

PIA3921: URBAN AND SOCIAL POLICY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Urban and Social Policy

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

3921

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

SA/POL/PIA2201 Public Policy and Social Development
Part I of SA3201 Social Policy and Administration
SA3921 Social Policy and Society
POL3921 Social Policy and Society
POL3205 Urban Policy
POL3921 Urban and Social Policy

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course introduces the essential elements of urban and social policy. At the end of this course, students should:

- have a good understanding of modern processes of urban development and the nature of cities;
- have a good understanding of the processes that shape social welfare;
- understand how urban processes relate to social policy issues;
- have knowledge of the key elements of urban sociology such as access to urban opportunity, issues of social cohesion and social exclusion;
- appreciate the major urban and social policy issues facing Hong Kong;
- understand the politics of urban and social controversies that emerge in urban settings.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Students will be able to understand the nature of cities and the factors that determine their development in general, and in Hong Kong in particular.		x	x	
2	Students will be able to understand the processes that shape social welfare in general, and in Hong Kong in particular.		x	x	
3	Students will be able to critically assess the impacts of urban transformations for social welfare; the importance of social cohesion and neighbourhood; and the processes of social exclusion and social stratification.		x	x	
4	Students will be able to understand different models that underpin social welfare policies and urban policies.		x	x	
5	Students will be able to critically examine specific urban and social policy issues and provide ideas and perspectives on tackling possible urban and social problems.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Students will: - acquire knowledge of the concepts, values and development in urban policy. - develop an awareness of the ways in which urban policy relates to social issues. - develop their analytical and critical capabilities to discuss urban policy issues and their social consequences.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	Self-study and reading	Students will: - acquire knowledge of the concepts, values and development in urban policy and its social consequences.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Group Presentation and Paper	Students will: - work on a topic related to urban or social policy and discuss key issues involved and the social consequences. - give a presentation on the topic for which they will conduct research and analysis. - apply theoretical knowledge to analyse relevant case(s). - write a group paper to communicate their knowledge and understanding of the topic.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	To check the students' active participation	Yes

2	Group presentation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	To test students' ability to organise their arguments for examining urban and social policy issues; and to test their verbal presentation skills.	No
3	Group paper	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	To test students' ability to organise their arguments for examining urban and social policy issues; and to test their written communication skills.	No
4	In-class test	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	50	To test the students' understanding of the course material and readings	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Participation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Actively engage with the lectures and participate in discussions and class activities.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Regularly participate in discussions and class activities.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Rarely participate in discussions and class activities.

Marginal (D)

No active participation and class activities.

Failure (F)

No participation in the classes

Assessment Task

Group presentation

Criterion

Ability to critically assess the literature on the urban or social policy topic and translate this to a well-structured and informative presentation, with a clear assessment and recommendations; and

Capacity to organize time, communicate effectively and cooperate with classmates.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reach marginal levels

Assessment Task

Group paper

Criterion

Ability to integrate information from a wide variety of sources to formulate a well-structured and informative group paper on the urban or social policy topic with a clear assessment and recommendations.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reach marginal levels

Assessment Task

In-class test

Criterion

Ability to individually study, comprehend and reproduce core knowledge from basic urban and social policy literatures, as well as related in-class discussions.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Not even reach marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Role and nature of cities; global hierarchy of cities; determinants of social welfare and major social institutions; concepts of social needs, poverty, stigma, and social justice; social exclusion; segregation; the urban structure of Hong Kong and its determinants; social welfare in Hong Kong; urban and social policies; institutional development; neighbourhood change; urban social movements; major urban and social policy issues in Hong Kong.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Harvey, D. (1989) 'From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism', <i>Geografiska Annaler, Series B Human Geography</i> , 71(1), pp.3-17.
2	Knox, P.L. (1991) 'The restless urban landscape: Economic and socio-cultural change and the transformation of Washington DC', <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> , 81, pp.181-209.
3	Thorns, D. (2002) 'Industrial-modern cities', in: <i>The Transformation of Cities</i> , MacMillan, New York, pp.13-39.
4	Thorns, D. (2002) 'Urban social inequality and social exclusion', in <i>The Transformation of Cities</i> , New York: MacMillan, pp.149-177.
5	Atkinson, R. (2006) 'Padding the bunker: Strategies of middle-class disaffiliation and colonisation in the city', <i>Urban Studies</i> , 43(4), pp.819-832.
6	Kemeny J. (2001) 'Comparative housing and welfare: Theorising the relationship', <i>Journal of Housing and the Built Environment</i> , 16, pp.53-70.
7	Harvey, D. (2012) 'The right to the city', in: <i>Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution</i> , London & New York: Verso: pp. 3-25.
8	Chow, N. (1998) 'The making of social policy in Hong Kong: Social welfare development in the 1980s and 1990s', in: R.W. Goodman and H.J. Kwon (Eds.) <i>The East Asian Welfare Model</i> , London: Routledge, pp.159-174.
9	MacGregor, S. (1999) 'Welfare, neo-liberalism and new paternalism: Three ways for social policy in late capitalist societies', <i>Capital & Class</i> , 23(1), pp.91-118.
10	Wong, H. (2012) 'Changes in social policy in Hong Kong since 1997: Old wine in new Bottles?', in: W.M. Lam, L.T. Lui and W. Wong (Eds.) <i>Contemporary Hong Kong Government and Politics</i> , Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp.277-296.
11	Fainstein, S. (2015) 'Just city', in: J.D. Wright (Ed) <i>International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences</i> , Vol.12, 2nd Edition, Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp.913-918.
12	Hall, T. & P. Hubbard (1996) 'The entrepreneurial city: New urban politics, new urban geographies?', <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 20(2), pp.153-174.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Alcock, P., Erskine, A. and May, M. (2012). The Student's Companion to Social Policy (4th ed.), Oxford: Blackwell.
2	Bridge, G., & Watson, S. (2002) The Blackwell City Reader Oxford: Blackwell.
3	Clark, D. (1996) Urban World/Global City, Routledge, London.
4	Fainstein, S. and Campbell, S. (1996) Readings in Urban Theory, Blackwell, Oxford.
5	Lee, E. W. Y. (2008). Social mobilization, blame avoidance and welfare restructuring in Hong Kong. In M. Sing (ed.) Politics and Government in Hong Kong: Crisis under Chinese Sovereignty. London: Routledge, pp. 162-175.
6	Lee, J.K.C. (2000). Balancing collectivization and individual responsibility: Hong Kong social policy under the Chinese regime. In K.L. Tang (ed.) Social Development in Asia, Boston: Kluwer Academic.
7	Midgley, J. (2014). Defining social development. In J. Midgley (ed.) Social Development: Theory & Practice. London: SAGE.
8	Short, J (1996) Urban Order: An introduction to cities, culture, and power, Oxford: OUP.
9	Thorns, D. (2002) The Transformation of Cities, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.