The Canadian Welfare State in Comparative Perspective
Fall 2018

Professor: Rodney Haddow
Class time: Thursday, 2 - 4 PM
Class location:
My office location: 3119 Sydney Smith Hall; 100 St. George Street
Office hours: Wednesday, 4:15-5:15 PM; Thursday, 4:15-5:15 PM; or by appointment.
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Course description: Welfare states now receive considerable attention in political science due to their prominence among state functions, and because of the fiscal and demographic pressures they face in an age of globalization. They are the focus of some of the most interesting theoretical and empirical debates on the comparative politics of industrial societies and in scholarship about Canadian politics. This course examines recent trends in Canadian social policy in light of this comparative scholarship.

The first substantive seminar addresses the legitimacy of the welfare state from the perspective of political theory. Section A then reviews leading themes in the comparative study of welfare states in industrial societies, with one week devoted to the application of this literature to Canada. Section B treats aspects of Canada’s welfare state.

Format: This is a seminar course; classroom sessions will be devoted to a discussion of the readings assigned for that session. Students are expected to complete the readings required of them, even when they are not submitting a paper or making an oral presentation.

Readings: There are four articles listed for each week of the course. All four of these readings are required for graduate students, and must be incorporated into submitted essays. Undergraduate students are required only to read three of these readings each week, and to write about those three when preparing a paper. (I recommend that undergraduates read the first three readings listed as required, but you may choose to do otherwise).

There is one textbook:

Keith Banting and John Myles, eds., Inequality and the Fading of Redistribution (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).
All other readings are available electronically from our course Quercus page.

**Grading Scheme and Course Requirements:**

**Pol 439H:**
- 4 short essays (4-5 pages each) 75%
  -(each is worth 20%, except your weakest, which is worth 15%)
- 1 oral presentation 10%
- Oral participation 15%

**Pol 2139H:**
- 5 short essays (5-6 pages each) 75%
  -(each essay is worth 15%)
- 1 oral presentation 10%
- Oral participation 15%

_Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the turnitin.com web site. If, as a student, you object to using turnitin.com, please see me to establish alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments._

**Written and oral assignments:** The most important responsibility for students in the course is to prepare four 4-5 page (1000-1250 words) (undergraduate) or five 5-6 page (graduate) (1250-1500 word) papers, based on the assigned readings. There is considerable flexibility regarding which topics you write on, but at least one paper must be submitted by October 25th to comply with the university’s course-drop decline.

These essays will be expected to accomplish two tasks: [a] they should provide a clear account of the main arguments made by each of the readings assigned for that week, indicating where they differ and where they converge; and [b] they should make an argument, by pointing to a major issue or theme addressed in the readings, comparing what the different authors have to say about this question, and evaluating these different perspectives. Needless to say, papers should be written in good Standard English, and with appropriate references to the sources used.

Essays are due in class, at the beginning of the class, on the date when their topic will be discussed in the seminar. Because the seminar discussion should serve to clarify the readings for all participants, it would not be fair for me to accept papers submitted
late without significant penalty. Consequently, late papers will be subject to a penalty of 10% during the first 24 hours after they are due, and of 20% thereafter. The 10% penalty will rise to 20% for a second or subsequent one-day-late assignment. Please note that all term work must, according to University regulations, be submitted by December 5th.

In conjunction with one of these essays, each student will also make one 10 minute presentation of their argument, in class. Students will sign up for a presentation topic during the second week of the course. Presentations should not simply summarize the readings. They should be argumentative, and provide a cogent analysis of a theme relevant to the readings. The presenter should assume that other seminar participants are familiar with the readings.

Finally, students will be graded for participation. Five marks will be assigned based on attendance at class. Only documented medical grounds will be accepted as an explanation of non-attendance. I reserve the right to count a student as absent who persistently shows up late for class (i.e., more than 5 minutes after the normal start time). Students will lose one per cent of their term grade for each class missed without evidence of such grounds. (If more than five classes are missed, further grades will be deducted). The other ten marks will be based on the quality and quantity of each student’s involvement in oral discussions. It is not essential that you be talking all the time. But I do expect each student to make an effort to contribute to each week’s seminar discussion. In evaluating this participation, I am particularly interested in the extent to which the oral contribution shows an accurate understanding of the readings, and gives evidence that the student has reflected upon them. Particular emphasis will be attached to each student’s contribution during weeks when they are not submitting an essay.

Seminar themes and readings:

[1] September 6: Introduction to the Course

[2] September 13: Are welfare states justifiable? How much should the state reduce inequality and poverty?

Section A: Comparing Welfare States in Industrial Societies:


[4] September 27: Canada’s Welfare State: Liberal, with ‘special characteristics’?


Jane Jenson, “Historical Transformations of Canada’s Social Architecture,” in Banting and Myles, eds., Inequality and the Fading of Redistribution, chapter 2.


Alain Noel, “Quebec’s New Politics of Redistribution,” in Banting and Myles, eds., Inequality and the Fading of Redistribution, chapter 11.

[5] October 4: Gender and the Welfare State: When does the welfare state promote equity for women?


[6] October 11: Class and the Welfare State: Are redistribution and the welfare state supported more by the socially less advantaged than by the advantaged? Why might this pattern vary across countries and over time?


[7] October 18: **Multiculturalism and Immigration: Does ethno-cultural diversity undermine support for the welfare state?**


[8] October 25: **The Welfare State and Poverty: When do welfare states, and individual programs, alleviate poverty the most? Is the answer different for children and adults?**


[9] November 1: **The Welfare State and Happiness: Are ampler welfare states and more equality conducive to greater happiness and well-being?**


Jonathan Kelley and M.D.R. Evans, “Social Inequality and Individual Subjective Well-Being”, *Social Science Research* 62 (2017), 1-23


November 8: Reading week; no class.

Section B: Canadian Social Policy and Politics

[10] November 15: Inputs: What changes occurred in the factors influencing Canada’s welfare state since the 1980s? What have been the consequences?


Susan Phillips, “Restructuring Civil Society in Canada; Muting the Politics of Redistribution,” in Banting and Myles, eds., Inequality and the Fading of Redistribution, chapter 5.


[11] November 22: Outputs: How much less successful is Canada’s welfare state now than in the past in achieving equality? It is because of changes in market income, redistribution, or both?

Miles Corak, “'Inequality is the Root of Social Evil,' or Maybe Not? Two Stories About Inequality and Public Policy”, Canadian Public Policy 42: 4 (2016), 367-414.

Lars Osberg, The Age of Increasing Inequality (Toronto: Lorimer, 2018), chapter 1.


[12] November 29: Health Insurance, Public Pensions and Children: What broad design emerged in Canada in these areas during the post-war years? How has it changed recently? Why?

Carolyn Tuohy, “Health Care Policy after Universality: Canada in Comparative Perspective”, in Banting and Myles, eds., Inequality and the Fading of Redistribution, chapter 12.
