

POLI 412
Comparative Social Policy (3 credits)
Winter 2025

Instructor: Dr. Mark Paradis

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Office Hours:

- Wednesdays from 16:30-17:30 in H-1213 (by appointment)

Class Time: Wednesdays 5:45PM - 8:30PM

Class Location: FB S109 SGW

This seminar examines various explanations for the development and retrenchment of the welfare state in different countries. It analyzes typologies developed to conceptualize welfare-state regimes and examines, in a comparative fashion, key social policies such as health, pensions, and employment.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will be held in-person. Since this course is a seminar, attendance is required. Students are expected to follow all public health guidelines that are in place at the time.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

For emails with the instructor, every effort will be made to respond within 24 hours on weekdays. On weekends, the delay may be longer. For emails, you are expected to:

1. Include the course number and purpose of the email in the email subject.
2. Do not send follow-up emails within 24 hours or on weekends. If you do, both the original and follow-up emails will be ignored.
3. If your email is asking about facts found directly in the syllabus, it will be ignored (for example, asking about the date of the midterm). The syllabus is made available to all students, and it is disrespectful to expect the instructor to look up something when you are unwilling to do so.
4. Do not send messages through Moodle. I almost never check Moodle messages.

COURSE READINGS

All course readings will be posted on Moodle for download. I have also tried to select a mixture of classic pieces and cutting edge new research.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation: 15%

This class is a seminar. Other than the first day of class, there will be no lectures. Therefore, attendance and participation are extremely important. Each week, students should come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss the topic of the week.

Weekly Questions: 10%

Each week, students will submit three (3) discussion questions based on the readings. These questions must be submitted on Moodle by 10pm the night before the class. Ideally, questions won't focus on a single reading, but will build links between multiple readings (although, questions on single readings may be acceptable). Each student must submit questions for 7 of the 9 classes.

Discussion Leadership: 10%

In order to help structure the discussion each week, 1-2 students will be responsible for leading the discussion. When leading discussions, students should take extra care in doing the readings. The weekly questions are available in order to help you structure the discussion. You may use none, some, or all of the questions to structure a coherent discussion.

Response Papers: 25%

Twice during the semester, students will submit a 5-7 page (double-spaced) critical response paper to the readings for the chosen week. The first response is worth 10%. The second response paper is worth 15%.

- Papers should *briefly* summarize the readings and then discuss areas of weakness, or opportunity for growth in the literature.
- For the summary portion of the response paper, students should summarize the key points of every reading for the week. Each summary should be approximately half a page (i.e. if there are 5 readings, the summary section should not exceed 2.5 pages).
- For the critique portion of the response papers, students should focus on 1-2 readings and analyze weaknesses and/or areas for future research in those papers. The entire critique section should ideally include 2-3 arguments. Critiques should focus on the logic of the author(s)' argument, not the argument/paper you wish they wrote.
- Response papers are due the week after the topic is discussed in class. You may not submit a response paper for the weeks you are discussion leader.

Research Paper: 40%

Students will write a 20-page research paper on a topic of their choice. Papers can either be a) empirical papers or b) a critical review of the literature on a particular topic. Empirical papers require the selection of a research puzzle, the identification of a theory that could explain this puzzle (not an entire paradigm), and provide evidence that tests the proposed theory. Empirical papers can use case study, comparative case studies, or quantitative methods. Critical review papers *do not* simply summarize the literature on the topic. Instead, it critically analyzes the literature and suggests a typology, areas of possible synthesis, critical weaknesses, or avenues for future research. Papers must be double-spaced with normal margins. References lists and appendices do not count towards the page limit. Papers are due on April 2 by the start of class.

LATE POLICY

Papers must be submitted by the end of class on August 16. Papers that are not turned in on time will be penalized 5% per day. Late papers will not receive any comments and will not be accepted more than a week late. If you are having any problems in handling the course load, please speak to me ASAP. There are more solutions available if you approach me early.

RE-GRADES

If you believe that your grade on an assignment does not reflect the quality of your work, it is your right to request a re-grade. However, you must follow these steps:

1. You must wait 7 days before requesting a re-grade.
2. You must submit a written statement detailing why you believe your grade should be changed. You should point to specific areas of your exam/paper that you believe were graded unfairly AND explain why.
3. I will then re-grade your ENTIRE assignment. I reserve the right to RAISE or LOWER your grade.
4. After the re-grade, if you still believe that your grade is unfair, you must then follow the Department's procedures for re-grades.

CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS

I reserve the right to amend the schedule of meetings and assignments listed in this syllabus as might become necessary based on events throughout the semester. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced and students will receive an amended syllabus in writing. Copies of the most up to date syllabus can be found on the course website on Moodle.

