

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	APSS5202											
Subject Title	Comparative Social Policy and Social Development											
Credit Value	3											
Level	5											
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil											
Assessment Methods	<table><tr><td>100% Continuous Assessment</td><td>% weighting</td></tr><tr><td>1. Class Participation</td><td>10%</td></tr><tr><td>2. Group Seminar Presentation</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>3. Country Case Study Report</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>4. Term Paper</td><td>40%</td></tr></table> ▪ The grade is calculated according to the percentage assigned; ▪ The completion and submission of all component assignments are required for passing the subject; and ▪ Student must pass the specific component(s) (standard of passing) if he/she is to pass the subject.		100% Continuous Assessment	% weighting	1. Class Participation	10%	2. Group Seminar Presentation	25%	3. Country Case Study Report	25%	4. Term Paper	40%
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Objectives	1. To introduce a variety of approaches to research on cross-national social policy and social development. 2. To critically assess the strengths and limitations of these approaches to policy-making and social development. 3. To outline the institutional arrangements of various welfare systems and the policy and development context in which they developed. 4. To explore the trends and patterns of social policy making in welfare states and social development across nations.											
Intended Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to acquire: a. Basic Knowledge and Competence of the Field of Study Students will be able to discuss in depth major concepts and theoretical paradigms in analyzing social policy and social development in a comparative perspective.											

	b. Effective Communication Students will be able to demonstrate their competence effectively in interpreting and communicating major issues involved in comparative analysis of social policy and social development. c. Independence and Creativity Students will be able to demonstrate independence and creativity in reviewing and examining policy and development options, activities, and processes. d. Critical Judgment Students will be able to exercise critical judgment in assessing and evaluating policy and social development decisions and options. e. Ethical and Social Understanding Students will be able to articulate with proficiency the ethical values and beliefs crucial to designing and framing responsible policies and development decisions that are compatible with international benchmark and practices. f. Commitment to continuous learning in social policy and social development Students will be able to demonstrate their adaptability and resilience to pursue lifelong learning in a changing world.
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	Introduction: Comparative Social Policy and Social Development This session introduces students to the subject matter (comparative social policy and social development) and APSS5202 course details. It serves to provide foundational knowledge about what social policies are, how they work, and why we need them. Additionally, in this session, the value of conducting comparative research on social policies will be discussed. Welfare State in Focus: Construction, Origins, and Development I This session introduces students to the welfare state. Using Esping-Andersen's (1990) <i>The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i> as a framework, students learn about the historical development of the welfare state and its defining characteristics. The three configurations of welfare regimes, and how it matters for social policy-making and social development, will be discussed. Welfare State in Focus: Construction, Origins, and Development II This session delves deeper into <i>The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i> (Esping-Andersen, 1990), discussing the socio-cultural and historical roots of the different welfare regime types. The varying relationships between the state, market, non-profit sector, and family across the three welfare regime types will be discussed, as well as the implications of these relationships for welfare provision and social development. Conducting Research on Comparative Social Policies and Social Development I This session invites students to explore the case study strategy. Yin's (2003) five components of research design will be discussed in detail and illustrative examples will be provided. Conducting Research on Comparative Social Policies and Social Development II

This session builds on the previous content by discussing about multiple-case study designs. The logic behind such designs, approaches, and best practices will be explored together in class. Illustrative examples and in-class practice exercises will be provided to increase comprehension of the material.

East Asian Welfare Systems – Hong Kong

This session kicks off the ‘East Asian Welfare Systems’ series. A historical perspective is used to discuss the development of social welfare and related policies in Hong Kong from the colonial to post-colonial era. Special attention will be placed on Hong Kong’s social security system, public assistance programs, healthcare policies and systems, the labour market, welfare reforms, and housing. Also, the session covers demographic trends, public expenditure, and contemporary social issues that are relevant to social policy-making and research (e.g., poverty and ageing society).

East Asian Welfare Systems – Japan

This session discusses the development of social policies and the welfare sector in post-war Japan. The session focuses on social policies across the lifespan (e.g., as relevant to birth, education, work, income protection, and retirement), as well as in the context of contemporary crises (e.g., declining birth rates, ageing society, and elderly poverty). These developments will be discussed in the context of interactions between the government, market, non-profit sector, and the general public.

