

POLITICAL ISSUES AND SOCIAL POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Aims

An identification and examination of key political issues in a range of social policy areas within the European Union (EU). Employing relevant concepts, models and theories, these issues will be addressed within the context of EU processes of harmonisation, mutual recognition, and the overall on-going integration project.

Objectives

Initially, a range of theoretical models and concepts relating to the overall development of the EU, and the process of integration, will be examined against the background of the growth in importance of social policy areas in the EU project. Within that framework and process the course will then proceed to address political issues relating to specific areas of social policy, including those concerning the environment, employment and unemployment, education, the 'demographic time-bomb', gender, and immigration and asylum policy. The course will conclude by examining political issues relating to social policy within the EU regional policy arena, and by examining social policy within the context of the politics of the future of the EU.

Structure of the course

The course will be taught through a series of weekly lectures and seminars.

Lecture programme:

1. The growth in importance of social policy in the European Union project (03.10.06)
2. The E.U. integration project and the politics of social policy: theoretical perspectives – 'spillover', functionalism, neo-functionalism, federalism. (10.10.06)
3. Harmonisation, mutual recognition, and the europeanisation of social policy. (17.10.06)
4. Environment policy (24.10.06)
5. Employment and unemployment policy (31.10.06)
6. Education and training policy (07.11.06)
7. Immigration, mobility and asylum policy (14.11.06)
8. The 'gender dimension' and E.U. social policy (21.11.06)
9. The 'demographic time bomb' (28.11.06)
10. Regions and the E.U. policy process (05.12.06)
11. Social policy and the politics of the future of the E.U. (12.12.06)

Seminar programme (commencing 24.10.06):

1. What factors can be identified as being key in the growth in importance of social policy in the European Union project?
2. Theoretically and practically how is the growth of social policy related to the E.U. integration project?
3. Can we really talk of the harmonisation of E.U. social policy or should it be described in a different way?
4. Choose **one** of the policy areas below and demonstrate how developments in that policy area have contributed to the harmonisation and/or mutual recognition of E.U. social policy, as well as to the overall E.U. integration project:
 - a) environment policy

- b) employment and unemployment policy
- c) education and training policy
- d) immigration, mobility and asylum policy
- e) gender policy

Course Assessment

- a) Seminar presentation and written transcript (maximum 1,000 words/3 sides of A4 paper).....**30%**
Deadline: Friday 15 December 2006.
- b) Essay (maximum 2000 words/6 sides of A4 paper) **70%**
Deadline: Wednesday 17 January 2007.

a) Seminar presentation and written transcript

Students will be required to make one formal verbal seminar presentation in English on one of the seminar questions listed above in the Seminar Programme. These will take place throughout the course, commencing in week 4 of teaching. Presentations can be made individually or as part of a group. After the presentation students will receive verbal feedback and then be required to write up (in no more than 1000 words/3 sides of A4 paper) the transcript of their final seminar paper. They will be marked individually on their presented final seminar paper.

b) Essay

Students will be required to submit an essay in answer to **one** of the questions shown below. The essay must be of a maximum of 2,000 words/6 sides of A4 paper, be type written, fully properly referenced, and include a full bibliography.

- (i) Using examples from at least two social policy areas illustrate practically and theoretically how social policy has grown in importance in the European Union project.
- (ii) Why should the European Union be interested in social policy?
- (iii) Are we witnessing both a Europeanisation and a regionalisation of social policy making in the European Union?

Texts

Students are referred to a range of journal, book and internet texts. These include:

Books

Hantrais provides a useful introductory overview, and is useful for a range of E.U. social policy areas covered in the course. Kleinman addresses some broader issues concerning the role of social policy in the E.U. Kleinman (Ch.7) also examines the pressures created for EU social policy by rising levels of unemployment and changes in Labour Market policies. Richardson (Ch.3) examines ‘Europeanisation’, as well as Regions and the E.U. social policy process (Ch.13). Featherstone and Radaelli also examine the politics of ‘Europeanisation’. Hantrais outlines EU strategies for promoting equal opportunities and gender policies in the social policy arena. Castles considers the importance of ‘family friendly’ policies, particularly useful for gender policy analysis.

