

Comparative Public Policy: The Swedish Model in the 21st Century

Fall 2018

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Class hours: TBA

Office hours: TBA

In the middle decades of the 20th century, Sweden was often held up as a positive anomaly, proof that it was possible to have both robust economic growth and a strong welfare state. Today, talk of the Swedish Model has faded, even as Sweden's economy and welfare state have continued to evolve. The question we will investigate in this course is whether the Swedish Model can survive in the 21st century in the face of economic restructuring, welfare state retrenchment, a changing electorate, and pressure from the EU and beyond.

This investigation will begin by looking at the historical background that allowed the Swedish Model to emerge, and then proceed to a thorough examination of the rise and fall of the welfare state, and finally analyze the future prospects of that welfare state. Along the way, students will gain familiarity with the structure, mechanics, and major players in the Swedish political system, as well as with how Swedish politics differs from and is similar to both Sweden's immediate as well as its more distant European neighbors, with the role of labor unions and other social movements, with Sweden's role in the larger international system, and with the challenges faced by Sweden in a changing world.

Google Classroom: The Swedish Program uses the Google Classroom platform for all its courses. On the course Classroom page, you will find the readings, assignments, and lecture notes, as well as links to useful resources for further study. The course platform is also where you will submit your assignments. It also functions as a discussion forum outside of class: you are highly encouraged to participate in extending class discussions by posting questions and links throughout the semester. I will use the course platform to post links to articles and books that are relevant to the class, as well as reminders of deadlines and questions I have for you as a group outside of class.

Readings: There will be two books, which will comprise the core of the readings. All the additional readings will be available on the course platform. The two books are: Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*

Jonas Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity*

Laptops in the classroom: You are welcome to use a laptop to take notes during lecture. However, please refrain from using the internet while in class: it distracts you and those around you from the classroom discussion, and current research shows that focusing on several tasks at once negatively impacts learning.

Grading: Your grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

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|--------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Attendance and participation:</i> | 15% |
| <i>Papers:</i> | 40% |
| <i>Final policy brief:</i> | 25% |
| <i>Policy colloquium:</i> | 20% |

Attendance & Participation (15%): Attendance is mandatory; you have to come to lecture to pass this course. One unexcused absence is permitted; any unexcused absence after that will lower your grade one step (e.g., from A to A-). Even more importantly, your active participation in class discussions is essential. You should also participate by posting to the course stream in Google Classroom. Please prepare for seminar by writing down the questions you have about the reading or the topic of that day's class.

Lecture & Policy labs: Each week will be divided into a lecture and a policy lab. Monday classes will be lectures, although you are of course encouraged to ask questions and participate then as well. Wednesday classes will be what I have called policy labs: these are not discussion sections as such, but rather a space to work out and critique specific policies in a number of different policy areas using different methods. It is also during the policy labs that you will have your policy briefing.

Papers (40%): There will be two formal papers throughout the semester, each worth 20% of your final grade. Each paper will cover only one part of the course; i.e., the papers are not cumulative. I will give you a choice of several topics for each paper. The papers should be about 5-6 pages in length.

Final policy brief (25%): Instead of a final analytical paper, at the end of the semester you will hand in a joint policy on a topic of your choosing. For the brief, you will pair up with one other student. Together, you will research your chosen topic throughout the semester, so that you can produce an authoritative introductory brief on that topic. You should also expect to be called on as the class expert on your topic during class discussions. The final policy brief should be about 10-15 pages in length.

Policy colloquium (20%): Rather than present the findings of your joint research brief to the rest of the class, you will present it during the policy colloquia, on one of the last four class sessions of the semester. Each policy colloquium will start with a brief (30 minutes) lecture with the entire class, after which we will break into groups. I will meet with three of the groups each time for the colloquium, which will consist of a

focused conversation on each of the groups' chosen topics. During the colloquium, the groups that do not participate that class session will have time to work on their final policy briefs.

Course learning outcomes: At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge about the social democratic welfare state and its justification
- Acquire knowledge about a policy area of their choosing
- Compare, analyze, and critique varieties of capitalism
- Draw out policy implications and come up with recommendations from empirical data
- Produce a research-based policy brief

Schedule:

Week 1 *Introduction to the course + The Structure of Swedish Government*

Policy lab: What is the welfare state?

