Critical Policy Studies

(Draft Syllabus! Can be modified before Winter Semester!)

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Course Description

In this course students will understand mainstream and critical theories and concepts of policy research and analysis. The course will shed light on the process of policy making and the ways in which policies are designed and implemented on the local, national and global level. Students will also learn about various types of actors involved in policy making, the ideas that drive policy design and the importance of discourses. The course will also involve the historical analysis of (public) policies and the contradiction between policy continuity and change.

Besides the most important conventional methods of policy analysis students will understand new, innovative methods, including participatory action research, democratic and deliberative techniques. By the end of the course students will be able to apply critical theories of policy analysis on various policy areas, on different policy tiers and related to diverse geographical contexts.

The course consists of three main parts:

- The introductory part includes the presentation of the most important mainstream and critical concepts of policy studies and the process of policy making.
- In the second, largest part we focus on the gendered and intersectional analysis of selected policy fields including, among others, family policy; policies related to domestic violence; migration policies. In this part of the course students will also learn how various tiers of policy making may intersect with each other. Through these policy fields varying innovative and new methods of policy making and policy analysis will also be highlighted. In some of the classes invited guests will speak about their work in various policy fields as social workers, activists or researchers.
- In the third part of the course students’ proposed themes for essays will be discussed. We also pull strings together and assess the course.

Assessment:

1. Students will be provided with 3-5 questions related to the readings to all classes via Moodle. They will have to upload their answers to the on-line system. We start the discussion on class with these issues. Answering questions to at least 10 classes provides 30% of the final grade.
2. Students will have to write a short research essay on one policy field (2-5.000 words). The research can be linked to a policy field discussed on class, or can be a field chosen by the student. In the latter case students have to consult me on the theme. Research essays have to utilize one of the theories or concepts and one of the research methods discussed at class. Essays provide 70% of the final grade.
Week 1-4 INTRODUCTION: Understanding the policy process and policy development

**Week 1. What are (public) policies? Understanding the policy process**

**Week 2. Making gender visible in policy research**

**Week 3. Continuity and change in policies and institutions**
Suggested reading:

**Week 4. Intersectional approach in the historical analysis of social policies**

**Week 5-11 Fields, levels and methods of policy making and analysis**

**Week 5. Family policies and mainstream policy analysis**

**Week 6. Framing and discursive governance**


**Week 8. Policies of domestic violence**

**Week 8. Migration, asylum policies and transnational actors**
Week 10. The role of changing civil society in CEE and Russia

Week 11. Democracy, deliberation and action research

Week 12 Pulling the strings together
Summary, evaluation and discussion of research proposals