

Economics of Social Policies

Code: 101157
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500262 Sociology	OT	4	0

Contact

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: spanish (spa)
Some groups entirely in English: No
Some groups entirely in Catalan: No
Some groups entirely in Spanish: Yes

Prerequisites

It is highly advisable to have passed the Political Economy 1st year course.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The purpose of the course is to analyze and appraise a variety of social policies (social security, health, education and housing.) The course provides an overview of the main problems of public policy facing European and OECD countries. The course is organized in three parts. The first one reviews some basic concepts in public economics. The second one is devoted to analyze the above-mentioned social policies. The third one will mainly be covered by presentations by students.

Competences

- Analysing the problems arising from the implementation of public policies and conflict situations by recognising the complexity of the social phenomena and political decisions affecting democracy, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.
- Applying the concepts and approaches of the sociological theory, specially the explanations of social inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups, to the implementation of public policies and to the resolution of conflict situations.
- Assessing the contributions of sociological approaches to the study of culture, education, interaction between society and environment, social policy, and work.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrating a comprehension of the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects, interpretations and historical context.
- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Generating innovative and competitive proposals in research and professional activity.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
- Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.

- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

Learning Outcomes

1. Comparing the different theoretical approaches concerning social policy.
2. Comparing the reading of social policies from several ideologies of the social reality of Spain and Catalonia.
3. Comprehending the social interpretations of social policy in accordance with these approaches.
4. Defining the sociological concepts that interpret social policy.
5. Defining the underlying social phenomena of social policies and conflicts about social needs.
6. Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
7. Developing self-learning strategies.
8. Distinguishing sociological concepts, as well as the methods and techniques of social investigation commonly used to analyse social policy.
9. Distinguishing underlying social policies of specific conflicts.
10. Expressing the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to social policy.
11. Generating innovative and competitive proposals in research and professional activity.
12. Relating the concepts, methods and techniques used to analyse social policy with general theoretical and methodological debates.
13. Relating the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to social policy, with the historical context in which they emerged.
14. Relating the explanations of the access inequalities and the impact of social policies with the general theoretical and methodological debates.
15. Relating them with the debates about state, social change and inequality.
16. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
17. Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
18. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
19. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

Content

1. Introduction and review of some foundations of microeconomics.

Consumer theory. Producer theory. Efficiency of competitive markets. The two fundamental theorems of Welfare Economics.

2. The case for public intervention

Efficiency and equity. Market failure: imperfect competition, public goods, externalities, incomplete markets, imperfect information, unemployment and inflation. Redistribution and merit goods. Poverty and inequality.

3. Social expenditure

An overview of social expenditure in Spain and the OECD countries. Justifying the need for social expenditure: interpersonal and intergenerational redistribution of income. Effects of ageing population.

4. Income maintenance programs

Guaranteed minimum income programs. Non-contributory pension benefits. Unemployment insurance.

5. The social security pension system

The case for a public pension system. Designing of a pension system: pay-as-you-go financing versus fully funding. Equity in a contributory social security system. The demographic problem: the old-age dependency ratio.

6. Health economics

Rationales for public financing, public provision and regulation of health services markets. Imperfect information, externalities, demand uncertainty, equity and health.

7. Education economics

Characteristics of the market for education services: capital markets imperfections, imperfect information, externalities. Equity in education: equality of opportunity versus free choice. Education programs: goals and instruments.

Methodology

Lectures will be combined with seminars and presentations by students.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	23	0.92	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15
Oral presentations and seminars	15	0.6	18, 17, 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 19, 16
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	30	1.2	18, 17, 7, 12, 14, 16
Type: Autonomous			
Study and information collection	71	2.84	18, 17, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Assessment

Evaluation of the course will comprise of four activities: two case studies (with weights 15% the first one and 25% the second one) and two theoretical exams (with weights 30% each). The dates of the evaluation activities will be announced well in advance.

To be eligible to participate in the retake process, it is required to have achieved an average grade of the subject between 3.5 and 4.9.

In case plagiarism is detected, the grade assigned to the activity will be 0.

In accordance with article 117.2 of the UAB Academic Regulations, the evaluation of those students who have been enrolled before may consist of a single synthesis examination. The students who wish to be evaluated this way should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester.

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Discussion and oral presentations	40%	8	0.32	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Bibliography

Albi, E., González-Páramo, J.M. and I. Zubiri (2000), *Economía Pública, Vols. I y II*, Barcelona: Ariel.

Mochon, F. (2009), *Economía: Teoría y política*, Madrid: McGraw Hill.

Rosen, H.S (2008), *Hacienda Pública*, 7th ed., Madrid: McGraw Hill,

Stiglitz, J.E. (1995), *La Economía del Sector Público*, 2nd ed, Barcelona: Ed. Bosch.