Subject Description Form

Subject Code	APSS5793
Subject Title	Social Problem, Policy Analysis and Accountability
Credit Value	3
Level	5
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil
Assessment Methods	<table><tr><td>100% Continuous Assessment</td><td>Individual Assessment</td></tr><tr><td>1. Policy analysis report</td><td>50%</td></tr><tr><td>2. Presentation</td><td>35%</td></tr><tr><td>3. Participation</td><td>15%</td></tr></table> ▪ The grade is calculated according to the percentage assigned; and ▪ The completion and submission of all component assignments are required for passing the subject; and ▪ Student must pass all components (grade D) if he/she is to pass the subject.
Objectives	The subject is particularly for students enrolled in the Master of Social Work programme. It aims to develop students' scholarly ability in social policy analysis, with special emphasis on the interrelationship between current social issues/problems, social policy solutions and social service provision. Specific objectives are: 1. To examine the process of social policy formation and implementation, and its impact on social development, especially in terms of social equality and social justice. Special attention will be paid to understand the complexity and interconnectedness of various social problems and policy intervention; 2. To understand the philosophical and epistemological basis of various theoretical approaches in analysing social problems and policy making, with particular emphasis on the inherited value conflicts and dilemmas in the process; 3. To critically evaluate the various approaches in social policy analysis, and their relevance and applicability in local context; and 4. To help the students to review their own values and approaches in analysing social problems and social policy so as to develop a more reflective attitude in their professional practice.

Intended Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to: a. show their understanding of the current debates and discussions about social issues and policy reaction; b. acknowledge the arguments inherited in various theoretical perspectives of social problem and policy analysis, reviewing how they can be applied in the local context, accounting for their strengths and weaknesses; c. develop their own framework for analyzing social problems, social policy and development issues with clear vision for social accountability in professional practice; d. articulate and initially reflect on values and philosophies in analyzing social problems, social policy, and social development; and e. critically review the current social policy provisions in addressing social problems in local context
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	**1. Defining Social Problems** . Different perspectives in understanding social problems . Connections between social problems, analysing social policy and social service provisions **2. Scope and Approaches in Policy Analysis** . Scope and boundary of social policy . Rational-technocratic approach vs. interpretative-normative approach . Development of policy analysis as an art and science **3. Theories of Social Policy and Social Analysis** . Classical theories: individualist, functionalist, corporatism, Fabianism, social democracy, the Third Way, New Right, Marxism and Neo-Marxism, etc. . Contemporary theories: (E.g.) feminism, anti-racism, critical theory, post-structuralism, postmodernism, anti-oppressive practices, new public administration, etc. **4. Basic Concepts and Issues in Social Accountability** . The quest for public good, social development and social accountability . Evaluation, audit, accountability and neo-conservatism . The role of bureaucracy, professionals, interest groups, NGOs and the community in the formation and implementation of social policy . Professionalism . Managerialism **5. Power and Rationality in Policy-making Processes** . Policy-making processes in Hong Kong . Power, knowledge, and rationality in policy-making processes **6. Policy Analysis Frameworks and Skills** . Political culture and political economic context . Historical and social analysis . Economic development vs. social development

	7. Contemporary Issues & Themes in Social Problems and Social Policy Analysis, examples:
	Aging society and ageism
	Challenges to families
	Crimes and addiction
	Education and employment
	Health and wellness
	Housing and land use
	Marginalization of vulnerable groups
	Poverty and distributional justice
	Social security and retirement protection
Teaching/Learning Methodology	This subject aims at providing further training to students in developing fuller ability in understanding social policy and its connection with social problems and social welfare. Students are required to integrate policy and social analysis, incorporating social, economic, political, and cultural contexts. An interactive approach in which dialogues and debates are featured in lectures and policy presentation to assist students to consolidate their knowledge. Students will also conduct their own policy analysis in their assignment by developing their topic of interest, selecting an appropriate framework, and analyzing the underlying social issue.

Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes

Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed				
		a	b	c	d	e
1. Policy analysis report	50%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Presentation	35%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Participation	15%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total	100%					

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

Term paper will allow students to integrate major concepts, theory and methods they have learnt in the subject to demonstrate their knowledge and competence in the field of study. Students can also indicate the effectiveness of their proficiency in communicating ideas, creativity and critical thinking, appropriateness and critical insights in making judgment, and handling complex ethical and social issues.

