



# SOCX811

## North, South, East, West: Comparative Social Policy

S1 OUA 2018

*Dept of Sociology*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Charlotte Overgaard

[Charlotte.overgaard@mq.edu.au](mailto:Charlotte.overgaard@mq.edu.au)

Contact via Email

Per appointment

Prerequisites

(SGY881 or SOCX810) and (SGYX818 or SOCX818) and admission to MPASR or GradDipPASR or GradCertPASR

Corequisites

(SGY888 or SOCX831) and (SGY889 or SOCX830)

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit investigates and analyses social policy experiments around the world. Social policies that aim to enhance public welfare are often incorrectly considered to solely be the province of wealthy Western democracies. In fact, some of the most interesting social policy experiments in recent times have occurred in East Asia, Latin America and beyond. In this unit we build on foundational knowledge established in earlier core social policy units (SGY881, SGYX818) and core methodology units (SGY888 and SGY889), which we strongly recommend that you do before undertaking this unit. We extend our analysis to social policy in richer and poorer countries, considering similarities as well as differences in scale, scope, instruments and politics. The course proceeds in three sections. The first engages with frameworks for comparing social policies, welfare states and understanding historical developments. The second section considers recent developments in the welfare regimes of Europe, North America and the Antipodes. The third section outlines contemporary experiments in East Asia, Latin America and Africa, contemplating their implications for how we understand social policy. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see [www.open.edu.au](http://www.open.edu.au)

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy

Understand key processes involved in social policy development

Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally

Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world

Further develop vocational and research skills

Discuss and present relevant research findings

Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

## General Assessment Information

### Submission of written papers

Written assessments (or components of assessments) should be submitted via Turnitin. Assessments will be marked online using GradeMark and returned within 3 weeks of the due date wherever possible (excluding papers submitted after the due date). Please see individual assessment descriptions for more information.

### Extension requests

Extensions for this unit should be organised via the Special Consideration process wherever possible. Ensure that the unit convenor or online tutor is also contacted when an application is submitted. More information is available on the Macquarie University website.

### Late submissions

Written papers or presentations submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty unless an extension has been granted. Wherever possible, this should be organised the due date of the assessment.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#"><u>Scoping Paper</u></a>	20%	No	Monday, Week 6
<a href="#"><u>Work-In-Progress Presentation</u></a>	25%	No	Week 9 to 12 seminar
<a href="#"><u>Discussion Paper</u></a>	45%	No	Saturday, Week 13
<a href="#"><u>Seminar Participation</u></a>	10%	No	Ongoing

## Scoping Paper

Due: **Monday, Week 6**

Weighting: **20%**

Comparative social policy can give us insights into how well we are responding to a social issue and give us a greater appreciation of the available policy options. Of course, just because a policy works in one context does not mean that it will work in another. The assessments in this unit aim to give you practice communicating your ideas about comparative social policy using a variety of formats that are widely used in modern workplaces. The *Scoping Paper*, *Work-In-Progress Presentation*, and *Discussion Paper* should be thought of as part of one larger assignment. You are required to select one social policy issue to be the focus for all three assignments and **compare developments in Australia with TWO other countries**. You should select **ONE** country from Europe, North America or New Zealand. And, you should select **ONE** country from Africa, Asia or Latin America. To reiterate, the three assessments should be focused on the same social policy issue.

Scoping papers are widely used in the public sector and beyond to help manage research, report and project work. In this scoping paper, you are required to identify the social policy issue (you have selected), explain its importance, provide an overview of relevant policy settings, and outline your proposed approach to the discussion paper. Please take care to identify which countries you will compare and contrast Australia with and why.

*N.B. Please contact the unit convenor or online tutor via email with your proposed social policy issue by week 4 to ensure its suitability.*

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world
- Further develop vocational and research skills

## Work-In-Progress Presentation

Due: **Week 9 to 12 seminar**

Weighting: **25%**

Building on the *Scoping Paper*, the *Work-In-Progress Presentation* is designed to help you organise your ideas and get feedback on your work to date preparing the *Discussion Paper*. The presentation should give a clear overview of the policy environment in Australia, identify major issues and explain how the comparative analysis will be undertaken to allow key areas of reform to be identified. We strongly recommend providing a justification for the countries you have selected. This task will require you to contribute a presentation (PP or other) to the special weekly discussion forum between week 9 to 12 that you will be assigned in **week 1**.

This presentation provides an opportunity to share your understanding of the policy issue you have selected and present your comparative analysis, as well as get valuable feedback from your colleagues.

As part of the presentation, you will need to **participate in discussion and respond to questions** from the unit convenor and class mates. You are encouraged to facilitate discussion, but do not feel that you have to have all the answers. You might like to pose a couple of questions for the audience to garner feedback about particular aspects of your approach as well as taking questions.

You should also contribute to the discussions of other students who are presenting their work-in-progress papers this week.