SCHEDULE

January 15 – Introduction to the Course

January 22 – Theories and Methods

- Geva-May, Iris, David C. Hoffman, and Joselyn Muhleisen. 2018. "Twenty Years of Comparative Policy Analysis: A Survey of the Field and a Discussion of Topics and Methods." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 20 (1): 18-35.
- Gupta, K. 2012. "Comparative public policy: Using the comparative method to advance our understanding of the policy process." *Policy Studies Journal* 40: 11-26.
- Jenkins-Smith, H. C., D. Nohrstedt, C. M. Weible, and K. Ingold. 2018. "The advocacy coalition framework: An overview of the research program." *Theories of the policy process*: 135-171.
- Shanahan, E. A., M. D. Jones, M. K. McBeth, and C. M. Radaelli. 2018. "The narrative policy framework." In *Theories of the policy process*, pp. 173-213. Routledge.
- Fischer, M., and M. Maggetti, M. 2017. "Qualitative comparative analysis and the study of policy processes." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 19 (4): 345-361.

January 29 – Diffusion

- Dobbin, F., B. Simmons, and G. Garrett. 2007. "The global diffusion of public policies: Social construction, coercion, competition, or learning?" *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (1): 449-472.
- Weyland, K. 2005. "Theories of policy diffusion: Lessons from Latin American pension reform." *World politics*: 262-295.

- Shipan, C. R., and C. Volden. 2008. "The mechanisms of policy diffusion." *American journal of political science* 52 (4): 840-857.
- Marsh, D., and J. C. Sharman. 2009. "Policy diffusion and policy transfer." *Policy Studies* 30 (3): 269-288.
- Obinger, H., C. Schmitt, and P. Starke. 2013. "Policy diffusion and policy transfer in comparative welfare state research." *Social Policy & Administration* 47 (1): 111-129.

February 5 – Welfare State

- Hein, E., W. Paternesi Meloni, and P. Pasquale Tridico. 2021. "Welfare models and demand-led growth regimes before and after the financial and economic crisis." *Review of International Political Economy* 28 (5): 1196-1223
- Andersen J. G., M. A. Schøyen, and B. Hvinden. 2017. "Changing Scandinavian Welfare States. Which Way Forward?" In Peter Taylor-Gooby, Benjamin Leruth, and Heejung Chung (eds.). *After Austerity. Welfare State Transformation in Europe after the Great Recession*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferragina, E., and M. Seeleib-Kaiser. 2011. "Thematic Review: Welfare regime debate: past, present, futures?" *Policy & Politics* 39 (4): 583-611.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/030557311X603592>.
- Mares, I., and M. E. Carnes. 2009. "Social policy in developing countries." *Annual review of political science* 12 (1): 93-113.
- Starke, P. 2006. "The politics of welfare state retrenchment: A literature review." *Social policy & administration* 40 (1): 104-120.

February 12 – Policy Formulation

- Jones, B.D. 2003. "Bounded rationality and political science: Lessons from public administration and public policy." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13 (4): 395-412.
- Rochefort, D.A., and R. W. Cobb. 1993. "Problem definition, agenda access, and policy choice." *Policy studies journal* 21 (1): 56-71.
- Schneider, A. and H. Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Policy and Politics." *American Political Science Review* 87: 334-347.
- Htun, M., and S. L. Weldon. 2012.. "The civic origins of progressive policy change: Combating violence against women in global perspective, 1975–2005." *American Political Science Review* 106 (3): 548-569.
- Paquet, M. 2017. "Wicked problem definition and gradual institutional change: Federalism and immigration in Canada and Australia." *Policy and Society* 36 (3): 446-463.

February 19 – Problem Presentation

- Béland, D. 2005. "Ideas and social policy: An institutionalist perspective." *Social Policy & Administration* 39 (1), 1-18.
- Marier, P., S. Paterson, and M. Angus. 2014. "From quacks to professionals: The importance of changing social constructions in the policy-making process." *Policy Studies* 35 (4): 413-433.

- Pierce, J.J., S. Siddiki, M. D. Jones, K. Schumacher, A. Pattison, and H. Peterson. 2014. "Social construction and policy design: A review of past applications." *Policy Studies Journal* 42 (1): 1-29.
- Fischer, M. 2014. "Coalition Structures and Policy Change." *Policy Studies Journal* 42: 344-366. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12064>.
- Peters, Guy. 2017. "What Is So Wicked about Wicked Problems? A Conceptual Analysis and a Research Program." *Policy and Society* 36 (3): 385–96.

February 26 – NO CLASS (Reading Week)

March 5 – NO CLASS (Professor at Conference)

March 12 – Paper Workshop

March 19 – Implementation and Institutions

- Sabatier, P. and D. Mazmanian. 1980. "The implementation of public policy: A framework of analysis." *Policy Studies Journal* 8 (4): 538-560.
- Campbell, A. L. 2012. "Policy makes mass politics." *Annual review of political science* 15 (1): 333-351.
- Peters, B.G., J. Pierre, and D. S. King. 2005. "The politics of path dependency: Political conflict in historical institutionalism." *Journal of Politics* 67 (4): 1275-1300.
- Ney, S. 2005. "Active aging policy in Europe: Between path dependency and path departure." *Ageing International* 30 (4): 325-342.
- Sven Steinmo. 1989. "Political Institutions and Tax Policy in the United States, Sweden, and Britain," *World Politics* 41: 500-535.