- Castles, F. *The Future of the Welfare State*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Featherstone, K. and Radaelli, C. (eds.) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Gallie, D. (ed.) *Resisting marginalisation: Unemployment experience and social policy in the EU*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Geyer, R. *Exploring European Social Policy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000.
- Hantrais, L. *Social Policy in the EU*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000.
- Jones, C. (ed.) *New Perspectives on the Welfare State in Europe*, London, Routledge, 1993 (especially Liebfried, S. 'Towards a European Welfare State?')
- Jordan, A. and Liefferink, D. (eds.) *Environmental Policy in Europe: The Europeanization of National Environmental Policy*, London, Routledge, 2004.
- Kleinman, M. *A European Welfare State: European Union Social Policy in context*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002.
- McCormick, J. *Understanding the European Union* (Third Edition), Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2005.
- Richardson, J. (ed.) *European Union. Power and policy-making* (Third edition), Oxford, Routledge, 2006.
- Roberts, I. and Springer, B. *Social Policy in the European Union: Between Harmonisation and National Autonomy*, Boulder, Lynne Reiner, 2001.
- Rosamond, B. *Theories Of European Integration*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2000
- Salais, R. and Villeneuve, R. (eds.) *Europe and the politics of capabilities*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004
- Schimmelfennig, F. and Sedelmeier, U.. (eds.) *The Europeanisation of Central and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 2005.

Journal Articles

- Begg, I. and Nectoux, F. (1995) 'Social protection and economic union', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 5, pp.285-302.
- Borros, S. and Greve, B. (2004) The Open Method of Co-ordination in the European Union, special issue of *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11:2 (various articles of interest)
- Cunliffe, A. and Wilton, J. (2006) The Development of a European Asylum Policy in an Expanded European Union, *Migration Online*, May 2006 (www.migrationonline.cz/studies.shtml)
- Guillen, A. and Palier, B. (2004) 'Does Europe matter? Accession to EU and social policy developments in recent and new member states', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 14:3, pp.203-209, and other articles in this special issue on *EU Enlargement, Europeanisation and Social Policy*.
- Jepsen, M. and Pascual, A.S. (2005) 'The European Social Model: an exercise in deconstruction', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 15(3), pp.231-245.
- Mosher, J. and Trubek, D. (2003) 'Alternative approaches to governance in the EU: EU Social Policy and the European Employment Strategy', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 4:1, pp.63-88.
- Neilson, J. (1998) 'Equal opportunities for women in the European Union: success or failure?', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 8, pp.64-79.
- Sinn, H-W and Ochel, W (2003) 'Social Union, convergence and migration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41, pp.869-96.
- Threlfall, M. (2003) 'European social integration: harmonization, convergence and the single social area', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13, pp.121-140.

- Van der Mei (2003) 'Freedom of movement for the unemployed and co-ordination of unemployment benefit schemes', *European Journal of Social Security*, 5:3, pp.214-229.
- Vobruba, G. (2003) 'The enlargement crisis of the European Union: limits of the dialectics of integration and expansion', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13 (1), pp.35-48, and responses by M. Bach and M. Rhodes.

Journals

Environmental Politics

European Union Politics

European Political Science

Journal of Common Market Studies

Journal of European Social Policy (the 'European Briefing' section of this journal is very useful for up-to-date EU developments)

Journal of European Public Policy

Migration Online (www.migrationonline.cz/studies.shtml)

Internet

<http://www.cec.org.uk>

<http://www.ecsa.org>

<http://europa.eu.int>

<http://ibeurope.eu.int>

<http://www.ieep.org.uk>

<http://www.policylibrary.com>

John Wilton

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