RPOS399: The Welfare State
State University of New York at Albany
Fall 2014

Professor: Zsofia Barta
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11.30-12.30 in the Contact Office
Office: Milne 205
Phone: 518-442-5259
Email: zbarta@albany.edu

Course description

From the 1960s, governments in developed countries progressively widened the scope of their involvement in the life of citizens. The state assumed responsibility for the welfare of people not only through public pensions, health care, education, unemployment benefits and the like, but also through interventions in the economy to smooth out business cycles, stimulate growth and mitigate unemployment. By the 1980s, the tide turned and many countries attempted to retreat from the path of the ever-growing welfare state. The order of the day became retrenchment, privatization and market principles. This course studies both processes, with special attention to the cross-national differences within the general patterns. It seeks to explain the driving forces behind the expansion of the welfare state from the 1960s and the differential success of countries in reversing that trend since the 1980s.

Course objectives

By the end of the course, you should have a good understanding of what the welfare state is, what it does for citizens and how it shapes society. You should be aware of the large degree of variation across the welfare states of different countries, and familiar with the main theoretical approaches to why variation is so great across democracies at similar levels of development. You should understand the challenges that existing welfare arrangements face from fiscal problems, globalization, demographic changes and the changing risk structure of modern life and be familiar with the different strategies different countries have adopted to deal with these challenges. You are expected to think critically about the strengths and weaknesses of the theories we cover and use your knowledge to make informed arguments about cross-national variation in different policy areas. The course is also aimed at developing your presentation and research skills.

Teaching method

This course relies mostly on lectures and student participation. You are expected to hold presentations, participate in class discussions and engage in group work. You are expected to have done the assigned readings before coming to class in
order to enable you to participate actively in group-work and to ask informed
questions and express opinions on current policy issues in the US and elsewhere.
(There will be a quiz at the beginning of each week to test how well prepared
you are for classes.)

Assessment

The final grade for the course will be based on the following components:
• pop-quizzes, group work and class participation 25%
• presentation 25%
• mid-term 25%
• final 25%

Extra credit opportunity: If you are concerned about your final grade – for
example because your mid-term exam did not go so well as you hoped – you can
earn up to 20 extra credits (20%) towards your total credits by submitting
summaries of the required readings. Each summary is worth 1 credit point.
Summaries should be no longer than 300 words each. (When several chapters
are assigned from the same book, each chapter counts as one reading. You have
300 words to summarize each chapter and will receive one extra credit point for
each chapter.) The summaries should recapitulate the most important
statements of the readings formulated in your own words. Do not cut and paste
whole sentences from the original text or use the abstract as the basis of your
summary. In order to receive credit, summaries should be handed in to me in
person, on paper in the first class of the week that the relevant readings were
required for. Summaries submitted later than the week that they were required
for will not receive credit. Besides giving you an opportunity to improve your
grade, this exercise is meant to help you improve your reading and writing skills.
I will provide you with feedback on both how well you understood the given text
and how you could improve your summary (if it needs improvement). Therefore,
I expect you to come see me in my office hours to discuss your summaries.

Presentations

The purpose, format and required content of the presentations are described in a
separate document in Appendix 1. of this syllabus.

Readings

There is no single textbook for this class. We will, however read three books
extensively. These are recommended for purchase:

• Esping-Andersen (1990) “The three worlds of welfare capitalism” Princeton
  University Press
  Press
• Van Kersbergen and Vis (2013) “Comparative Welfare State Politics”
  Cambridge University Press
All other readings will be made available on Blackboard. The readings for each week are specified in the weekly outline of the course in Appendix 2. of this syllabus.

**Rules of classroom behaviour**

Please arrive on time as a courtesy to your fellow students as well as to the instructor. Attendance will be taken and pop quizzes will be given at the beginning of classes with no allowance for those who arrive late. If you are late by more than 10 minutes, please refrain from entering the classroom. Also, please refrain from leaving before the end of the class or from walking in and out during class unless you have pressing reasons to do.

The use of mobile phones is not permitted during class. If you are texting or writing emails in class, you will be asked to leave immediately.

**Grade Appeals**

In order to appeal a grade on a particular assignment, you should contact me during office hours within 2 weeks of receiving the assignment back and submit a written explanation of your reasons for believing that the grade should be changed, not to exceed 2 pages. A grade appeal may result in the grade being raised, lowered, or left as is, depending on the results of the review. After two weeks, grade complaints will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances like a serious illness.

**Accommodations**

“Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations. (For further information, please visit  [http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html](http://www.albany.edu/studentlife/dss/Accommodation.html)].” If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course please also inform the instructor as soon as possible. In addition, the instructor will make every effort to accommodate difficulties arising from religious observance. You are asked to bring any possible conflicts to the instructor’s attention as soon as possible. “Students should not expect that, if they do poorly on an exam or other assignment, to claim, at that time, the need of an accommodation. This statement is to preclude that problem, and allow people with a need for accommodations to be treated fairly and appropriately (Harwood 2003).”

