SOCI811

North, South, East, West: Comparative Social Policy

S1 Evening 2018

Dept of Sociology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Charlotte Overgaard
Charlotte.overgaard@mq.edu.au
Contact via 0487773338
Per appointment

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
SOC810 and SOC818 and admission to MPASR or MPASRMDevStud or MPPPMPASR or GradDipPASR or GradCertPASR or MPlan

Corequisites
SOC830 and SOC831

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 (SOC810 and SOC818) and core methodology units (SOC830 and SOC831), 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.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-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. This is particularly important for the Work-in-Progress presentation. 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 written 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 before the due date of the assessment.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Scoping Paper	20%	No	Monday, April 9th
Work-In-Progress Presentation	25%	No	Weeks 9 to 12
Discussion Paper	45%	No	Monday, June 4th

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Seminar Participation	10%	No	Ongoing

Scoping Paper

Due: **Monday, April 9th**
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 comparing the same social policy issue in three appropriate countries.

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 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: **Weeks 9 to 12**
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. This task will require you to deliver a 10-minute presentation and then lead discussion for a further 5 to 10 minutes during the seminar in either week 11 or 12. It 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.

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. You are welcome to use PowerPoint or other supported presentation aids (such as handouts). You are encouraged to facilitate discussion, but do not feel that you have to have all the answers. You might like to bring along a couple of questions for the audience to garner feedback about particular aspects of your approach as well as taking questions from the floor.

You will need to submit a one-page summary of your presentation, along with any materials or files you use (such as pdfs of powerpoint slides). These materials need to be submitted online via Turnitin directly after your presentation. A rubric will be provided on the unit *iLearn* page by the mid-semester study period.

N.B. It is 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: **Monday, June 4th**
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 SOCI 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 other countries' 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 themself' 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:

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- 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%**

The weekly seminars are compulsory. To meet the requirements of this course, you are required to attend at least 80 per cent of seminars. In addition to attending, you are also expected to actively participate. 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 will be held on Mondays from 6pm to 8pm during semester (weeks 1 to 5 and 7 to 12). Occasionally, the seminars will run past 8pm. In week 6 (Easter), the lecture will instead consist of a recorded lecture made available through ECHO360 and online activities.

Delivery

The weekly seminars will include a lecture component that will be recorded. ***Note:*** *only the lecture component will be recorded*. It will be made available online via ECHO360 (which can be accessed on the unit's iLearn page).

Resources

The unit readings are available online by searching the *Unit Readings* tab using the course code (SOCI811) of the Macquarie University Library's website.

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

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

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

Textbook

There is no textbook for this unit.

Unit Schedule

SOCI 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.*

SOCI 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.

Module 2: 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 3: 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 move from unemployment to welfare-to-work. These discussions are aimed at highlighting what a comparative approach to social policy can offer (and what it does not).

Policies and Procedures

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). 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). 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).

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.

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) 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

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit 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.