

# PS374 Comparative Public Policy

Seminar Leader: Boris Vormann  
Course Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3:30pm  
Office Hours: By appointment  
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## Course Description

This class addresses key public policy fields through a comparative lens. A first part is dedicated to the means and ends of public policy and addresses historical shifts in policy regimes. In the second section of this class we develop an understanding of theory traditions and approaches to analyzing the processes and institutional mechanisms by which policy-makers, experts and interest groups can have an impact on policy. The third part of the course shifts gears and zooms in on a series of specific policy fields, notably (1) welfare and labor market policy, (2) higher education, and (3) urban planning. As such, the different policy fields will serve as ways to address questions of distributional justice, of inequalities and the mechanisms that reproduce them. Overall, this course will enable us to critically rethink the role of the state in globalization processes as well as the uneven development within and between national political systems and regional economic clusters.

## Requirements

### Reading material

- Class Reader

### Class preparation

Preparing for class means reading thoughtfully and engaging with the texts. Take notes while reading and try to identify questions in advance: Why do the authors argue as they do? How do they raise and substantiate their claims? How does their line of argumentation relate to earlier readings and discussions in class?

### Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected, as regular attendance is essential to the success of this course. There will be an attendance sheet for every session. Each absence beyond two (that is more than two absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) will lead to the subtraction of 1 point from the overall final grade. Late arrival counts as an absence. If you miss more than 30 percent of the class you cannot pass.

## Assignments, Grade Breakdown and Essay Deadlines

### Oral

- **Classroom Participation** **20%** (of overall grade)  
This seminar involves thoughtful and active participation in class discussions and working groups. The classroom is a protected space and you should feel free to voice your arguments and contribute to debates.
- **Case Study Workshop (3\*10%)** **30%**  
The class will be subdivided into three groups for section (III) on *Actors, Contexts, and Processes*. Groups will be formed in class and will meet to prepare specific country cases across specific policy fields. In workshops on March 21, April 11, and May 9, they will have 30 minutes each to outline the institutional set-up of the policy fields at stake and reflect on globalization's impact on existing political formations and actor constellations.
  - Groups are responsible for posting one text for each of these workshops a week ahead of the session at the latest.

### Written

- **10 Response Papers (each ~500 words; 10\*5%)** **50%**  
Each student is required to write 10 response papers (1.5-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman) on sessions of their choice (i.e., five responses in section II, 2 response paper for the following parts, and one concluding response). Response papers should include a short abstract of the primary texts' main tenets, an analysis that embeds the reading in earlier class discussions, and the articulation of one central synthetic question that engages the issues and debates addressed in the reading as a starting point for broader discussion. The *concluding response paper* will identify and discuss a common problem or theme across readings throughout the class and seek to link it to current developments in political economy today.
  - Response papers need to be **submitted in print by the beginning of the respective session**.

## Policy on Late Submission of Papers and Academic Integrity

Late submission will be downgraded by 5 points, and by an additional 5 points per extra week. After four weeks of the deadline the essay cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

## Schedule

Week  
Beginning

Tuesday

Thursday

Writing  
Assignment

### I. Debates and Background

*Public Policy and its Post-War History*

1  
Jan 18

**Introduction**  
Lowi, *Four systems of Policy*

#### Classics

Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*  
Marshall, T.H., *Social Citizenship*  
\*\*\*Select Country Case\*\*\*

### II. Theories of the Welfare State

*Foundations of the Field*

2  
Feb 4

**Functionalism to Power Resources**  
Offe, *Advanced Capitalism & the Welfare State*  
Korpi, *Power Resources Approach*

**Bringing the State Back In**  
Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In*

3  
Feb 11

\*\*\*No In-Class Meeting\*\*\*  
Please read: Immergut, *The Rules of the Game*

**Institutionalisms**  
Steinmo, *Historical Institutionalism*

4  
Feb 18

**Regimes**  
Esping-Andersen, *Three Political Economies*

**Varieties of Capitalism**  
Hall and Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism*  
Thelen and Hall, *Institutional Change*

5  
Feb 25

**Women and the Welfare State**  
Orloff, *Gender in the Welfare State*

**Globalization**  
Cerny, *The Dynamics of Financial Globalization*

5 response  
papers

### III. Actors, Contexts, and Processes

#### *Labor Market Reforms*

6  
March 4

**Recapitulating**  
Miles and Quadagno, *Political Theories of the Welfare State*

**Welfare State Reform**  
Pierson, *The New Politics of the Welfare State*

7  
March 11

**Marketization and Workfare**  
Kenworthy, *Labor Market Activation*  
Fox Piven, *The Politics of Retrenchment*

**Libertarian Paternalism**  
Thaler and Sunstein, *Nudge*

2 response  
paper

8  
March 18

**Normative Implications**  
Mettler, *The Submerged State*  
Barr, *Shifting Tides*

**Case Study Workshops**  
**Labor Market Reforms**

*Higher Education*

9  
March 25

**A Private Investment?**  
Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*  
Becker, *Human Capital Revisited*

**Globalized Higher Education**  
Busemeyer and Nikolai, *Education*  
Scott, *The University as a Global Institution*

10  
April 1

**The Knowledge Economy**  
Peters, *Three Forms of the Knowledge Economy*  
Hazelkorn, *Measuring World Class Excellence*

Blackmore, *A Useful Concept?*

2 response  
paper

11  
April 8

**Normative Implications**  
Brown, *Undoing the Demos*

*Case Study Workshops*  
**Entering the Knowledge Economy**

*Spring Break*

*Urban Planning*

12  
April 22

**Urban Policy**  
Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, *Urban and Regional  
Planning*

**Rescaling**  
Brenner, *State Spaces*

13  
April 29

**The Entrepreneurial City**  
Harvey, *From Managerialism to  
Entrepreneurialism*

**PPPs and Gentrification**  
Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City*  
Smith, *New Globalism, New Urbanism*

14  
May 6

**Governing Regions**  
Keil et al., *Regional Governance Revisited*  
Wachsmuth, *Infrastructure Alliances*

*Case Study Workshops*  
**Urban Transitions**

1 response  
paper