

## Subject Description Form

<b>Subject Code</b>	APSS5203											
<b>Subject Title</b>	Contemporary Issues in Social Policy											
<b>Credit Value</b>	3											
<b>Level</b>	5											
<b>Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion</b>	Nil											
<b>Assessment Methods</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">100% Continuous Assessment</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Individual Assessment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Class Participation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Seminar Presentation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Term Paper</td> <td style="text-align: center;">40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Case Study</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The grade is calculated according to the percentage assigned;</li> <li>▪ The completion and submission of all component assignments are required for passing the subject; and</li> <li>▪ Student must pass all components (standard of passing) if he/she is to pass the subject.</li> </ul>		100% Continuous Assessment	Individual Assessment	1. Class Participation	10%	2. Seminar Presentation	30%	3. Term Paper	40%	4. Case Study	20%
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<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To introduce in-depth studies on various social policy issues/domains to students;</li> <li>2. To outline the various institutional arrangements of social policy issues and to appreciate the risks and constraints involved in planning these policies;</li> <li>3. To apply various theoretical approaches to analyse social policy and development around the world.</li> </ol>											
<b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Basic knowledge and competence of the field of study</b> Students will be able to discuss in depth major emerging issues in social policy and social development in a comparative perspective;</li> <li><b>b. Effective Communication</b> Students will be able to demonstrate their competence effectively in interpreting, communicating, and dissecting major emerging issues in social policy and planning for social development;</li> <li><b>c. Independent critical thinking</b></li> </ol>											

	<p>Students will be able to demonstrate independence and creativity in reviewing and evaluating policy and development options, activities, and processes; and</p> <p><b>d. Ethical and Social Understanding</b> Students will be able to articulate with proficiency the ethical values and beliefs crucial to designing and framing responsible policies and development solutions in contemporary international and local contexts.</p>
<p><b>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Social Policy Issues: Introduction to global and local dimensions</b> An introduction to the broad spectrum of social policy issues facing contemporary societies. Particular emphasis would be placed on East Asian societies, covering issues such as poverty, housing, healthcare, the changing role of the family, social security systems, and more.</li> <li>2. <b>The Role of Government in Social Policy &amp; Social Development</b> An emphasis will be placed on the centrality of the government in achieving balanced social development. The controversy between productivism and developmentalism as different guiding principles of social development will be critically examined to highlight the possibilities and limits of the government's role in facilitating welfare provision and social development. Particular emphasis will be placed on the role of the government, in conjunction with the larger society, in building an inclusive environment for the poor and socially deprived.</li> <li>3. <b>The Political Economy of Social Policy in East Asia</b> The focus will be on the shift from explanations that emphasize convergence in the development of welfare states to those focusing on divergence. Particular attention will be paid to East Asian welfare regimes, where the emphasis on workfare and social security system integration has been prevailing. Students will need to explore the issue of welfare and social justice within a socio-political context that gives undue advantages to capitalists in terms of social resource allocation, and deeply opposes a fairer society through developmental social welfare.</li> <li>4. <b>Impact of Economic Crises on Family Functioning</b> The focus will be on the shifting role of the family as source of mutual aid and how the changing global economy has stressed and shaped modern intra-familial relationship. Questions would be raised as to the impact of changing socio-economic policies on family functioning and how the capacity of normal family functioning could be protected by social policies.</li> <li>5. <b>Do we need health insurance?</b> The focus would be on the problem of increasing healthcare costs and the problems and risks associated with various forms of healthcare insurance. The issue of health insurance will be examined comparatively and critically, citing examples of successes and failures. A careful examination will be conducted on the effectiveness and efficiency of the current mixed healthcare system shared between the state and the market, its advantages and disadvantages, its potential for improvements, and possible constraints in the provision of long-term care for an ageing population.</li> <li>6. <b>Why are social security systems failing? What are the alternatives?</b> The focus would be on the problems associated with the prevailing failures of social security systems in the context of an extremely volatile global economy in the post-financial tsunami era. Special efforts will focus on a critical examination of alternatives to social security and how East Asian societies and governments cope with the problem of long-term income security through system integration and risk</li> </ol>