East Asian Welfare Systems – Singapore

This session discusses the development of social policies and the welfare sector in Singapore since its independence. The session focuses on social policies across the lifespan (e.g., as relevant to birth, education, work, income protection, and retirement), as well as in the context of contemporary crises (e.g., declining birth rates and ageing society). These developments will be discussed in the context of interactions between the government, market, non-profit sector, and the general public.

East Asian Welfare Systems – South Korea

This session discusses the development of social policies and the welfare sector in South Korea since the Korean war. The session focuses on social policies across the lifespan (e.g., as relevant to birth, education, work, income protection, and retirement), as well as in the context of contemporary crises (e.g., declining birth rates and employment insecurity). These developments will be discussed in the context of interactions between the government, market, non-profit sector, and the general public.

East Asian Welfare Systems – Taiwan

This session discusses the development of social policies and the welfare sector in Taiwan since 1949. The session focuses on social policies across the lifespan (e.g., as relevant to birth, education, work, income protection, and retirement), as well as in the context of contemporary crises (e.g., declining birth rates, ageing society, and rising income inequality). These developments will be discussed in the context of interactions between the government, market, non-profit sector, and the general public.

Conducting Research on Comparative Social Policies and Social Development III

This session focuses on different ways to analyse case study evidence, as applicable to single- and/or multiple-case study designs. Illustrative examples and in-class practice exercises will be provided to increase comprehension of the material.

	Questions on Ethics in the Welfare State and Social Policy Development In this session, ethical quandaries in comparative social policy and social development will be examined. Among others, philosophical debates and ethical puzzles on the welfare state, welfare redistribution policies, and public assistance programs will be critically discussed in the context of ongoing crises (e.g., low birth rates and an ageing society). Reflections on Comparative Social Policy and Social Development The final session concludes the course with a review of the content, as well as open and critical discussions on the shared challenges that different countries in East Asia face. Relevant publications on social policy and welfare that use multiple-case study designs will be studied together in class, analyzing their logic of inquiry, treatment of units of analysis, analytical strategy, merits of the findings, research limitations, and the feasibility of their recommendations for policy-making and/or promoting social development.																																																						
Teaching/Learning Methodology	The subject is divided into lectures and seminar sessions. Students will attend interactive lectures to gain a proper understanding of the major frameworks in analyzing social policy and social development in international and local contexts. Whenever possible, international scholars visiting the Department and guest lecturers from other academic institutions will be invited to contribute to guest lectures to expose students to a broader horizon for appreciating different social policies and social development practices. Students are required to do group presentations at seminar sessions.																																																						
Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes	<table><tr><th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th><th rowspan="2">% weighting</th><th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed</th></tr><tr><th>a</th><th>b</th><th>c</th><th>d</th><th>e</th><th>f</th></tr><tr><td>1. Class participation</td><td>10%</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>2. Group Seminar Presentation</td><td>25%</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>3. Case Study Report</td><td>25%</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>4. Term Paper</td><td>40%</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>100%</td><td colspan="6"></td></tr></table> Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed						a	b	c	d	e	f	1. Class participation	10%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2. Group Seminar Presentation	25%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3. Case Study Report	25%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4. Term Paper	40%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Total	100%						
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Class participation (10%)

Full attendance and active participation are expected. Students will be recognized and rewarded for their active participation. For scoring as high as possible in class participation, students are encouraged to speak up during class time (such as to ask or answer questions) and participating in discussion topics.

Group Seminar Presentation (25%)

Each group should consist of no more than four students. Each project presentation will last between 30 and 35 minutes, followed by a 10-minute feedback/ Q&A session.

The structure of each seminar presentation should be based on a comparison of a policy or scheme between two jurisdictions. Groups can refer to the list of suggested topics or set up their own topics, subject to instructor's approval.

Groups are required to submit a presentation outline one week before their presentation. Each group is encouraged to consult with the instructor before their presentation.

Groups will be assessed on their presentation and their ability to stimulate discussions and handle Q&A. Also, following the presentation, a copy of the Power-Point presentation should be submitted to the instructor for assessment. Through this exercise, students will be able to demonstrate their basic knowledge in the field of study, their effectiveness in communicating and responding to ideas and discussions, their independent thinking and creativity, capability in making critical judgments, and ability in tackling ethical issues in policy and social development.

