University of Edinburgh
Graduate School of Social and Political Science

SCPL11021 GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY

Course handbook

Option course
Semester 1
Day: Tuesday
Time: 16.10-18.00
Room: 11.01
Building: David Hume Tower

Course Organiser: Dr Jay Wiggan
Room: 3.07
Email: j.wiggan@ed.ac.uk

Course Administrator: Jemma Auns
Room 1.20
Email: pgtaught.sps@ed.ac.uk
Course summary

Traditionally the pre-eminent actor shaping social policy via regulation, establishment of rights and the distribution of resources and life-chances has been perceived to occur at the national level and to be most ‘developed’ amongst states in the ‘Global North’. Increasingly however international organisations have become important actors in the generation, championing and dissemination of policy ‘best practice’ and the prescribing of social policy reforms for high, middle and low income countries. Many mature welfare states are under pressure to reform social policy to fit with austere socio-economic times. Conversely rapid economic growth experienced by countries such as India, China and Brazil has created new demands and opportunities for innovative social protection and welfare service development.

This course provides an critical introduction to the theories, concepts and debates in global social policy so as to equip students to critically examine the interplay between international institutions such as the World Bank, International Labour Organisation, International Monetary Fund and the OECD and national governments, business and other non-state actors in shaping specific policy sub-sectors (social security; employment; family; health; education) in a variety of national contexts. The course is therefore global and international in orientation exploring both issues of global social governance and the operation of policies in countries outside of Europe.

The course therefore offers an introduction to the roles of international governmental organisations, national governments and non-state actors in social policymaking and the common and distinct socio-economic and political pressures driving and constraining reform in various countries. Overall the intention is to introduce students to theories and concepts of a global rescaling of social policy and examples of policy reform in key policy sectors from various countries.

Level: postgraduate

This a optional course available to MSc students (taught and by research) and also for supervised postgraduate students in their first year

Course objectives

This course will help students develop the ability to;
• Critically analyse and synthesise complex policy evidence and debates
• Communicate this information to academic and non-academic, but informed policy aware audiences.
Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts and debates in global social policy.

2. Critically analyse the role of actors, structures, institutions and discourses in the diagnosis of policy challenges and formulation of responses in key social policy sub-sectors.

3. Apply critical analysis to evaluate and synthesise evidence on policy problems and programmes in high and middle income countries.

4. Communicate complex policy debates in the style of a policy briefing paper produced by organisations such as the OECD and WHO.

5. Communicate effectively with peers and specialist academic staff about the topic of global social policy.

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## Course structure

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Core texts


Additional useful texts


Key Journals

Global Social Policy

Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy

International Journal of Social Welfare

Social Policy & Society

Social Policy & Administration

Assessment

The assessment consists of two separate pieces of coursework:

- Assignment 1: a 1000 word policy brief worth 25% of the final mark.

For the first assignment students are asked to write a 1000 word briefing paper on the topic of the ‘Social Protection Floor’ or the concept of ‘Decent Work’.

Please submit for assessment the first assignment by 12 noon **Tuesday October 9th**.

Prior to submission of the first piece of assessed work a portion of the tutorial will be given over to clarifying requirements of the policy brief with the organiser providing a draft ‘template’ and examples of policy briefs from organisations such as the OECD and WHO. The deadline for the short policy brief is set early within the course so that the course organiser can provide timely feedback ahead of the submission of the long policy brief. Feedback for coursework will be returned online via ELMA on 30 October 2018 for the 1000 word policy brief.
For the second assessment students are asked to write a 3000 word policy brief on one of the topics explored in weeks 3-10. The paper can focus on one country or more than one country.

- Assignment 2: a 3000 word policy brief worth 75% of the final mark.

Please submit for assessment the second assignment by 12 noon Thursday November 22nd.

Feedback for coursework will be returned online via ELMA on 13 December 2018 for the 1000 word policy brief.

External Examiner
The External Examiner for this course is Dr Emma Carmel, University of Bath.

Requirements
For Assessment requirements you should consult the Taught MSc Student Handbook 2017-18. This is available on Learn.

