

## Social Policy and Social Theory: Intersections, Challenges, and Solutions

7.1 Module Overview								
<b>Module Number</b>		<b>Module Title</b>	Social Policy and Social Theory: Intersections, Challenges, and Solutions					
<b>Stage of Principal Programme</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Duration.</b> <i>(Weeks F/T)</i>	<b>ECTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Mandatory / Elective (M/E)</b>	<b>E</b> Core	<b>Hours of Learner Effort / Week</b>	<b>2</b>					
Analysis of required hours of learning effort								
<b>Teaching and Learning Modalities</b>					<b>✓if relevant to this module</b>	<b>Approx. proportion of total (hours)</b>		
<b>Contact Hours</b>								
In person face-to-face					✓	24		
Synchronous								
<b>Indirect/Non-Contact Hours</b>								
Asynchronous								
Work Based								
Other:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent, self-directed reading</li> </ul>					✓	46		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, preparation and completion of assessments</li> </ul>					✓	55		
<b>Total</b>						125		

<b>Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title</b>	NA
<b>Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title</b>	NA
<b>Maximum number of learners per instance of the module</b>	120
<b>Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.</b>	
<b>Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.</b>	<b>Qualifications &amp; experience required</b>
Lecturer	A minimum level 9 qualification in Social Sciences, Social Policy, Sociology, or closely cognate area
	<b>Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y</b>
	1:120

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution –				
<b>Continuous Assessment</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>Proctored Exam – in person</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>Practical Skills Based</b>
<b>Project</b>		<b>Proctored Exam - online</b>		<b>Work Based</b>
<b>Capstone (Y/N)?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>If Yes, describe</b>		

7.2 Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)	
<b>MIMLO</b> On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	<b>Related MIPLO #</b>
1. Critically examine the relationship intersections of social policy with broader societal structures, power dynamics using specific examples.	1, 2

2. Apply relevant concepts and theoretical frameworks in critiquing social policy agendas, interventions, and outcomes.	<b>2, 4</b>
3. Critically analyse the impacts of social policies on marginalized populations, social inequalities, and processes of social change.	<b>1, 8</b>
4. Identify the theoretical and practical significance of contemporary social theory.	<b>1</b>

### 7.3 Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

This final-year module introduces learners to critical approaches in sociology, emphasizing the examination of power dynamics, social inequalities, and processes of social change. Drawing upon a range of theoretical perspectives and empirical research, the module encourages learners to interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions about society and to engage critically with issues of power, oppression, and resistance.

#### *Module Aims:*

This final-year module offers learners an interdisciplinary exploration of social policy through the lens of social theory. Grounded in key concepts and theoretical frameworks from sociology, political science, and critical theory, the module examines the complex relationship between social policies, societal structures, and ideological perspectives. Through critical analysis of policy debates, theoretical texts, and empirical research, learners will explore how social theories inform, critique, and shape social policy interventions. By engaging with empirical case studies and contemporary issues, learners will develop the skills to evaluate social policy from a theoretical perspective and advocate for transformative policy solutions.

#### *Indicative Module Content:*

- Introduction to Social Policy and Social Theory: Theoretical Foundations and Debates
- The Sociological Imagination and Social Policy Analysis: Linking Personal Troubles to Public Issues
- Power, Ideology, and Social Policy: The Role of State, Market, and Civil Society
- Neoliberalism, Precarity and Social Policy: Critiques and Alternatives
- Classical Social Theory and Social Policy: Marx, Durkheim, and Weber Revisited
- Critical Theory and Social Policy: The Frankfurt School and Beyond
- The Criminalisation of Social Policy
- Feminist Theory and Social Policy: Gender, Sexuality and Social Reproduction
- Intersectionality and Social Policy: Race, Class, Gender, and Beyond
- Disability Studies and Social Policy: Accessibility, Inclusion, and Rights
- Postcolonial Theory and Social Policy: Decolonizing Perspectives on Development and Global Justice
- Environmental Justice and Social Policy: Ecological Perspectives on Sustainability and Equity
- Indigenous Perspectives on Social Policy: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and Reconciliation
- Rights-Based Approaches to Social Policy: Human Rights, Citizenship, and Social Protection

Empirical Case Studies can come under the following themes: Housing, Healthcare, Disability, Gender, Poverty, Precarity and Employment, Racism.