Presentation and participation will provide an additional opportunity for students to display the learning outcomes as described above. This will also allow them to make evident their competence in communicating ideas and learning experience in an interactive, student-centred and problem-based setting. Students as a team will need to select one of the given social problem and policy areas, and prepare a presentation and further discussion.

Student Study Effort Expected	**Class contact:**	
	▪ Lecture	39 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	▪ Self Study	42 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation for Policy Analysis Report	20 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation for Presentation	8 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	109 Hrs.
Reading List and References	Essential	

Essential

Alcock, P., May, M., & Wright, S. (Eds.) (2016). *The student's companion to social policy* (6th ed.). Malden: Wiley-Blackwell Publisher.

Blakemore, K. (2013). *Social policy: an introduction* (4th ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press. [Electronic Resource]

Ferguson, I. (2008). *Reclaiming social work: Challenging Neo-liberalism and promoting social justice.* London: SAGE Publication. [Electronic Resource]

Green, L., & Clarke, K. (2016). *Social policy for social work: Placing social work in its wider context*. Jaipur, India: Rawat Publications.

Mooney, L. A., Clever, M. & Van Willigen, M. (2022). *Understanding social problems* (11th ed.). Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Supplementary

Baldock, J., Manning, N., Vickerstaff, S., & Mitton, L. (2012). *Social policy* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Best, J. & Harris, S.R. (Eds.) (2013). *Making sense of social problems: New images, new issues*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Bochel, H. M., & Daly, G. (Eds.) (2020). *Social policy* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

Clarke, J. (2004). *Changing welfare, changing state: New directions in social policy*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Coffey, A. (2004). *Reconceptualizing social policy: Sociological perspectives on contemporary social policy.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Dickens, J. (2016). *Social Work and Social Policy (2nd ed.)*. London: Routledge.

Ferguson, I., Lavalette, M., & Mooney, G. (2002). *Rethinking welfare: a critical perspective.* London: Sage Publications.

Hartley, D. (2015). *Social rights and human welfare*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. [Electronic Resource]

Heiner, R. (2013). *Social problems: An introduction to critical constructionism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Lavalette, M., & Pratt, A. (Eds.) (2006). *Social policy: Theories, concepts and issues* (3rd ed.). London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Leon-Guerrero, A. (2016). *Social problems: Community, policy, and social action (5th ed.)*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

James, A. L. (2004). The McDonaldization of social work–or come back Florence Hollis, all is (or should be) forgiven. In R. Lovelock, K. Lyons, & J. Powell (Eds), *Reflecting on social work: Discipline and profession* (pp. 37-54). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Jordan, B. (2010). *What's wrong with social policy and how to fix it*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lee K. M., Wong H. & Law K.Y. (2007). Social polarization and poverty in the global city: The case of Hong Kong. *China Report*. Vol. 43:1, 1-30.

Payne, R. K. (2013). *A framework for understanding poverty: a cognitive approach.* Highlands, Tex: aha! Process.

Pierson, C., Castles, F. G., & Naumann, I. K. (Eds.) (2014). *The welfare state reader* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

So, W. Y. & Kao, Y. K. (Eds.) (2014). *Changing policy-making process in Greater China: Case research from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.* London: Routledge.

陳錦華、王志錚（合編）（2004）【香港社會政策評論】，香港：中文大學出版社。

梁麗清、陳錦華（合編）（2006）【性別與社會工作－理論與實踐】，香港：中文大學出版社。

王卓祺、鄧廣良、魏雁濱（合編）（2007）【兩岸三地社會政策－理論與實務】，香港：中文大學出版社。

黃洪 （2013） 【「無窮」的盼望──香港貧窮問題探析】，香港：香港中華書局。

Important Journals and periodicals
Asian Pacific Journal of Social Work
Critical Social Policy
Global Social Policy
Hong Kong Journal of Social Work
International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy
Journal of Asian Public Policy
Journal of Public Policy
Journal of Social Policy
Policy and Politics
Social Policy and Administration
Social Policy and Society
Social Policy