

Course Title	:	Comparative Social Policy Research Project
Course Code	:	SOC605
Recommended Study Year	:	Taught Master Year 1
No. of Credits/Term	:	6
Mode of Tuition	:	Individual supervision
Class Contact Hours	:	N/A
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 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.

Aims

Through independently conducted and supervised research, this course aims to develop students' ability to formulate, execute and write up a research project on a topic of their choice.

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Formulate well-designed and sound research questions on comparative social policy issues;
2. Conduct a comprehensive literature review on a specific research topic with effective use of library, Internet, and other research resources;
3. Plan and organise a research design, develop and apply appropriate research methodologies;
4. Work independently to conduct original research within a manageable scope and time frame;
5. Produce a research project which incorporates fundamental elements of a full-fledged research project, and complies with the basic requirements and format of academic research.

Indicative Contents

The course requires students to submit a research project based on original work conducted, on a topic of their choice, containing the basic elements of an academic research report.

Teaching Method

Individual supervision.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Our measurement consists of two parts: continuous assessment and the final examination.

Continuous assessment is made up of the following components:

Mid-term progress report (15%) LOs 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students need to demonstrate considerable progress at mid-term, as assessed through regular meetings and communication with their supervisors, and ability to satisfy specific requirements set by their supervisors
Poster presentation (15%) LOs 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are required to share their research findings with supervisors, faculty, and peers as part of poster session to be arranged towards the end of Term 2.
Final report (70%) LOs 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grading is based on content (40%) and organization (20%) and style (10%)

Assessment

Continuous assessment	100%
Mid-term progress report	15%
Poster presentation	15%
Final report	70%

Required/Essential Readings

To be assigned/suggested by individual supervisors.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings

To be assigned/suggested by individual supervisors.

Marking rubric for mid-term progress report:

Grade	A A- Excellent	B+ B B- Good	C+ C C- Fair	F Failure
<p>Contributes to supervision meetings (5)</p>	<p><i>Helps discussions with supervisor move forward by demonstrating independent analytical thinking</i> (5)</p>	<p><i>Offers new suggestions to advance the research project.</i> (4-3)</p>	<p><i>Shares ideas but does not independently advance the research project.</i> (2-1)</p>	<p><i>Does not share ideas or work independently.</i> (0)</p>
<p>Fosters constructive team environment with the supervisor (5)</p>	<p><i>Supports a constructive team climate by doing all of the following:</i> <i>(1) Treats the supervisor respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication.</i> <i>(2) Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the research topic.</i> <i>(3) Reflects upon assistance and/or encouragement by the supervisor.</i> (5)</p>	<p><i>Supports a constructive team climate by doing any two of the following:</i> <i>(1) Treats the supervisor respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication.</i> <i>(2) Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the research topic.</i> <i>(3) Reflects upon assistance and/or encouragement by the supervisor.</i> (4-3)</p>	<p><i>Supports a constructive team climate by doing any one of the following:</i> <i>(1) Treats the supervisor respectfully by being polite and constructive in communication.</i> <i>(2) Uses positive vocal or written tone, facial expressions, and/or body language to convey a positive attitude about the research topic.</i> <i>(3) Reflects upon assistance and/or encouragement by the supervisor.</i> (2-1)</p>	<p><i>Does not support a constructive team climate.</i> (0)</p>
<p>Individual contributions outside of team meetings (5)</p>	<p><i>Completes all assigned tasks by the deadline. Work accomplished is thorough, comprehensive, and advances teaching and learning in the group.</i> (5)</p>	<p><i>Completes all assigned tasks by the deadline. Work accomplished advances the research project.</i> (4-3)</p>	<p><i>Completes all assigned tasks by deadline.</i> (2-1)</p>	<p><i>Fails to complete assigned tasks by the deadline.</i> (0)</p>

Marking rubric for poster presentation:

	A A- Excellent	B+ B B- Good	C+ C C- Fair	F Failure
Overall understanding of the topic (3)	<i>Demonstrates a deep and insightful understanding of the topic with fully developed argument(s)</i> (3)	<i>Demonstrates a good understanding of the topic with mostly developed argument(s)</i> (2)	<i>Demonstrates a limited understanding of the topic with fairly developed argument(s)</i> (1)	<i>Demonstrates a superficial/no understanding of the topic with inadequately developed argument(s)</i> (0)
Evidence (3)	<i>Presents evidence that is relevant and accurate Presents tremendous amount of evidence to support argument</i> (3)	<i>Presents evidence that is mostly relevant and accurate Presents sufficient amount of evidence to support argument</i> (2)	<i>Presents evidence that is fairly relevant and accurate Presents limited amount of evidence to support argument</i> (1)	<i>Presents evidence that is irrelevant and inaccurate Evidence to support argument is missing</i> (0)
Visual clarity and appeal (3)	<i>The poster has an excellent design and layout. It is neat and easy to understand the content</i> (3)	<i>The poster has a good design and layout. It is neat and easy to read.</i> (2)	<i>The poster requires some improvement in design, layout, and neatness.</i> (1)	<i>The poster requires significant improvement in design, layout, and neatness.</i> (0)
Required elements (3)	<i>All of the required elements are clearly visible, organized, and well placed.</i> (3)	<i>Most of the required elements are clearly visible, organized, and well placed.</i> (2)	<i>Few of the required elements are clearly visible, organized, and well placed. Some elements may be missing.</i> (1)	<i>Missing most or all of the required elements.</i> (0)
Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation (3)	<i>The project has excellent spelling, grammar and punctuation.</i> (3)	<i>The project has 1-2 spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.</i> (2)	<i>The project has 3-5 spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.</i> (1)	<i>The project has multiple spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.</i> (0)

Marking rubric for final report:

Grading is based on:

- Content: understanding of topic, use of evidence and critical analysis—40%
- Organization: structure of argument—20%
- Style: writing and referencing—10%

Grade	Understanding of topic	Use of evidence	Critical analysis	Structure of argument	Writing and referencing
A A- Excellent 80-100	<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- Good 65-79	<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- Pass 50-64	<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 Failure 0-49	<i>Superficial coverage and significant misunderstanding 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>