### 7.4 Work-based learning and practice-placement *(if applicable)*

N/A

### 7.5 Specific module resources required *(if applicable)*

N/A

## 7.6 Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

The module teaching and learning strategy is based on the core objective of combining learners' existing knowledge the field of policy studies and social theory inclusive of historical and contemporary academic theoretical analysis and conceptual frameworks. The teaching and learning strategy adheres to the philosophy and practice of transformative, collaborative, and critically reflective learning approaches inclusive of the following methods: Lectures, peer learning achieved through face-to-face classroom discussion, experiential learning through presentations and interactive group discussion, group exercises, case studies, video.

In keeping with the principles of UDL, material will be made available in a variety of modes on the VLE; text, video, podcast, with lecturer's slides posted the day before so that learners may download in advance, should they wish.

### 1. Written Exam (60%)

The two-hour proctored exam asks learners to answer two out of five questions. This examines the learners understanding of the core concepts, empirical case studies and theories studied in the course (MIMLOs 1, 2, 3, 4).

### 2. Continuous Assessment - Reading Comprehension (30%)

The Reading Comprehension assignment is held in class and will develop the learner's ability to read introductory texts. The feedback after the first reading comprehension allows them to see where they need to improve and put their learning into practice in written exam (MIMLO 1, 4).

### 3. Attendance (10%)

## 7.7 Summative Assessment Strategy for this module

MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
1, 2, 3, 4	Written Exam	60%
1, 2	Reading Comprehension	30%
	Attendance	10%

## 7.8 Sample Assessment Materials

The module assessment strategy is based on a balance between theoretical and practical learning. Learners will be provided with opportunities to discuss and consider the theories presented in the context of their experience and knowledge of case studies.

This module will be assessed in three parts:

### Reading Comprehension (30%)

Learners are asked to undertake a close reading of a journal article/book chapter to develop their knowledge of the role and function of international institutions. Learners will summaries key points in their respective articles and post on a wiki in Moodle.

#### Sample Questions:

1. Based on the articles you have studied, please outline both Haslam's (1999) and Kelly Holmes and O'Regan's (2004) presentation of the infantilizing 'child as nation' discourse in their papers.
2. Outline and discuss how Kuhling and Keohane (2007) and Ging (2009) account for the proliferation of new discourses concerning Irish Identity in Irish media and popular culture.
3. Outline the key frames identified by Breen, Haynes, and Devereux (2005) in their article analyse the role of fear framing in shaping public attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic minorities.

## Written Exam (60%)

### Sample Exam Questions:

1. Outline the key features of the 'preariat' by Standing (2011) and assess the significance of the issues around minimum-wage employment in Ireland consisting of temporary, part-time work and zero-hours contracts.
2. Critically assess Hochschild's (2003, 2012) claim that in today's information economy there has been an increase in the range of service workers who engage in emotional labour.
3. Critically evaluate the key features of the neoliberal perspective of social welfare with reference to a contemporary policy you have covered.
4. How have Foucauldian ideas been applied to conceptualizing the system of Direct Provision in Ireland? In your answer, please refer to a reading you have studied.
5. Critically discuss the argument that there is a growing intersection between social policy and crime control (Kiely and Swirack, 2023) and outline the ways in which social policy can stigmatise, exclude and penalise social groups deemed to be problematic.

## Attendance (10%)

## 7.9 Indicative reading lists and other information resources

### Indicative Core Reading:

Choudhury, B. (2016) *Reading Postcolonial Theory - Key texts in context*. London: Routledge India.

Dukelow, F. & Considine, M. (2017) *Irish Social Policy: A Critical Introduction*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Policy Press.

Dillon, M. (2014). *Introduction to Sociological Theory; Theorists, Concepts and Their Applicability to the 21st Century*. UK: Wiley.

Hochschild, A. (2012) *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkley: California Press.

Hewson, D. (2022) 'All the time watched': an analysis of disciplinary power within the Irish Direct Provision system, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48:3, 676-692.

Kiely, E. & Swirack, K. (2023) *The Criminalisation of Social Policy*. Bristol University Press.

Mills, C. (1951) *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Courtois, A., & O'Keefe, T. (2015) Precarity in the ivory cage: Neoliberalism and casualisation of work in the Irish higher education sector. *The Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 13(1), 43-66. <http://www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/13-1-3.pdf>

### Indicative Other Reading:

Breen, M.J. et al. (2004), A cosy consensus on deviant discourse: How the refugee and asylum seeker meta-narrative has endorsed an interpretative crisis in relation to the transnational politics of the world's displaced persons, *Proceedings of the 1st Annual Kogakuin University/University of Limerick International Conference of Science and Humanities*, Tokyo, Japan.

