

PPOL 6100J Comparative Social Welfare Policy

SYLLABUS

Time and Venue: Tuesday 1:30PM-4:20PM @ Room 1409 (Lift 25-26)

Instructor: [Associate Professor HE Jingwei Alex](#), Division of Public Policy, HKUST

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Office hour: Wednesday 2:30PM-4:30PM @Room4616A

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Course Description

This elective course teaches social policy concepts and practices in a comparative perspective. It critically examines major social policy challenges confronting societies in Asia. A key feature of this course is that social welfare issues are addressed through case examples and accompanied by concrete analyses based on policy practices of societies in the region. Adopting a comparative approach in analysing social policy design and implementation, this course will enable students to understand the most recent developments related to poverty alleviation, health care, labour protection, social security, and public housing policies in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. Students will engage in comparing and contrasting major social welfare issues with the purpose of understanding their underlying dynamics and devising appropriate responses.

Course Objectives

Students who successfully undertake this course will:

- Understand the concepts and approaches of social policy studies.
- Appreciate the value of social welfare policies to human dignity and development.
- Be equipped with useful analytical skills in examining poverty alleviation, health, labour protection, old-age protection, and public housing policies.
- Compare and contrast the policy strategies of governments in Asia in promoting social development and make assessment.

Suggested Readings

Ken Blakemore and Edwin Griggs (2007). *Social Policy: An Introduction* (3rd edition). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Peter Saunders and Alex Jingwei He (2017). *Social Protection in East Asian Chinese Societies: Challenges, Responses, and Impacts*. London: Routledge (edited volume).

Assessment

Class participation	10%	Continuous
Individual essay	30%	October 13
Group project presentation	30%	November 21 and 28
Peer evaluation (within group)	15%	November 20 and 27
Peer evaluation (across group)	15%	On presentation days

Class #1 Introduction: Understanding Social Policy

September 5

Readings:

- Dean, H. (2006). *Social Policy*. Cambridge: Polity Press. (Read Chapter 1: What is Social Policy?)
- Blakemore, K., and Griggs, E. (2007), *Social Policy: An Introduction*. Buckingham: Open University Press. (Read Chapter 1: The Subject of Social Policy & Chapter 2: Ideas and Concepts in Social Policy).

Class #2 and Class #3 Poverty and Poverty Alleviation (I) and (II)

September 8 (Friday, 2PM-4:20PM @ Room 1103) and September 19

Readings:

- World Bank (2001). *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*. Washington DC: The World Bank (Read Chapter 1: The Nature and Evolution of Poverty; Chapter 2: Causes of Poverty and a Framework for International Action).
- World Bank (2009). *Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty*. Washington DC: The World Bank (Read Chapter 2: The Economic Rationale for Conditional Cash Transfers; Chapter 3: Design and Implementation Features of CCT Programs).
- HKSAR Government (2021). *Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2020* (Read Chapter 2: Poverty Situation and Its Trends from 2009 to 2020).
- Béland, D., He, J.A., and Ramesh, M. (2022). COVID-19, crisis response, and public policies: from the persistence of inequalities to the importance of policy design. *Policy & Society*, 41(2), 187-198.

Class #4, Class #5, and Class #6 Health Policy (I), (II) and (III)

September 26, October 3, and October 10

A special moving screening session @ September 26

Readings:

- Ramesh, M., and Bali, A.S. (2021). *Health Policy in Asia: A Policy Design Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Read Chapter 1: Health Policy Design; Chapter 2: The Economic and Social Context of Health Care in Asia)
- He, J. A. (2019). Healthcare policy and reforms in Hong Kong. In: W. Dong (eds). *Social Policy in China: From State-led to Market-led Economy*, Oakville, Canada: Rock's Mills Press, 211-224.
- He, J.A., Bali, A.S., and Ramesh, M. (2022). Active stewardship in healthcare: lessons from China's health policy reforms. *Social Policy & Administration*, 56(6), 925-940.
- Yin, J.D.C., and He, J.A. (2018). Health insurance reforms in Singapore and Hong Kong: How the two ageing Asian Tigers respond to health financing challenges? *Health Policy*, 122(7), 693-697.
- Lu, R.J., and Chiang, T. (2010). Evolution of Taiwan's health care system. *Health Economics, Policy and Law*, 6(1), 85-107.

Class #7 and Class #8 Retirement Protection and Elderly Care (I) and (II)

October 17 and October 24

Readings:

- World Bank (2008). *The World Bank Pension Conceptual Framework*. World Bank Pension Reform Primer Series. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Ng, K.H. (2011). Prospect for old-age income security in Hong Kong and Singapore. *Population Ageing*, 4, 271-293.
- Zhu, H., and Walker, A. (2018). Pension system reform in China: who gets what pensions? *Social Policy and Administration*, 52(7), 1410-1424.
- He, J.A., and Chou, K.L. (2019). Long-term care service needs and planning for the future: a study of middle-aged and older adults in Hong Kong. *Ageing and Society*, 39(2), 221-253.

Class Activity (October 30): Join “Integrating Health and Social Care Services for the Elderly in Asia: A Scholar-Practitioner-Policymaker Dialogue” at Clear Water Bay Campus

Class #9 Public Housing Policy (I)

October 31

Readings:

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (2019). *International Models for Delivery of Affordable Housing in Asia*. RICS Insight Paper. London: RICS.
- Phang, S.Y. (2015). Singapore’s housing policies: responding to the challenges of economic transition. *Singapore Economic Review*, 60(3), 1-25.
- Li, V.J. (2016). *Housing Policies in Hong Kong, China and the People’s Republic of China*. ADB Institute Working Paper Series No.566. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute.

Class #10 Public Housing Policy (II)

November 7

Guest Lecture

Speakers:

- [Professor Anthony B.L. Cheung](#), GBS, JP, Secretary for Transport and Housing, Hong Kong SAR Government (2012-2017).
- [Ms Vivien F.Y. Tang](#), Singapore citizen, PhD Candidate, Department of Asian and Policy Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong

Class #11 Labour Protection

November 14

Readings:

- Blakemore, K., and Griggs, E. (2007). *Social Policy: An Introduction*. Buckingham: Open University Press (Read Chapter 8: Work and Welfare).
- Hill, M. (2007). *Social Policy in the Modern World: A Comparative Text*. Malden: Blackwell (Read Chapter 5: Employment Policy).
- Cheung, K.C.K., and Chou, K.L. (2016). Working poor in Hong Kong. *Social Indicators Research*, 129, 317-335.
- Wong, M.Y.H. (2014). The politics of the minimum wage in Hong Kong. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 44(4), 735-752.

Class #12 and Class #13 Group Presentations (I) and (II)

November 21 and 28