**Plagiarism**

Please make sure to know and follow the rules. If you are involved in plagiarism the penalty will be failure in the course and you will be reported to judicial affairs. Every Student is expected to go through the following tutorial
All papers will be judged with the knowledge that you have taken the online tutorial.
Appendix 1.
Guidelines for presentations

Purpose of the presentation

The purpose of the presentation is to apply your general knowledge of the welfare state to analyze the welfare arrangements in concrete country cases.

You are free to choose any country for your presentation except the US, which we are going to discuss together in the last week of the course.

You are expected to carry out independent research on the given country's welfare system and have a good understanding of
- how existing welfare arrangements have come into being;
- how these arrangements deal with the main types of risks (sickness, unemployment, old age, children, disability etc.) and with poverty;
- how the country compares to others on the main welfare indicators.

The content of the presentation

The presentation should briefly explain the main characteristics of the existing welfare system in the given country, describe the types of political conflicts and historical turning points that shaped the evolution of the current welfare arrangements and link the existing policies to the welfare outcomes observed. It should discuss how the given country fits (or fails to fit) into one of the main categories of welfare states proposed by Esping-Andersen; and express an opinion on which type of theoretical approach best explains the welfare policy choices in the given country. The presentation should also touch upon the main challenges that the welfare system faces in the given country and the types of reforms (if any) that have been introduced.

Technical issues

The presentation should last approximately 20 minutes.

Depending on the size of the class, the presentations will be prepared and delivered either individually or by groups. You should choose a country and sign up with me to hold a presentation by no later than Monday, October 13. Countries and time slots will be allocated on a first come first served basis. The final schedule for presentations will be available on Blackboard no later than Monday, October 20.

I expect you to start your research well in advance of the presentation. I am happy to provide guidance at any stage of your preparation, including research, analysis or the actual putting together of the slides. Please come talk to me in my office hours if you'd like to avail of this help.

Each presenter should send me their Power Point presentation latest by 9 o'clock am on the day on which the presentation is to be held. I will upload the
file on Blackboard so that everyone can use it for preparation for the final exam later.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1   | Introduction                                    | Aug-25 Intro to the course | Aug-27 What are welfare policies? | Aug-29 Variation across countries in welfare outcomes | • Marshall (1950) "Citizenship and social class" (excerpts)  
• Block (2000) "Introduction to The Great Transformation by Karl Polanyi"  
• Esping-Andersen (1990) The three worlds of welfare capitalism (Ch1)  
• Farrel: The free market is an impossible utopia (http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/18/the-free-market-is-an-impossible-utopia/) |
| 2   | The welfare state on a grand historical scale   | Sep-01 No Class | Sep-03 Social rights               | Sep-05 The double movement                          | • Van Kersbergen and Vis (2013) 'Comparative Welfare State Politics', CUP (Ch3 and 5)  
• Esping-Andersen (1990) The three worlds of welfare capitalism (Ch2 and 3) |
| 3   | What is the welfare state and what does it do?  | Sep-08 Decommomodation | Sep-10 Poverty - Inequality       | Sep-12 Risk                                       | • Myles and Quadagno (2002) "Political Theories of the Welfare State" Social Service Review  
• Mares (2001) "The Politics of Social Risk" Cambridge University Press (Ch1)  
• Van Kersbergen and Vis ‘Comparative Welfare State Politics’, CUP (Ch3) |
| 4   | The emergence of the welfare state 1.           | Sep-15 The functionalist logic - | Sep-17 Workers VS employers - The power resource theory | Sep-19 Divisions amongst employers                 | • Rehm, Hacker, Schlesinger (2012) Insecure Alliances: Risk, Inequality, and Support for the Welfare State, APSR 106(2)  
• Van Kersbergen and Manow ‘Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare States Edited by Kees van Kersbergen and Philip Manow’ CUP (Ch1)  
<p>| 5   | The emergence of the welfare state 2.           | Sep-22 Divisions amongst workers | Sep-24 Other forms of differentiation (religion, gender, etc.) | Sep-26 No class                                   |                                                                          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Variation across welfare states</td>
<td>Sep-29</td>
<td>Oct-01</td>
<td>The Liberal Welfare State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Variation beyond the three worlds</td>
<td>Oct-06</td>
<td>Oct-08</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welfare policies in the US</td>
<td>Nov-17</td>
<td>Nov-19</td>
<td>Nov-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social security</td>
<td>Health care</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty relief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   |                            |         |        |          | • Quadagno (2005). One nation, uninsured. Oxford University Press  
|   | Revision                   | Nov-24 | Nov-26 | Nov-28 |
|   |                            | Bring your own questions! | No class | No class |
|   | Conclusion                 | Dec-01 | Dec-03 | Dec-05 |
|   |                            | How did the welfare state change the face of | What remains of welfare capitalism after the Global | Democracy and the welfare state |
|   |                            |         |        |          | • Streek (2014) "How will capitalism end?" http://newleftreview.org/II/87/wolfgang-streeck-how-will-capitalism-end |