

Economics of Social Policies

Code: 101157
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Sociology	OT	4
Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	OT	3
Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	OT	4

Contact

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Teachers

Guadalupe Souto Nieves

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

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, poverty) 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

Sociology

- 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.

Contemporary History, Politics and Economics

- Describe the origin and development of the main current social, political and economic conflicts.
- Recognise institutional and regulatory design and the main economic policies implemented in current economies on different scales to manage economic growth and its cyclical oscillations.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Work cooperatively in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams implementing new projects.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse economic facts and decisions about efficiency and equity.
2. Assess the main social expenditure programmes and their effects on economic growth.
3. Capacity to continue future learning independently, acquiring further knowledge and exploring new areas of knowledge.
4. Communicating in oral and written form in Catalan, Spanish and English, in order to be able to summarise and present the carried out project in both forms.
5. Comparing the different theoretical approaches concerning social policy.
6. Comparing the reading of social policies from several ideologies of the social reality of Spain and Catalonia.
7. Comprehending the social interpretations of social policy in accordance with these approaches.
8. Defining the sociological concepts that interpret social policy.
9. Defining the underlying social phenomena of social policies and conflicts about social needs.
10. Demonstrate capacity to adapt to changing environments.
11. Demonstrating a comprehension of the analysis of social phenomena presented in English, as well as observing their strengths and weaknesses.
12. Develop strategies for autonomous learning.
13. Developing self-learning strategies.
14. Distinguishing sociological concepts, as well as the methods and techniques of social investigation commonly used to analyse social policy.
15. Distinguishing underlying social policies of specific conflicts.
16. Expressing the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to social policy.
17. Generating innovative and competitive proposals in research and professional activity.
18. Identify the role of the public sector in the Spanish economy.
19. Organise work in relation to good time management and planning.

20. Relating the concepts, methods and techniques used to analyse social policy with general theoretical and methodological debates.
21. Relating the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to social policy, with the historical context in which they emerged.
22. Relating the explanations of the access inequalities and the impact of social policies with the general theoretical and methodological debates.
23. Relating them with the debates about state, social change and inequality.
24. Respect the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
25. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
26. Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
27. Select and generate the information necessary for each problem, analyse it and take decisions based on that information.
28. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
29. 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.
30. Work as part of a team and be able to argue own proposals and validate or refuse the arguments of others in a reasonable manner.

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. Introduction to the welfare state

The history of the welfare state. 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. Minimum income programs and poverty alleviation

Minimum income programs: Guaranteed minimum income programs, Universal basic income, Negative income tax, tax credits on labor income

5. The social security system: unemployment and pensions

The case for a public unemployment and pension systems. 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

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

7. Education

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.

8. Housing policies

Characteristics of housing: heterogeneity, durability, immobility. Design and evaluation of public policies on housing: rent controls, tax incentives, subsidies for low-income families, direct policies.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	23	0.92	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23
Oral presentations and seminars	15	0.6	28, 26, 5, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 29, 25
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	30	1.2	28, 26, 13, 20, 22, 25
Type: Autonomous			
Study and information collection	71	2.84	28, 26, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 29, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25

Lectures will be combined with seminars and presentations by students.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Discussion and oral presentations	40%	8	0.32	1, 2, 28, 26, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 29, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 24, 27, 4, 30
Written exams	60%	3	0.12	1, 2, 28, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 29, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 4

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

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

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

In this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is allowed as an integral part of the development of assignments, provided that the final result reflects a significant contribution from the student in

terms of analysis and personal reflection. Students must clearly identify which parts were generated using such technology, specify the tools used, and include a critical reflection on how these tools have influenced both the process and the final outcome of the activity. Lack of transparency in the use of AI will be considered a breach of academic integrity and may result in a grade penalty or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

In order to pass the subject, students must participate in all the activities, and they need to get a grade of 5.0 or above.

Those students with 2 or less evaluation activities will be considered "Not assessable"

Grade revision process

After all grading activities have ended, students will be informed of the date and way in which the course grades will be published. Students will be also be informed of the procedure, place, date and time of grade revision following University regulations.

Retake process

According to the article 112.3 of the UAB Academic Regulations, those students who fail the subject can retake it in a unique exam, in the date scheduled by the Faculty, if they have participated at least in 2/3 of the evaluation activities obtaining a grade of 3.5 or above.

UNIQUE ASSESSMENT

Students who opt for this assessment modality must:

1. Submit a written work on one of the social policies of the course contents (15% of the final grade). The detailed description of the content and the formal aspects of said work will be announced on the virtual campus at the beginning of the course. The date of presentation of the work is the same as the official one established by the faculty for the final exam.
2. Make an oral presentation, lasting 10 minutes, of the work detailed in 1) (15% of the final grade). Said presentation will be made on the same date established by the Faculty for the final exam, and once the exam described in section 3).
3. Take an exam in which the analytical capacity of the different policies worked during the course must be demonstrated (70% of the final grade). Said exam will take place on the official date established by the Faculty.

Grade revision process

Final grade revision will follow the same procedure as in the case of continuous assessment.

Retake process

The same system established for continuous assessment will be applied.

Bibliography

Projecte CORE, La Economía, e-libro abierto: <https://www.core-econ.org/project/la-economia/>

Rosen, H.S. and Gayer, T. (2014), *Public Finance*, McGraw Hill:

Stiglitz, J. and Rosengard, J. 2016. Economics of the public sector. Norton & Company.

Specific materials will be announced over the school year by the instructor.

Software

No specific software is required, beyond than a basic handling of a word processor and worksheets.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	51	Spanish	second semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	51	Spanish	second semester	afternoon