Reading: Esping-Andersen, "[The Three Political Economies of the Welfare State](#)"

Judt, "[What Is Living and What Is Dead in Social Democracy?](#)"

Hacker, "[Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State](#)"

Week 2 *Modernization and integration*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, Introduction + chapters 1-2

Policy lab: Political participation & representation

Reading: Dahl, "[What Political Institutions Does Large-Scale Democracy Require?](#)"

Achen & Bartels, "[Democracy for Realists](#)"

Levitsky & Ziblatt, "[This Is How Democracies Die](#)"

Dalton, "[Citizenship Norms and the Expansion of Political Participation](#)"

Saunders, "[The Democratic Turnout 'Problem'](#)"

Week 3 *From poor relief to the "people's home"*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, chapters 3-4

Policy lab: Nationalism and populism

Reading: TBA

Week 4 *The golden age of the strong welfare state*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, chapters 7-8

Policy lab: Education policy

- Reading: Sahlberg, "[Education Policies for Raising Student Learning](#)"
Darling-Hammond, "[What PISA Can Tell Us about U.S. Education Policy](#)"
Delblanco, "[The Two Faces of American Education Policy](#)"
Ravitch, "[When Public Goes Private, as Trump Wants: What Happens?](#)"

Week 5 *Corporatism meets the consumer society*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, chapters 10-11
Paper 1 due!

Policy lab: Health care

Reading: [International Profiles of Health Care Systems, 2017](#)
Schneider et. al., [Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, 2017](#)

Week 6 *Consensus and conflict*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, chapters 12-14

Policy lab: Energy and environmental policy

Reading: Victor & Yueh, "[The New Energy Order](#)"
McKibben, "[Some Like It Hot](#)"
Nordhaus, "[The Economic Aspects of Global Warming](#)"
Metcalf, "[Market-Based Policy Options to Control U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)"

Week 7 *The Swedish welfare state*

Reading: Rosenberg, [Sweden: The Reluctant Nation](#)

Policy lab: Corruption

Reading: Reading: Olken & Pande: "[Corruption in Developing Countries](#)"
Persson et. al., "[Why Anticorruption Reforms Fail](#)"
Bullough, "[The Dark Side of Globalization](#)"

Lanskoy & Myles-Primakoff, "[Power and Plunder in Putin's Russia](#)"

Heinrich, "[Corruption and Inequality](#)"

Week 8 *Inequality and capitalism*

Reading: Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity*, chapters 1-3

Policy lab: The poor and the 1%

Reading: Alvaredo et. al., "[The Top 1% in International and Historical Perspective](#)"

Gould & Wething, *U.S. Poverty Rates*

Immervoll & Richardson, *Redistribution Policy and Inequality Reduction in OECD Countries*

Tan Chen, "[All Hollowed Out](#)"

Week 9 *Job creation & labor market participation*

Reading: Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity*, chapters 4-6

Bonoli, *The Political Economy of Active Labor Market Policy*

Policy lab: Social trust

Reading: Rothstein & Uslaner, "All for All"

Bergh & Bjørnskov, "[Historical Trust Levels Predict the Current Size of the Welfare State](#)"

Rothstein, "[Corruption and Social Trust](#)"

Paper 2 due!

Break: no class!

Week 10 *Redistribution and growth*

Reading: Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity*, chapters 7-8

Policy lab: Gender equality

Reading: England, "[Gender Inequality in Labor Markets](#)"

hooks, "[Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In](#)"

Wypijewski, "[What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About #MeToo](#)"

Wright, "[A Court Overturns a Burkini Ban, But Not Its Mindset](#)"

Week 11 *The future of the welfare state + Policy colloquium I*

Reading: Esping-Andersen, [A Welfare State for the 21st Century](#)

Truth and politics + Policy colloquium II

Reading: Arendt, "[Lying in Politics](#)"

Orwell, "[Politics and the English Language](#)"

Havel, "[The Power of the Powerless](#)"

Davies, "[The Age of Post-Truth Politics](#)"

Kolbert, "[Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds](#)"

Week 12 *Choice topic + Policy colloquium III*

Reading: TBA

Conclusion + Policy colloquium IV

Exam week: Final policy brief due!