Breen, M.J., Haynes, A. and Devereux, E. (2005) Smuggling Zebras for Lunch: Media framing of asylum seekers in the Irish print media. *Études Irlandaises*, Vol. 30(1).

Breen, M.J., Haynes, A. and Devereux, E. (2006) Citizens, Loopholes and Maternity Tourists: Irish Print Media Framing of the 2004 Citizenship Referendum in Corcoran, M.P. and Peillon, M.(eds.) *Uncertain Ireland: A Sociological Chronicle*, 2003-2004. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Corcoran, M. and Share, P. (2008) *Belongings: Shaping Identity in Modern Ireland*. Dublin: IPA.

Crompton, R. (2008), *Class and Stratification*, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Cambridge: Polity.

Delanty, G. (2022) *Pandemics, Politics, and Society Critical Perspectives on the Covid-19 Crisis*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Ging, D. (2009) All-consuming images: new gender formations in post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland in Ging, D., Cronin, M. & Kirby, P. (eds.) *Transforming Ireland: challenges, critiques, resources*. Manchester University Press.

Haslam, R. (1999) 'A Race Bashed in the Face: Imagining Ireland as a Damaged Child, *Jouvert: a Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 4(1).

Hearne, R. (2020) *Housing Shock: The Irish Housing Crisis and How to Solve it*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Inglis, T. (2018) Webs of meaning: Theories and evidence from contemporary Ireland, *Irish Journal of Sociology* 26(3) 223-243.

Inglis, T. (2021) The slings, arrows and survival of Irish sociology in *Irish Journal of Sociology* 29(3):297-303.

Jones, P. Bradbury, L. and LeBoutillier, S. (2017) *Introducing Social Theory*, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). UK: Wiley

Kelly-Holmes, H. & O'Regan, V. (2004) The spoilt children of Europe; German press coverage of the Nice Treaty referenda in Ireland, *Journal of Language and Politics* 3(1) 81–116.

Kivisto, K. (2011) *Social Theory; Roots and Branches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kuhling, C. & Keohane, K. (2007) Liquid Modernity: Collective Representations of Irishness in the Guinness and Jameson Drink Ads, 'Liquidity and Irish Identity, paper for the 'Consuming Identities' Workshop.

Scott, L. (2020) *The Cost of Sexism. Why the Economy is Built for Men and Why we Must Reshape it*. Faber.

Slorach, R. (2015) *A Very Capitalist Condition. A History and Politics of Disability*. UK: Bookmarks.

Whelan, J. (2020) Specters of Goffman: Impression management in the Irish welfare space. *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 15(1), 47-65.

Online Resources/Websites:

**Peer-reviewed Journals**

*Critical Social Policy*, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/csp>

*European Sociological Review*, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/esr>

*Irish Political Studies*, Routledge. <https://www.psai.ie/journal/>

*International Political Science Review*, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/IPS>

*British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/description/BPI>

*The Journal of Economic Inequality*, Springer. <https://www.springer.com/journal/10888>

*Journal of European Public Policy*, Taylor and Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjpp20>

*Journal of Social Policy*, Cambridge Core. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-social-policy>

*Policy and Society*, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/policyandsociety>

*Political Science and Research Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/political-science-research-and-methods>

*Social Politics*, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/sp>

**Indicative Other Resources:**

Learners will be asked to engage with newsfeed and commentary on current affairs from a variety of resources, as well as content written by high-quality journalists and/or academics. Current affairs will be circulated via email and uploaded to the VLE.

*Sample List:*

- Newsfeed and Political Commentary
- Print-Newspaper Websites
- TV/News Channels

**Websites:**

Geary Institute for Public Policy: <https://www.ucd.ie/geary/>

ESRI – Economic Social Research Institute - <https://www.esri.ie/>

Living Wage Ireland: <https://www.livingwage.ie/>

Oxfam: <https://www.oxfam.org/en>

TASC – Think Tank for Action on Social Change: <https://www.tasc.ie/>

World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/>

What is the Precariat | Guy Standing | TEDxPrague [online] Available at: <https://youtu.be/nnYhZCUYOxs?si=e-pNsB7lyB5gUFtf>