### **Submission details:**

- \* You should upload the *presentation* to iLearn by the Monday of the week you are presenting.
- \* You should *participate in the discussion of your working-paper* (and others being presented) on iLearn multiple times over the week you are presenting (Monday to Sunday inclusive).

*N.B. The usual rules of **Netiquette** apply for all contributors to online forums. Please be constructive and engage with ideas. It is also important that you select the same policy issue for the Scoping Paper, Work-In-Progress Presentation, and Discussion Paper.*

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy
- Understand key processes involved in social policy development
- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world
- Further develop vocational and research skills
- Discuss and present relevant research findings

## Discussion Paper

Due: **Saturday, Week 13**

Weighting: **45%**

The major task for this capstone unit is a *Discussion Paper*. Widely used in the public sector and social science workplaces, discussion papers are in-depth reports that canvass the current state of affairs and evidence on an issue, policy or proposal for reform. Discussion papers often precede public and parliamentary inquiries, as well as major reviews or public campaigns. There is no single approach or format for writing discussion papers, but they are designed to stimulate *discussion* among stakeholders on the issue, review evidence, chart out options for reform and garner feedback.

You are required to write a *Discussion Paper* in SOCX 811 about the social policy issue

identified in the *Scoping Paper* and featuring in your *Work-in-Progress Presentation*. Your discussion paper can take a perspective, but should still provide a balanced account of the social policy issue. Your discussion paper should identify the current state of affairs of the issue (in Australia), review relevant policy and theoretical debates, discuss the merits and challenges of adopting TWO other countries' (see the *Scoping Paper outline for further details*) approaches to the social issue, and, based on this theoretical and comparative analysis, draw out and explain which key areas are in need of reform. You are also asked to develop key questions for stakeholders to help guide debate. Given the focus and location of the course, your paper should dedicate considerable space to critically comparing and contrasting the approaches of multiple countries.

While there is no single way to write a discussion paper, your discussion paper for this course should be structured with the following sections:

- \* abstract (150 words)
- \* introduction
- \* policy environment and the case for reform
- \* theoretical discussion of the policy issue
- \* international comparisons and evaluation of existing practices
- \* explain key priorities for reform
- \* identify questions for stakeholders
- \* reference list

The abstract and reference list do not have to be included in the word count. You are also welcome to use appendices. For instance, you might provide more detailed statistical evidence from the Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to further support your claims or to contrast the policy context in Australia with that of other countries. But, keep in mind that appendices do not 'speak for themselves' and need to be introduced in the main text of your paper where relevant.

*If you want to vary the structure from that outlined above, an alternative plan for the discussion paper must be provided to the unit convenor in writing at least 4 weeks before the due date and approved via email.*

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy
- Understand key processes involved in social policy development
- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world
- Further develop vocational and research skills

- Discuss and present relevant research findings
- Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

## Seminar Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

To foster discussion and critical thinking, you are expected to actively participate in the weekly discussion forums. As an incentive, 10 percent of your final mark will be awarded for your attendance and your participation. We will look for evidence that you have done the readings and your ability to engage respectfully with other students.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy
- Understand key processes involved in social policy development
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world

## Delivery and Resources

### Seminars

Weekly seminars run during semester (weeks 1 to 13). The slides and audio recordings from the lecture component of the seminar are available via iLearn.

### Delivery

Course materials, including information on weekly readings and discussion forums, are available on the course iLearn page.

### Resources

The unit readings are available online by searching the *Unit Readings* tab of the Macquarie University Library's website.

The lecture recordings are available via ECHO360 (which can be accessed thru the unit's iLearn page).

Additional course resources are available on the SOCX 811 iLearn page.

Additional readings are available online thru the *Unit Readings* tab of the Library's website and the reserve section of the library.

### Textbook

There is not textbook for this unit.

## Unit Schedule

**SOCX 811 North, South, East, West: Comparative Social Policy** investigates and analyses

social policy experiments around the world. It is the capstone unit for the *Master of Policy & Applied Social Research* and 13 seminars are scheduled over the semester. The scheduled program is:

**Table 1: Weekly schedule for SOCX 811 in 2016**

1	Comparative methods	AS
2	Theorising convergence & divergence	AS
3	Comparing motivations: Knights, knaves & 'nudge' politics	AS
4	Marketisation, financialisation and social policy	AS
5	Understanding the service transition	BSB
6	The paradox of redistribution: Targeting vs. universalism	SW
7	African in/security regimes?	AS
8	Social innovations in Latin America	AS
9	East Asian social policy experiments	TBC
10	Markets for social care	GM
11	Population ageing: A global phenomenon	AS
12	Social policy and climate change in a globalising world	AS
13	Course conclusion	AS

