



SOCI811

North, South, East, West: Comparative Social Policy

S1 Evening 2019

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 MPASRMDDevStud 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

Flexibility and responsibility for own progress

Please note: In this unit, all assignments are steps towards the final discussion paper. In completing the different tasks, you are handed a large amount of flexibility in terms of progression. That is, while the scoping paper and the discussion paper are mandatory, you can submit these at any point during the semester, allowing you to work around your other commitments. Of course, such flexibility comes with an equal responsibility to manage your own time over the semester.

In return for the increased expectations of your ability to manage your own time, I aim to provide you with feedback within 5 to 7 days after your submission – as long as you notify me of the submission per email.

In addition to the mandatory tasks, you have the opportunity to give a work in progress (WIP) presentation. This presentation is voluntary but will allow you to harvest early feedback on your discussion paper. It is therefore highly recommended that you utilise this opportunity.

Please note that you **MUST** allow at least one week between each submission.

Submission of written papers

Written assessments should be submitted via Turnitin. Assessments will be marked online using GradeMark and returned within 5 to 7 days of the due date wherever possible (excluding papers submitted after the due date).

As this course operates with flexible due dates, it is absolutely necessary that all submissions are notified to teaching staff by email.

Please see individual assessment descriptions for more information.

Extension requests

As this unit operates with flexible due dates, it should not have to be necessary to apply for extensions. However, should it be necessary, extensions for this unit should be organised via the

Special Consideration process. Ensure that the unit convenor or online tutor is also contacted when an application is submitted.

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|--|-----------|--------|-----------------------|
| <u>Scoping Paper</u> | 25% | No | No later than week 12 |
| <u>Work-In-Progress Presentation</u> | 0% | No | Weeks 6 to 12 |
| <u>Discussion Paper</u> | 50% | No | No later than June 19 |
| <u>Seminar Participation</u> | 25% | No | Ongoing |

Scoping Paper

Due: **No later than week 12**

Weighting: **25%**

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.

N.B. This assignment can be submitted anytime during the semester but no later than week 12.

It is recommended to submit the scoping paper between weeks 6 and 8.

Word count: 800 to 1,000 words.

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 6 to 12**

Weighting: **0%**

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 gives you the option to deliver a maximum 10-minute presentation and then gain input for a further 5 to 10 minutes during the (online) seminars in weeks 6 to 12. Please stick closely to the time allocation. 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.

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 the discussion. You should not feel that you have to have all the answers as the purpose here is that you can get inputs from other students and teaching staff. 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.

N.B. It is important that you select the same policy issue for the Scoping Paper, Work-In-Progress Presentation, and Discussion Paper.

N.B. This is not a mandatory assignment, but it is strongly recommended that you take this opportunity to present to the group. If you wish to utilise this chance for feedback, you must present during the weeks 6 to 12 seminars (on-campus students) or in the online discussion forums (on-line students) during the same weeks.

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: **No later than June 19**

Weighting: **50%**

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 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.

*N.B. You can submit this assignment any time during the semester to fit around your other assignments and obligations outside university. However, the last possible submission day is on **June 19th, 2019.***

Word count: 3,000 words maximum

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: **25%**

The weekly seminars are compulsory - in class for SOCI811 students and online for SOCX811 students.

To foster discussion and critical thinking, you are expected to actively participate in the weekly discussions – in class and/or online.

When marking, teaching staff will look for evidence that you have engaged with the readings, your ability to engage with other students and your willingness to provide quality feedback on WIP presentations.

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 Wednesdays from 6pm to 8pm during semester. Occasionally, the seminars will run past 8pm.

Delivery

The weekly seminars will include a lecture component that 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.

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.

In this module, we start by looking at mainstream approaches, including the work of Tittmus, Esping-Andersen, Gough and Aspalter. We then - due to popular demand in former offerings of the course - turn to so-called gender-sensitive frameworks which have much to offer for policy areas that contain a gender perspective, such as care, domestic violence, parental leave and population ageing.

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 consider how population ageing is likely to transform the political economy of societies across the globe in coming decades. In week 11, 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 12, we consider volunteering in a comparative perspective. 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 \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](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 published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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.