

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.	:	Master of Social Sciences 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 from a 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 organisational contexts that shape the process by which social policies are made from a comparative perspective.

Indicative Contents

1. What is social policy analysis?
2. The political economy of social policy
3. The productive and protective dimensions of social policy
4. Institutions and institutional change
5. Governance
6. Policy Networks
7. Policy Learning
8. Policy Implementation
9. Policy Evaluation

Teaching Method

One weekly lecture and tutorial (3hrs)

Assessment Weightings

Tutorial Participation	15%
AI Text Evaluation	15%
Group Presentation	20%
Research Essay	50%

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Tutorial Participation 15%	<p>Preparation of tutorial materials is important to develop students' general understanding and instrumental for their ability to contribute to completing smaller-scale tutorial tasks and discussions of group presentations.</p> <p>Grading of tutorial participation will put particular attention on students' frequency of participation, quality of contributions, and listening skills.</p>
Generative AI Text Evaluation 15%	<p>Students will be provided with a short essay generated by ChatGPT (including all prompts that resulted in the output) and asked to write-up an evaluation of the AI generative texts' originality and rigour in no more than 1,000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices) which is designed to provide formative feedback.</p> <p>Grading of the practice essay is based on the marking rubric provided on Page 5 of this course syllabus.</p>
Group Presentation 20%	<p>In weeks 7-12, lectures are followed by group presentations. Students will be asked to present summaries of 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 15 minutes, to use visual aids and where appropriate to provide a brief hand-out summarising the key points of their presentation. The presentation will be directly followed by a Q&A session which will further test the students' understanding of key theories and concepts included in their presentation.</p> <p>Grading of the group presentation is based on the marking rubric provided on Page 6 of this course syllabus.</p>
Research Essay 50%	<p>Students are required to complete one research essay of no more than 4,000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices). Essay questions will be provided to students in advance and require them to discuss a concrete policy example provided by the course instructor while covering key theories and literature discussed throughout the course. All students will be required to declare the use of generative AI tools in the preparation of the research essay and submit a full list of prompts used in ChatGPT in an Appendix to the research essay (if applicable).</p> <p>Grading of the summative essay is based on the marking rubric provided on Page 7 of this course syllabus.</p>

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Assessment	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 organisational contexts which shape the process by which social policies are made from a comparative perspective
Tutorial participation (15%)	X	X	X	X
Generative AI Text Evaluation (15%)	X	X		
Group presentation (20%)	X	X	X	X
Research Essay (50%)	X	X	X	X

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 key readings will be chosen from the following texts for different weeks – they all present excellent resources to gain a deeper understanding of the policy making process:

- 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.
- Sabatier, Weible, Weible, Christopher M, & Ebooks Corporation. (2014). *Theories of the Policy Process* (3rd ed.). New York: Westview Press.
- Parsons, D. (1995). *Public Policy: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis*. Aldershot, Hants.: Edward Elgar Pub.
- Wu, X., Howlett, M., & Fritzen, S. (2010). *The Public Policy Primer: Managing the Policy Process*. London; New York: Routledge.

Students new to the study of *Social Policy Analysis* will find it helpful to 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 useful 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

- 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.
- 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.
- Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- 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 tutorial participation (15%):

Grade	<i>Excellent 5-4</i>	<i>Good 3</i>	<i>Pass 2</i>	<i>Failure 1</i>
Frequency of participation	<i>Actively participates in class by asking questions and contributing to classroom discussions frequently.</i>	<i>Actively participates in class by asking questions and contributing to classroom discussions regularly.</i>	<i>Actively participates in class by asking questions and contributing to classroom discussions when prompted.</i>	<i>Not actively engaged in tutorial discussions and does not contribute to classroom discussions even when prompted.</i>
Quality of comments	<i>Comments always insightful & constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions</i>	<i>Comments mostly insightful & constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.</i>	<i>Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion..</i>	<i>Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste.</i>
Listening skills	<i>Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks, i.e., student hears what others say & contributes to the dialogue.</i>	<i>Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect & build on others' remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from T.A of focus of comment.</i>	<i>Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking</i>	<i>Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc.</i>

Marking rubric for generative AI text evaluation (15%):

Grade	<i>Excellent 5-4</i>	<i>Good 3</i>	<i>Pass 2</i>	<i>Failure 1</i>
Understanding of Topic	<i>Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed.</i>	<i>Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject.</i>	<i>Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.</i>	<i>Superficial coverage and understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.</i>
Critical analysis	<i>Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues.</i>	<i>Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.</i>	<i>More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.</i>	<i>Too descriptive. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.</i>
Writing and referencing	<i>Thorough referencing throughout Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.</i>	<i>Generally, uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.</i>	<i>Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.</i>	<i>Referencing is inconsistent. Writing skills need considerable improvement. Sentence structure needs work. Needed proof reading.</i>

Marking rubric for group presentation (20%):

Grade	Excellent 4	Good 3	Pass 2	Failure 1
Structure of presentation	<i>Consistently clear, concise, well organised. Points were easy to follow. Transitions between sections smooth and coordinated.</i>	<i>Usually clear, concise, well organised. Most of the presentation was easy to follow. Transitions between sections usually coordinated.</i>	<i>Not always clear or concise. Organisation was adequate, but weak. Occasionally wandered and was sometimes difficult to follow. Transitions between sections weak.</i>	<i>Often unclear and disorganised, rambled too much. The presentation was confusing and difficult to follow. Transitions between sections awkward. No discernible structure.</i>
Substantive content	<i>Displayed an excellent grasp of the material. Key points supported with evidence critically evaluated. Data in charts is analysed thoroughly and critically and linked to the literature.</i>	<i>Displayed a general grasp of the material. Most points illustrated with relevant evidence. Data in charts is analysed in detail and good links are made to the literature</i>	<i>Displayed some grasp of the material. Use of evidence 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.</i>	<i>Little-to-no linkage between the charts used and the wider narrative and literature. Inappropriate measures and styles adopted in the charts. No linkage between narrative, literature, and data.</i>
Visual aids including charts	<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>Analysis of charts is variable and in some instances the charts presented may not represent the best evidence to support the narrative.</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>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>
Time management	<i>Perfectly timed, delivery of material very well paced.</i>	<i>Well organised, more or less to time and with delivery of material in the main well-paced.</i>	<i>Delivery of material rushed and/or ran out of time before covering all parts of presentation</i>	<i>Significantly under time or significantly over time. Disorganised delivery.</i>
Audience engagement	<i>Excellent stage presence. Confident, used notes well, at ease, excellent gestures, good audience attention, good eye contact.</i>	<i>Good stage presence. Fairly confident, used notes fairly well, good gestures, acceptable audience attention and eye contact.</i>	<i>Adequate stage presence. Read parts, fumbled with notes, several distracting mannerisms, minimal gestures, minimal eye contact, too many 'ums'</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>

Marking rubric for research essay (50%):

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	Pass	<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>
F 49-0	Failure	<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>