

Comparative Public Policy: The Swedish Model

Fall 2020

Instructor: Jonas Brodin

E-mail: jonas.brodin@swedishprogram.org

Class hours: TBD

Office hours: TBD

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 differ from and are 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:

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

Attendance & Participation (20%): 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 (15%): 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. I will meet with two or 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*

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 2 *The just society*

Reading: Rawls, "Justice as Fairness"

Nozick, "The Entitlement Theory of Justice"

Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self"

Nussbaum, "Capabilities and Human Rights"

Policy lab: Nationalism and populism

Reading: Anderson, "Indonesian Nationalism"

Bonikowski, "Nationalism in Settled Times"

Müller, "The Attractions of Populism for Politicians, the Dangers for Democracy"

Mudde, "Europe's Populist Surge"

Ivaldi et. al., "Varieties of Populism across a Left-Right Spectrum"

Week 3 *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"

Policy lab: Truth and politics

Reading: Arendt, "Truth and Politics"
Havel, "The Power of the Powerless"
Kakutani, "The Death of Truth"
Davies, "The Age of Post-Truth Politics"
Kolbert, "Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds"

Week 4 *Toward "the people's home"*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, Introduction + chapters 1-4

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 *The golden age of the strong welfare state*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, chapters 7-8, 10
Paper 1 due!

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"

Week 6 *The neoliberal welfare state*

Reading: Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy*, chapters 11, 13, "After Social Democracy"
Diefenbach, "New Public Management in Public Sector Organizations"
Rothstein, "Creating Political Legitimacy"
Svallfors, "Politics as Organized Combat"

Policy lab: Corruption

Reading: Olken & Pande, "Corruption in Developing Countries"
Persson et. al., "Why Anticorruption Reforms Fail"
Bullough, "The Dark Side of Globalization"
Lansky & Myles-Primakoff, "Power and Plunder in Putin's Russia"
Heinrich, "Corruption and Inequality"

Week 7 *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 8 *Job creation & labor market participation*

Reading: Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity*, chapters 4-6
Bonoli, *The Political Economy of Active Labor Market Policy*
Desmond, "Americans Want to Believe Jobs Are the Solution to Poverty. They're Not."

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 9 *Redistribution and growth*

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

Policy lab: Health care

Reading: *International Profiles of Health Care Systems, 2017*
Schneider et. al., *Mirror, Mirror 2017*

Paper 2 due!

Week 10 *The future of the welfare state*

Reading: Esping-Andersen, *A Welfare State for the 21st Century*

Policy lab: Choice topic

Reading: TBD

Week 11 *Policy colloquium I*

Policy colloquium II

Week 12 *Policy colloquium III*

Policy colloquium IV

Week 13 **Exam week: Final policy brief due!**