

## SPL 502: Contemporary Issues in Social Policy from a Comparative Perspective



Workers returning home (1915), Edvard Munch

**Instructor:** Volkan Yılmaz  
**Fall 2019**, Wednesdays btw. 10:00-13:00  
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### Course overview

This is a master's level course on the contemporary issues in social policy from a comparative perspective. The objective of the course is to introduce students to key theoretical, conceptual, methodological and empirical aspects of the study of social policy with a particular emphasis on the political economy of social welfare. In doing so, it brings together the valuable insights of the classical debates in the social policy literature with an analytical and critical understanding of the contemporary challenges to social welfare. The course provides an overview of the interplay between states and market in social welfare, the structure and functioning of key social policy areas in different country contexts, key principles and politics underpinning these arrangements and contemporary changes they have been undergoing. Special emphasis is on the following areas: social policy financing, employment, industrial relations, pensions, healthcare, education and welfare attitudes.

### Organization of classes

The course instructor will lecture around 50 minutes at the beginning of the class to set the scene, which will be followed by a Q & A session. After a short break, a discussion session will be held where each student is expected to contribute.

### Requirements

Participants of the course are expected to **read all reading assignments of the week** before the class and to engage each week's readings in written form prior to classes. These written engagements with the assigned readings are called "**memos**". Memos should be written on **all of the assigned core readings** of each week. In these memos, you are asked to summarize the main arguments of the reading material and write what you find most thought-provoking about them (including your criticisms and/or appraisals). The average length of these memos should be around 500 words only (around one A4 page with single-space). Please note that longer memos are not better memos. You are expected to send them to the course instructor by email until each Monday night

(midnight at the latest). **Fulfilling these requirements on time (reading and writing) is key to ensure the quality of lectures and class discussions.** Late memos are not accepted, as they will not be useful in facilitating class discussion anymore. Even if you will not be attending one particular class for some reason, you are still expected to hand in your memo on time. Failing to submit memos on time will affect your grade. Memos will constitute 50 per cent of your final grade (5 points for each of the 10 memos in total).

**Class participation** (not attendance, but participation in discussions) will constitute 15 per cent of your final grade.

**The term paper** will constitute 35 per cent of your final grade. All students are expected to write a term paper related to the topics covered in this course. All students should discuss their final paper topics with the course instructor in advance and are expected to prepare a 2-3 page long final paper proposal with a list of empirical sources and the literature that they will cover by December 18, which is the last day of lectures. Final papers are due January 6. Average expected length of papers will be 5000 words. Author instructions will be available in due course.

**Grading scale: 90-100: AA; 80-89 BA; 75-79 BB; 70-74 CB; 65-69 CC; 60-64 DC; 55-59 DD; 50-54 F; 49-00.**

### Reading List

<b>Sep 25</b>	<p><b>The state of the world</b></p> <p>United Nations Development Programme. 2016. Human development report 2016: Human development for everyone, pp.25-39</p> <p>Alvaredo, F., Chancel, L., Piketty, T., Saez, E. and Zucman, G. 2018. <i>World inequality report 2018: executive summary</i>. Belknap Press.</p>
<b>Oct 2</b>	<p><b>Why do social inequalities matter?</b></p> <p>Wilkinson, R.G. and Pickett, K.E., 2009. Income inequality and social dysfunction. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>, 35, pp.493-511.</p> <p>Wacquant, L., 2010. Crafting the neoliberal state: workfare, prisonfare, and social insecurity. <i>Sociological Forum</i>, 25(2), pp.197-220.</p>
<b>Oct 9</b>	<p><b>Social policy: an introduction</b></p> <p>Polanyi, K. (1944[2001]). The self-regulating market and the fictitious commodities: labor, land and money, Boston: Beacon Press, pp.71-80.</p> <p>Titmuss, R. M. (1965). "The role of redistribution in social policy." <i>Soc. Sec. Bull.</i> 28, pp.14-20.</p> <p>Titmuss, R. M. (1974). "What is social policy?" London: George Allen &amp; Unwin, pp.138-147.</p>



<p><b>Nov 20</b> <b>(first lecture)</b></p> <p><b>Nov 20</b> <b>(second lecture)</b></p>	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>Bonoli, G., 2003. Social policy through labor markets: Understanding national differences in the provision of economic security to wage earners. <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>, 36(9), pp.1007-1030.</p> <p>Palier, B. and Thelen, K., 2010. Institutionalizing dualism: Complementarities and change in France and Germany. <i>Politics &amp; Society</i>, 38(1), pp.119-148.</p> <p>Stanford, J., 2017. The resurgence of gig work: Historical and theoretical perspectives. <i>The Economic and Labour Relations Review</i>, 28(3), pp.382-401.</p> <p><b>Industrial relations</b></p> <p>Gallin, D., 2001. Propositions on trade unions and informal employment in times of globalisation. <i>Antipode</i>, 33(3), pp.531-549.</p> <p>Chen, F., 2007. Individual rights and collective rights: Labor's predicament in China. <i>Communist and Post-Communist Studies</i>, 40(1), pp.59-79.</p>
<p><b>Nov 27</b></p>	<p><b>Old-age pensions</b></p> <p>Rowlingson, K. 2002. Private pension planning: the rhetoric of responsibility, the reality of insecurity, <i>Journal of Social Policy</i>, 31(4), pp.623–642.</p> <p>Ebbinghaus, B. 2011. <i>Varieties of Pension Governance: The Privatization of Pensions in Europe</i>, Oxford University Press, pp.351-383.</p>
<p><b>Dec 4</b></p>	<p><b>Healthcare</b></p> <p>Navarro, V., 1989. Why some countries have national health insurance, others have national health services, and the US has neither. <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i>, 28(9), pp.887-898.</p> <p>Mackintosh, M., Channon, A., Karan, A., Selvaraj, S., Cavagnero, E. and Zhao, H., 2016. What is the private sector? Understanding private provision in the health systems of low-income and middle-income countries. <i>The Lancet</i>, 388(10044), pp.596-605.</p> <p>Kullberg, L., Blomqvist, P. and Winblad, U. 2019. Health insurance for the healthy?—Voluntary health insurance in Sweden. <i>Health Policy</i>, 123, pp.737-746.</p>

<p><b>Dec 11</b></p>	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Ramesh, M., 2004. <i>Social Policy in East and Southeast Asia: Education, Health, Housing and Income Maintenance</i>. Routledge, pp.153-187.</p> <p>Van de Werfhorst, H.G. and Mijs, J.J., 2010. Achievement inequality and the institutional structure of educational systems: A comparative perspective. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>, 36, pp.407-428.</p>
<p><b>Dec 18</b></p>	<p><b>Welfare knowledge &amp; attitudes</b></p> <p>Taylor-Gooby, P., Hastie, C. and Bromley, C., 2003. Querulous citizens: welfare knowledge and the limits to welfare reform. <i>Social Policy &amp; Administration</i>, 37(1), pp.1-20.</p> <p>Taylor-Gooby, P. and Leruth, B. eds., 2018. <i>Attitudes, Aspirations and Welfare: Social Policy Directions in Uncertain Times</i>. Springer, pp.1-28.</p>