Requirements included are:
- Coursework submissions
- Extension request
- Penalties
- Plagiarism
Course Programme

Week 1

The global turn in social policy

Date: 18th September 2018
Session Leader: Dr Jay Wiggan

Traditionally nation states were the pre-eminent actors shaping social policy and the distribution of resources and life-chances in society. The capacity of individual governments to intervene to redistribute resources and regulate how markets operate however seemingly waned in the context of globalisation and regionalisation of the world economy. Supra-national organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, WHO, OECD and WTO increasingly took on the role of disseminating ‘best practice’ and prescription of specific social policy reforms. At the same time states in the ‘Global South’ have developed their own approaches to social policy reform indicating the continued salience of national government. This session provides an introduction to the global governance of social policy.

Core reading


Further reading


Week 2
The Social Protection Floor and Global labour policy

Date: 25th September 2018
Session Leader: Dr Jay Wiggan

The right to an adequate standard of living for an individual and their family is set out in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The extent to which this ‘right’ is met in practice however has varied over time and between nation states with people in the ‘Global South’ typically having access to limited social protections in comparison to those living in wealthier states of the ‘Global North’. Moreover protections against social risks associated with income interruption have been accompanied by weaker employment protections and regulations associated with work in the informal economy.

In this session we explore how global social and economic policy actors have sought to develop a high level response to these challenges to encourage and co-ordinate the enhancement of social protection and re-regulation of employment. To this end we examine the campaign and development for a Social Protection Floor and ‘Decent Work’. We will explore the problem interpretations and socio-economic presumptions underpinning these initiatives and the tensions this gives rise to between international organisations and between these organisations and nation states.

Core reading
Deacon, B. (2013) Chapters 2 and 3 in Global social policy in the making: The foundations of the social protection floor.


Further reading


The recent phase of economic and political globalisation had unprecedented implications for national education policy. Increasingly global endeavours to assess and compare national education systems, such as the OECD’s PISA programme, have triggered education reform debates in many of the now 72 participating countries. While national educational and cultural traditions still play a role in ‘translating’ policy, an increasingly global policy discourse in education is permeating national policy agendas in the Global North and South alike. For the Global South, the exposure to foreign policy solutions is not a new experience, their education systems have long been influenced by colonialism and more recently development cooperation and the activities of international organisations such as the World Bank. In recent years, the emergence of globally operating philanthropic actors, transnational educational business and civil society advocacy groups has again changed the dynamics of educational politics and policy landscapes. We will discuss these complex networks of policy actors and the implications of the emerging global policy agenda for national education policy across the globe.

**Core reading**


**Further reading**


Mundy, Karen E.; Green, Andy; Lingard, Bob; Verger, Antoni (Eds.) (2016): *Handbook of global education policy*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell. [online available through the library website]


Week 4

Conceptualising varieties of welfare regime

Date: 9th October 2018

Session Leader: Dr Jay Wiggan

The comparative study of welfare states has stimulated a voluminous body of academic work focused on explaining the similarities and differences in the emergence and development of welfare services and supports amongst advanced capitalist economies. In doing so it has helped to identify the distribution of responsibility for provision between market, state and community; variations in the scope and form of coverage; and the relative salience of ideas, class cleavage, partisan politics, gender and religion. This session explores how the ‘welfare regimes’ method has been extended beyond core capitalist economies through the notion of ‘insecurity’, ‘informal’ and ‘productive’ ideal type welfare regimes.

Core reading


Further reading


Week 5

Welfare provision in East and Southeast Asia

Date: October 16th 2018

Session Leader: Dr Daniel R. Hammond

A persistent theme in studies of welfare policy in East and Southeast Asia is the idea that there is a welfare model or regime unique to the region. This session will explore the extent to which there is an East or Southeast Asian welfare regime, whether it is distinguishable from the more Eurocentric typology, and what the implications of our conclusions might be for policy developments in the region. The session will explore China and Indonesia as points of comparison although students are encouraged to read more widely and bring in their experience and expertise relating to other countries.

