). *An introduction to the policy process : Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making* (3rd ed.). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Cairney, P. (2012) *Understanding Public Policy*. London: Palgrave.
- Colebatch, H. (2009) *Policy*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Hill, M. (1997). *The policy process : A reader* (2nd ed.). London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Hill, M. and Varone, F. (2016) *The Public Policy Process*. London: Routledge.
- John, P. (2012) *Analysing Public Policy*. London: Routledge.
- Parsons, D. (1995). *Public policy : An introduction to the theory and practice of policy analysis*. Aldershot, Hants.: Edward Elgar Pub.
- Sabatier, Weible, Weible, Christopher M, & Ebooks Corporation. (2014). *Theories of the Policy Process* (3rd ed.). New York: Westview Press.
- Wu, X., Howlett, M., & Fritzen, S. (2010). *The public policy primer : Managing the policy process*(Routledge textbooks in policy studies). London ; New York: Routledge.

Students new to the study of *Social Policy Analysis* will find it useful to first consult Hudson, J., Kühner, S. and Lowe, S. (2015) *The Short Guide to Social Policy* (Second Edition, Bristol: Policy Press) as this text is written at an introductory level and with an international audience in mind.

Other key social policy textbooks for this course are:

- Alcock, P., Haux, T., May, M. and Wright, S. (Eds) (2016) *The Student's Companion to Social Policy*. Fifth Edition, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bochel, H. and Daly, G. (Eds) (2014) *Social Policy*. Third Edition. London: Prentice Hall.

Important Notes

- (1) Students are expected to spend a **total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week** to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>

Marking rubric for practice & summative essay:

Grade		Understanding of topic	Use of evidence	Critical analysis	Structure of argument	Writing and referencing
A A- 80-100	Excellent	<i>Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed. Clearly answers the question.</i>	<i>Wide range of evidence used to support arguments. Thoroughly researched. Use of primary sources.</i>	<i>Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues. Shows original thinking and analysis.</i>	<i>Clear structure. Presents a convincing and well developed argument.</i>	<i>Thorough referencing throughout. Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.</i>
B+ B B- 65-79	Good	<i>Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject. Answers the question.</i>	<i>Good use of evidence to support arguments.</i>	<i>Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.</i>	<i>Clear structure. Develops a sound argument.</i>	<i>Generally uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.</i>
C+ C C- 50-64	Fair	<i>Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.</i>	<i>Adequate range of evidence used. Could have drawn on more suitable evidence.</i>	<i>More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.</i>	<i>Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.</i>	<i>Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.</i>
D+ D 40-49	Pass	<i>Superficial coverage and understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.</i>	<i>Relies on limited range of sources. Has not been thoroughly researched.</i>	<i>Too descriptive. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.</i>	<i>Arguments not clear. Structure is not clear. Some repetition. Little clear linkage from point to point.</i>	<i>Referencing is inconsistent. Writing skills need considerable improvement. Sentence structure needs work. Needed proof reading.</i>
F 0-39	Failure	<i>Very little or no understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question.</i>	<i>Inadequate use of evidence to support argument. No use of evidence to support argument</i>	<i>Describes the issues but shows significant misunderstanding of basic issues.</i>	<i>Poor structure. No clear argument. No clear linkage from point to point.</i>	<i>Not referenced correctly. Poor writing skills. Needed proof reading.</i>

Marking rubric for group presentation:

Grade		Structure or presentation	Substantive content	Use of evidence	Visual aids including charts	Time management	Audience engagement
A A- 80-100	Excellent	<i>Consistently clear, concise, well organised. Points were easy to follow. Transitions between sections smooth and coordinated.</i>	<i>Displayed an excellent grasp of the material. Excellent research depth.</i>	<i>Key points supported with evidence critically evaluated. Data in charts is analysed thoroughly and critically and linked to the literature.</i>	<i>Simple, clear, easy to interpret, easy to read. Well coordinated with content, well designed, used very effectively. Excellent example of how to prepare and use good visual aids.</i>	<i>Perfectly timed, delivery of material very well paced.</i>	<i>Excellent stage presence. Confident, used notes well, at ease, excellent gestures, good audience attention, good eye contact.</i>
B+ B B- 65-79	Good	<i>Usually clear, concise, well organised. Most of the presentation was easy to follow. Transitions between sections usually coordinated.</i>	<i>Displayed a general grasp of the material. Good research depth..</i>	<i>Most points illustrated with relevant evidence. Data in charts is analysed in detail and good links are made to the literature</i>	<i>Usually clear, easy to interpret, easy to read. Generally well coordinated with content, design was okay, generally used effectively. Demonstrated generally reasonable understanding of how to use visual aids.</i>	<i>Well organised, more or less to time and with delivery of material in the main well paced.</i>	<i>Good stage presence. Fairly confident, used notes fairly well, good gestures, acceptable audience attention and eye contact.</i>
C+ C C- 50-64	Fair	<i>Not always clear or concise. Organization was adequate, but weak. Occasionally wandered and was sometimes difficult to follow. Transitions between sections weak.</i>	<i>Displayed some grasp of the material. Research not very deep.</i>	<i>Analysis of charts is variable and in some instances the charts presented may not represent the best evidence to support the narrative.</i>	<i>Acceptable, but with many of the most common flaws such overly complex and/or crowded content, and material difficult to read or interpret. Adequate coordination with content. Showed moderate understanding of how to prepare and use visual aids.</i>	<i>Delivery of material rushed and/or ran out of time before covering all parts of presentation</i>	<i>Adequate stage presence. Read parts, fumbled with notes, several distracting mannerisms, minimal gestures, minimal eye contact, too many 'ums'.</i>
D+ D 40-49	Pass	<i>Often unclear and disorganized, rambled too much. The presentation was confusing and difficult to follow. Transitions between sections awkward.</i>	<i>Displayed a weak grasp of the material. Little depth of research.</i>	<i>Little-to-no linkage between the charts used and the wider narrative and literature. Inappropriate measures and styles adopted in the charts.</i>	<i>Poor quality visual aids, hard to read, technically inaccurate, poorly constructed. Poor coordination with content. Used poorly. The presenters did not seem to know how to prepare or use visual aids effectively.</i>	<i>Significantly under time or significantly over time. Disorganised delivery.</i>	<i>Poor stage presence. Unprepared, awkward, shuffled papers, poor eye contact, lots of 'ums', turned from audience to read overheads, shuffled feet, fidgeted. Poor gestures.</i>
F 0-39	Failure	<i>No discernable structure.</i>	<i>No narrative, errors presented, no reference to literature</i>	<i>No linkage between narrative, literature, and data.</i>	<i>No visual aids used, representing a failure to address the assessment criteria.</i>	<i>Extremely poor time management inappropriate for level of assessment.</i>	<i>No real stage presence combined with inability to answer questions posed by panel.</i>