SOCX 811 has been organised so that we start by thinking about frameworks to aid comparison, move onto country-level comparisons, starting with the welfare states of affluent OECD countries before turning to social policy experiments around the globe, and finish up with policy-level comparisons. The course will proceed in the following four modules:

**Module 1: Understanding and comparing welfare states**

Social policies are often the state instruments that have most bearing on the everyday lives of the citizenry. Yet, these policies are often difficult to evaluate in isolation and tend to fall short of 'absolute principles'. The field of comparative social policy offers a range of analytic tools and theoretical devices to investigate the workings of social policies and welfare states, with the potential to increase our understanding of what is working (and what is not) and broaden our appreciation of the policy options. This module is tasked with providing context and the theoretical backdrop for our course. In *week 1* we consider the what, how and why of comparative social policy scholarship. Continuing this discussion in *week 2*, we turn to different theoretical approaches to comparing and contrasting both social policies and welfare states.



Then, in *week 3*, we consider how a number of analytic tools and theoretical devices reflect different understandings of human motivation. We pay particular attention to the politics of 'nudge' to highlight how this can be linked to the ideological underpinnings and design of social policies

### **Module 2: Recent debates about affluent welfare states**

This module focuses on recent debates about affluent welfare states, particularly the OECD countries that featured in Esping-Andersen's three worlds of welfare. *Week 4's* seminar will focus on arguments about how neoliberalism has influenced welfare state development, with particular focus on the marketization and finalisation of social policy in the 'age of austerity'. *Week 5's* seminar will examine how the development of social policy markets, particularly pertaining to care work, are implicated in the broader processes of deindustrialisation and considers how they are implicated in the political economy of welfare states. And, *week 6's* seminar will consider the long-standing debate over the merits of targeted and universalist approaches to social policy, using Palme and Korpi's (1998) article as a frame for the discussion.

### **Module 3: Welfare experiments in Africa, Latin America & East Asia**

Most of the discussion in the course up to this point has been focused on affluent OECD countries. This module plans to broaden the scope of the course onto East Asia, Latin America and Africa. As well as discussing the applicability of existing welfare state models, the seminars in this module will ask whether social policy developments in these regions have their own character or should be considered on a country-by-country basis. *Week 7* will focus on Africa and *week 8* will focus on Latin America. *Week 9* will focus on East Asia. These discussions will highlight the complexity and diversity of social policy experiments across the globe.

### **Module 4: Comparative social policy case studies**

A major contribution of comparative scholarship is to highlight what is unique and similar in the approaches different countries have taken to particular social policy issues. Here our focus is on three social policy case studies, selected because of their international and global implications. In *week 10*, we take a comparative approach to markets for social care, comparing how different countries have responded to increasing demands for care by implementing markets and other private sector responses. In *week 11*, we consider how population ageing is likely to transform the political economy of societies across the globe in coming decades. In *week 12*, we consider the links between social policy, inequality and climate change. These discussions are aimed at highlighting what a comparative approach to social policy can offer (and what it does not).

## **Policies and Procedures**

Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated

## elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

## Extension Request

**Special Consideration Policy and Procedure**  
**(<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>)**

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](#) and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

## Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

## OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

### Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to [the census date](#) (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to [apply for Special Circumstances](#). If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can [apply online](#).

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to [apply directly to Macquarie University](#).

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

***N.B. Please note that the Disruptions to Studies policy replaced the Special Considerations Policy.***

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Further develop vocational and research skills
- Discuss and present relevant research findings
- Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

## **Assessment tasks**

- Scoping Paper
- Work-In-Progress Presentation
- Discussion Paper

## **PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills**

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy
- Understand key processes involved in social policy development
- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

## **Assessment tasks**

- Scoping Paper
- Work-In-Progress Presentation
- Discussion Paper
- Seminar Participation

## **PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy
- Understand key processes involved in social policy development
- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world
- Further develop vocational and research skills
- Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

## Assessment tasks

- Scoping Paper
- Work-In-Progress Presentation
- Discussion Paper
- Seminar Participation

## PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand key processes involved in social policy development
- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world
- Further develop vocational and research skills
- Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

## Assessment tasks

- Scoping Paper
- Work-In-Progress Presentation
- Discussion Paper
- Seminar Participation

## PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically

supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- Explain interdisciplinary approaches and frameworks for the study of comparative social policy
- Further develop vocational and research skills
- Discuss and present relevant research findings
- Communicate policy information and social research findings in a discussion paper

### **Assessment tasks**

- Scoping Paper
- Work-In-Progress Presentation
- Discussion Paper
- Seminar Participation

## **PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens**

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- Situate developments in Australian social policy internationally
- Compare and contrast social policy designs from around the world

### **Assessment tasks**

- Scoping Paper
- Work-In-Progress Presentation
- Discussion Paper
- Seminar Participation

## **Changes from Previous Offering**

Since the last offering of the course, a number of course readings have been changed, lecture materials revised and assessment summaries refined.