Core reading:


Further reading:


Week 6

Social Assistance policy in China

Date: 23rd October 2018

Session Leader: Dr Daniel R. Hammond

In 1997 the People’s Republic of China undertook a major national reform of its urban social assistance system with the implementation of the minimum livelihood guarantee (MLG) system. This was followed by the rolling out of a similar system for China’s rural residents in 2007. The system was notable for implementing a means test and localising administrative and fiscal responsibilities in order to guarantee a minimum income for residents. The emergence, spread and implementation of the MLG provides scholars and students an opportunity to reflect on the impact that both domestic and global factors can have on the design and success of social assistance programmes in an emerging economy. This session will discuss the design of the MLG, the significance of its emergence and implementation, the question of success in social assistance, and what the future might hold for the MLG.

Key reading


Further reading


Week 7
Cash Transfer schemes

Date: 30th October 2018
Session leader: Jay Wiggan

One of the most significant developments in social protection policy in the ‘Global South’ during the last 20 years has been the rise of Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT). The turn to CCT as an anti-poverty policy lever reflected a policy presumption that targeting is the best means to efficiently concentrate resources on those in need and that conditionality is an effective mechanism to drive behaviour change. With support from international organisations the use of CCT policy has spread widely and has been also accompanied by growing experiments with Unconditional Cash Transfer schemes. This session explores the development and spread of cash transfer schemes and their relationship to the mitigation of poverty, exclusion and inequality.

Core reading

Further reading
Week 8

Public employment programmes

Date: November 6th 2018

Session leader: Jay Wiggan

Subsidized work provided through public employment schemes were once a common policy response in the Global North to unemployment, but more recently the popularity of public employment schemes in the North has waned. Conversely in the Global South countries such as Argentina and India, presented with rising and/or persistent unemployment have brought the potential of these programmes to mitigate hardship back into view. This session explores what policymakers in the North might learn from public employment guarantee programmes in the Global South through examination of their goals, structure and the social and economic outcomes.

Core reading


Further Reading


Week 9

Health policy in a global context

Date: Tuesday 13 November 2018

Session Leader: Dr Eleanor Brooks

Nation states are commonly regarded as having responsibilities in relation to the health of their populations, with health-related rights expressed in terms of both access to health care, and – more broadly – access to the determinants of health (that is, the broader socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions that allow people to live healthy lives). Yet states’ ability to address these goals may be constrained or shaped by a range of factors – including their level of economic development, the growing influence of external actors (including international organisations), and increased reliance on markets for the provision and distribution of basic goods.

Despite the development of a global agenda via the Sustainable Development Goals, the goals of international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank may not be entirely consistent with one another or with the priorities and concerns of individual nation states; while the activities of powerful commercial actors may also make it difficult for governments to develop and implement effective health policy.

This session will explore health policy, as a facet of social policy, in a global context. It will introduce the vast array of actors involved in global health governance and the constraints facing nation states in formulating health policy. Three case studies, covering different elements of the health system and different geographical regions, will illustrate how the distribution of authority and power between actors affects policy outcomes and the tensions involved. Our first case study addresses the goal of universal health coverage (UHC), which offers potential improvements in population access to health care, but which faces obstacles in the context of pre-existing financing structures, the interests of health insurance actors and the legacy of institutions such as the World Bank. Our second case study will explore the Ebola outbreak of 2014, looking at weaknesses in the capacity of both nation states and the WHO to respond to the crisis effectively, and the consequent emergence of a security discourse. Finally, in the seminar, our third case study will consider the extent to which nation states are able to protect their populations against a key driver of non-communicable diseases – tobacco consumption – and the impacts of other key actors in this policy domain. Here, the web of international regulations and agreements that shape global trade and investment relationships, along with examples of transnational lobbying, will be used to explore the concept of ‘policy space’ and the reality facing governments which seek to legislate against tobacco.

Core readings


Further readings

On health policy in a global context:


On universal health coverage (UHC):


On Ebola and the global health response:


On global NCD prevention / tobacco control:


Week 10

Social protection futures: new challenges, new policies, new governance?

Date: 20th November 2018

Session Leader: Jay Wiggan

Transformations in the world of employment, together with the persistence of poverty, inequality and rising concern about the impact of climate change have led to growing interest in new eco-social and universalist approaches to social protection. This session explores the proposal for an Unconditional Basic Income which is gaining growing international policy attention and consider the arguments for and against it, situating this in a discussion of global, regional and national social policy governance.

Core readings


Further readings