March 26 – Bureaucracies and Policy Feedback

- Soss, J. and S. F. Schram. 2007. "A public transformed? Welfare reform as policy feedback." *American Political Science Review*: 111-127.
- Béland, D. 2010. "Reconsidering policy feedback: How policies affect politics" *Administration & Society* 42 (5): 568-590.
- Anat Gofen. 2014. "Mind the Gap: Dimensions and Influence of Street-Level Divergence." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 24 (2): 473-493. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mut037>.
- Ellis, K. 2011. "'Street-level Bureaucracy' Revisited: The Changing Face of Frontline Discretion in Adult Social Care in England." *Social Policy & Administration* 45 (3): 221-244.

April 2 – Globalization and Social Policy (Term Paper Due)

- Hajer, M. 2003. "Policy Without Polity? Policy Analysis and the Institutional Void." *Policy Sciences* 36 (2): 175-195.
- Keck M. E., and K. Sikkink. 1999. "Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics." *International Social Science Journal* 51 (32): 89-101.
- Dreher, A. 2006. "The influence of globalization on taxes and social policy: An empirical analysis for OECD countries." *European Journal of Political Economy* 22 (1): 179-201. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eipoleco.2005.04.006>.

- Yeates, N. 2002. "Globalization and Social Policy: From Global Neoliberal Hegemony to Global Political Pluralism." *Global Social Policy* 2 (1): 69-91.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468018102002001095>.
- Béland, D., and M. A. Orenstein. 2013. "International organizations as policy actors: An ideational approach." *Global Social Policy* 13 (2): 125-143.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468018113484608>.

April 9 – Diversity Issues

- Tolbert C., and R. E. Hero. 2001. "Dealing with Diversity: Racial/Ethnic Context and Social Policy Change" *Political Research Quarterly* 54 (3): 571-604.
- Daly M. 2011. "What Adult Worker Model? A Critical Look at Recent Social Policy Reform in Europe from a Gender and Family Perspective." *Social Politics* 18 (1): 1-23.
doi: 10.1093/sp/jxr002.
- Michener, J. 2019. "Policy Feedback in a Racialized Polity." *Policy Studies Journal* 47 (2): 423-450.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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PLAGIARISM

Department of Political Science Statement on Plagiarism

The Department of Political Science has zero tolerance for plagiarism.

1. What is plagiarism? The University defines plagiarism as "the presentation of the work of another person, in whatever form, as one's own or without proper acknowledgement" (Concordia Undergraduate Calendar 2020-2021, section 17.10.3 (<https://www.concordia.ca/academics/undergraduate/calendar/current/17-10.html>)). Plagiarism is an academic offence governed by the Code of Conduct (Academic). To find out more about how to avoid plagiarism, see the Concordia University Student Success Centre at: <https://www.concordia.ca/students/success.html>
2. What are the consequences of being caught? Students caught plagiarizing are subject to the following sanctions: (a) a written reprimand; (b) a piece of work be re-submitted; (c) an examination be taken anew; (d) a grade reduction or grade of zero for the piece of work in question; (e) a grade reduction or failing grade for the course; (f) a failing grade and ineligibility for a supplemental examination or any other evaluative exercise for the course;

(g) the obligation to take and pass courses of up to twenty-four (24) credits in addition to the total number of credits required for the student's program; (h) suspension for a period not to exceed six (6) academic terms. Suspensions shall entail the withdrawal of all University privileges, including the right to enter and be on University premises; (i) expulsion from the University. Expulsion entails the permanent termination of all University privileges. In the case of a student who has already graduated, the only two available sanctions are (i) a notation on the student's academic record that he or she has been found guilty of academic misconduct; or (ii) a recommendation to Senate for the revocation of the degree obtained. (Undergraduate Calendar, p. 58). Complete regulations can be found in section 17.10.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar.

3. See also The Political Science Department's "Resources on Avoiding Plagiarism" at: <https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/polisci/student-life/students.html#plagiarism> and the full (and updated) Academic Code of Conduct here: <http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/common/docs/policies/official-policies/Academic-Code-Conduct-2015.pdf>.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

For undergraduate courses & courses that are cross-listed with graduate courses:

In the event of extraordinary circumstances and pursuant to the [Academic regulations - Concordia University](#) - Concordia University, the University may modify the delivery, content, structure, forum, location and/or evaluation scheme. In the event of such extraordinary circumstances, students will be informed of the changes.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Concordia University is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) as soon as possible so that this office can assist with the necessary accommodations.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. If you have experienced sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination, Concordia's Sexual Assault Resource Centre provides information available resources: <https://www.concordia.ca/students/sexual-assault.html>.