

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, convergence 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 and political issues associated with that development. 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 and training, and the 'demographic time-bomb'.

Structure of the course

The course will be taught through a series of lectures and workshops. There will be 7 lectures and 1 workshop.

Course programme:

PLEASE NOTE: 80% attendance at lectures (i.e. at least 6), as well as attendance at the workshop, is a requirement to pass the course (see Course Assessment on page 2)

The powerpoint presentations for each lecture will be placed on the Masaryk University Information System prior to each lecture. They will include any additional sources to those included in the general reading list below.

Classes will be held at 10.00 hours on the dates shown below in the classrooms shown below

- 12.11.25 (Room P22) Lecture 1. The growth in importance of social policy in the European Union project
- 12.11.25 (Room P22) Lecture 2 The E.U. integration project and the politics of social policy: theoretical perspectives – 'spillover', functionalism, neo-functionalism, federalism
- 13.11.25 (Room U33) Lecture 3 Harmonisation, mutual recognition, and the europeanisation of social policy.
- 19.11.25 (Room P22) Lecture 4. Environment policy
- 20.11.25 (Room U33) Lecture 5. Employment and unemployment policy
- 26.11.25 (Room P22) Lecture 6. Education and training policy
- 27.11.25 (Room U33) Lecture 7. The 'demographic time bomb'
- 03.12.25 (Room P22) Workshop

Workshop 03.12.25:

PLEASE NOTE:

Attendance at the workshop is a requirement to pass the course (see Course Assessment below)

In the workshop there will be student group discussion after some direction provided in respect of preparation, structure and content of the assessment essay.

Course Assessment

- a) **Attendance:** 80% attendance at lectures (at least 6) and attendance at the workshop is a requirement to pass this course.
- b) **Essay** (maximum 2000 words)

To be submitted by 15.12.25 by email attachment to me at jitaly25@hotmail.com or through the Masaryk University Information System

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*, be fully properly referenced, and include a full bibliography.

PLEASE NOTE: Essays that are more than 10 per cent above or below the word limit will be penalised through the deduction of marks

- (i) Have political, social or economic factors led to the development of the growth in importance of social policy in the European Union integration project? Use examples from **at least two** social policy areas to illustrate practically and theoretically your assessment..
- (ii) Evaluate to what degree European Union social policy can be characterised as *Europeanised*. Provide evidence and examples from social policy areas to substantiate your assessment.

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MAY USE EXAMPLES FROM SOCIAL POLICY AREAS NOT COVERED IN THE COURSE IN YOUR ESSAY, BUT, IF IN DOUBT YOU SHOULD CHECK WITH PROFESSOR JOHN WILTON PRIOR TO WRITING AND SUBMITTING YOUR ESSAY WHETHER THEY ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ACCEPTABLE IN THIS COURSE AS EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL POLICY

Texts

Students are referred below to a range of journal, book and internet texts. *These may be added to within the lectures, and if so, sources will be included within the lecture powerpoint presentations placed on the Information System prior to each lecture.*

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, 2007 (Third edition) (or Second edition, 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. (or Second Edition, 2001)
- 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.
- Wallace, H. Wallace, W. and Pollack, M. A. *Policy Making in the European Union* (5th edition), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Journal Articles

- Aysan, M. F. and Beaujot, R. (2009) ‘Welfare Regimes for Ageing populations: No Single Path for Reform’, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp.701-720.
- 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)
- Delreux, T. ‘The E.U. negotiates multilateral environmental agreements: explaining the agent’s discretion’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 16, No.5, pp.719-737.
- 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.
- Kelemen, R. D. (2010) 'Globalising European Union environment policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 17, no.3, pp.335-349.
- Liefferink, D. Arts, B. Kamstra, J. Ooijevaar, J. (2009) 'Leaders and laggards in environmental policy: a quantitative analysis of domestic policy outputs', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 16, No.5, pp.677-700
- 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.
- Room, G. (2007) 'Challenges facing the E.U.: Scope for a coherent response', *European Societies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp.229-244.
- 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.
- Walkenhorst, H. (2008) 'Explaining change in EU education policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol.14, No. 4, June 2008, pp. 567-587.

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)

John Wilton

(22.09.25)