	<p>management. Institutional arrangements to facilitate the state and family in conjoint efforts to build long-term income security will be explored.</p> <p><b>7. The Role of Housing in Social Development</b> The unique role of housing policy as both a risk and a growth factor for families in the context of long-term asset building for income security would be carefully examined. Seldom does social policy carry such complex interfaces with both economic and urban policy as housing issues touch on land supply, the construction industry, and the banking system. Within the large set of housing policies, emphasis will be placed on home ownership policy and the quality of urban life associated with owner-occupation in metropolitan cities like Hong Kong, Singapore, Taipei and Seoul.</p> <p><b>8. Welfare Consumption and Ethopolitics</b> Modern welfare policy often conjures up images of choice, autonomy, and self-determination in welfare consumption. This lecture will focus on the characteristics and identity construction of welfare recipients. Particular emphasis would be placed on the concepts of governmentality and ethopolitics, where governance is disguised within a plethora of governing technologies aiming at promoting non-existent choices.</p> <p><b>9. Poverty – its many forms and causes in high growth East Asian Economies</b> The focus would be on understanding the forms and causes of poverty amongst low-income households in Hong Kong. Other relevant East Asian countries, who are beset with similar problems, will also be discussed. Finally, why public policy has thus far failed to alleviate the problem will be explored.</p> <p><b>10. Asset, Risk &amp; Social Policy</b> Modern social policies are now concerned with how social policies could enhance family and individual capacities to face both economic and non-economic family crises. Asset-building has been seen as vital life-long process to enhance such capacity. The focus of the lecture will be on how governments have succeeded or failed to use social policies to enhance such capacity-building.</p> <p><b>11. Disasters and Social Policy</b> Modern life is beset with natural disasters of a scale that commonly shatters families and communities within a short period of time. This often calls for emergency social policies and responsive measures from both the state and the society. Proper coordination of urgent relief work and long-term community rehabilitation calls for prior knowledge and planning. The lecture will focus on recent experiences in earthquakes, SARS, COVID-19, and other crises to have a preliminary evaluation of the effectiveness and equity issues of such relief work.</p>								
<b>Teaching/Learning Methodology</b>	Students will be involved in interactive lectures to learn about issues arising from changing frameworks and theories for understanding social policy, policymaking, and social development in international and local contexts. Different cases studies will be proposed to allow students to gain a broader perspective. In seminars, students will learn from group presentations that focus on a major contemporary policy or social development issue. These presentations put their learnt knowledge and skills into practice.								
<b>Assessment Methods in Alignment with</b>	<table border="1" data-bbox="443 1899 1474 1998"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="443 1899 721 1998">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th data-bbox="721 1899 935 1998">Assessment type</th> <th data-bbox="935 1899 1082 1998">% weighting</th> <th data-bbox="1082 1899 1474 1998">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	Assessment type	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed				
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Intended Learning Outcomes			a	b	c	d	
	1. Class Participation	Individual assessment	10%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2. Seminar Presentation	Group assessment	30%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3. Term Paper	Individual assessment	40%	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4. Case Study	Individual assessment	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total		100%					

Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:

#### **Seminar Presentation (30%)**

Students will undertake one group presentation chosen from a list of seminar topics. 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.

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 assessment, 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 judgment, and ability in tackling ethical issues in policy and social development.

#### **Term Paper (40%)**

The term paper should be up to 3,500 words (not including references, tables, and/or figures). The policy issues covered should be different from those investigated in the seminar presentation. This assessment will give students the opportunity to integrate major concepts, theories, and paradigms that they have 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 arguments and fair judgments, and tackle complex social and ethical issues in contemporary social policy.

#### **Case Study (20%)**

Students will write an 1000-word position paper (not including references, tables, and/or figures) on the assigned welfare issue. A list of essay questions will be provided and students must choose one from the list. 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 one particular social policy or social issue.

	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.	
<b>Student Study Effort Expected</b>	<b>Class contact:</b>	
	▪ Lecture	27 Hrs.
	▪ Seminar presentation and discussion	12 Hrs.
	<b>Other student study effort:</b>	
	▪ Self-directed Study	42 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation of Presentation	20 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation of Term Paper	20 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation of Case Study	5 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	126 Hrs.
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	English	
<b>Medium of Assessment</b>	English	
<b>Reading List and References</b>	<p>Arts, W., &amp; Gelissen, J. (2002). Three worlds of welfare capitalism or more? A state-of-the-art report. <i>Journal of European Social Policy</i>, 12(2), 137-158.</p> <p>Aspalter, C. (2006). The East Asian welfare model. <i>International Journal of Social Welfare</i>, 15, 290-301.</p> <p>Aspalter, C. (2019). Welfare regime analysis: 30 years in the making. <i>International Social Work</i>, 62(1), 76-88.</p> <p>Bambra, C. (2005). Worlds of welfare and the health care discrepancy. <i>Social Policy and Society</i>, 4(1): 31-41.</p> <p>Barr, N. (2002). Reforming pensions: Myths, truths, and policy choices. <i>International Social Security Review</i>, 53(3): 3-26.</p> <p>Choi, Y. J. (2012). End of the era of productivist welfare capitalism? Diverging welfare regimes in East Asia. <i>Asian Journal of Social Science</i>, 40(3), 275-294.</p> <p>Chow, N. W. S. (1981). Social security provision in Singapore and Hong Kong. <i>Journal of Social Policy</i>, 10(3), 353-366.</p> <p>Croissant, A. (2004). Changing welfare regimes in East and Southeast Asia: Crisis, change and challenge. <i>Social Policy &amp; Administration</i>, 38(5), 504-524.</p>	

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- \*Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- \* Alternatively, you may read previous editions of Robert K. Yin's book:  
 - (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.  
 - (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.