The instructor will look into the individual effort against group effort in assessing group work and grading individual students' effort accordingly.

Case Study Report (25%)

Students will write a 2,000-word report (not including references, tables, and/or figures) on the welfare system of the country/region they come from or are most familiar with. The focus should be on one particular sector or policy issue. This assessment will allow students to show their ability in making creative and independent use of available secondary information to highlight their specialized knowledge in the field. Also, they will be able to demonstrate their proficiency in communicating ideas, understanding of ethical and social issues and ability in making fine judgments through this written work.

Students may connect this case study report with the term paper, which focuses on a comparative case study.

Term Paper (40%)

The term paper should be no less than 2,000 words (not including references, tables, and/or figures). A list of essay questions will be provided and students must choose one from the list. Subject to instructor's approval, the student may work on a topic that he/she proposes. The student will be required to answer the question with reference to at least two countries/regions. The policy areas covered must be different from those investigated in the group seminar presentation. This exercise will allow students the opportunity to integrate major concepts, theories, and paradigms that they learned in the subject and demonstrate the levels of knowledge and competence they have gained

	in the field of study. Also, they will be able to demonstrate how effectively they can communicate their research findings, and whether they can make use of their data creatively and thoughtfully, make appropriate and fair judgments, and tackle complex social and ethical issues in comparative policy and development settings.	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ Lecture	27 Hrs.
	▪ Seminar presentation and discussion	12 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	▪ Self Study	39 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation of Presentation	10 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation of Case Study Report	15 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation of Term Paper	20 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	123 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<u>Essential</u> Esping-Andersen, G. (1990) <i>The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press. Kennett, P. (2013) (eds.) <i>A Handbook of Comparative Social Policy, Second Edition</i>. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Lee, J. & Chan, K.-W. (2007) (eds.) <i>The Crisis of Welfare in East Asia</i>. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. Lee, J. Midgley, J. & Zhu, Y. (2014) (eds.) <i>Social Policy and Change in East Asia</i>. Lanham: Lexington Books. Marsland, D. (1996) <i>Welfare or Welfare State? Contradictions and Dilemmas in Social Policy</i>. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. Midgley, J. & Tang, K.L. (2010) (eds.) <i>Social Policy and Poverty in East Asia: The Role of Social Security</i>. London: Routledge. <u>Supplementary</u> Adams, D. (2002) 'Poverty – A precarious public policy idea', <i>Australian Journal of Public Administration</i>, 61(4), pp. 89-98. Adema, W. (1997) 'What do countries really spend on social policies? A comparative note', <i>OECD Economic Studies</i>, 28. Paris: OECD.	

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	Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore’, <i>Asian Politics & Policy</i>, 12, pp. 559-574. O’Connor, J.S. Orloff, A.S. & Shaver, S. (1999) <i>State, Markets, Families: Gender, Liberalism and Social Policy in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Especially Chapter 1. Pierson, P. (2000) ‘Three worlds of welfare state research’, <i>Comparative Political Studies</i>, 33(6/7), pp. 791-821. Teo, K. K., Tan, E. S., & Wang, Z. (2025). Regime support in Singapore: From enigma to ‘new normal’. <i>Asian Journal of Political Science</i>, 33(1), 140-171. van Doore, A., & Roosma, F. (2026). The perceived procedural paradox: Explaining (in)coherence in attitudes towards conditionality and complexity in the Dutch welfare state. <i>Social Policy & Administration</i>, 60, 740-753. van Oorschot, W. (2000). Who should get what, and why? On deservingness criteria and the conditionality of solidarity among the public. <i>Policy & Politics</i>, 28(1), 33-48. Walker, A. & Wong, C.-K. (2005) (eds.) <i>East Asian Welfare Regimes in Transition: From Confucianism to Globalisation</i>. Bristol: The Policy Press. Wu, C.-F., Wang, J. S.-H., Kadiyan, L., Chen, J.-H., Liu, W.-C., & Lee, P.-C. (2025). Patterns and determinants of multiple welfare programme participation among families with children in Taiwan: Evidence from panel data (2016-2022). <i>International Journal of Social Welfare</i>, 34, 1-14. Yang, J.-J., Choe, Y., & Nam, Y. (2026). People’s contrasting attitudes towards universal basic income in Sweden and South Korea. <i>Social Policy and Society</i>, 25, 16-29.
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