

Course Specifications

Valid in the academic year 2018-2019

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)
Credits 6.0 Study time 180 h Contact hrs 45.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2018-2019

A (semester 2)	English	lecture	15.0 h
		excursion	5.0 h
		group work	5.0 h
		PDE tutorial	15.0 h
		self-reliant study activities	5.0 h

Lecturers in academic year 2018-2019

Verhofstadt, Elsy	EB21	lecturer-in-charge
Van Ootegem, Luc	EB21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2018-2019

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Economics	6	A
Master of Science in Economics	6	A
Exchange programme in Economics and Business Administration	6	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Welfare state, efficiency, social justice, employment policy, social security, pensions, well-being, capabilities

Position of the course

The goal of the course socio-economic policy is twofold. On the one hand, this course wants to give students an insight into the possible reasons for government intervention, the term wellbeing, and the theoretical concept 'welfare state' (paying specific attention to the Belgian situation). On the other hand, the course also wants to encourage students to think critically about a number of current problems that welfare states have to deal with and about the possibilities to cope with them through policy. The use of arguments from the first part of the course should allow students to form a well-founded opinion on several social problems, for which the normative choice can be clearly distinguished from the positive analysis.

The course socio-economic policy is slightly different from most courses. Clear emphasis still lies on gaining and integrating basic knowledge. This basic knowledge is provided through lectures and theme classes. Apart from that, this course also pays attention to skills: course-specific skills (such as gaining insight into the current problems of our welfare state), learning skills with which you organise your own knowledge-gathering process and learn to develop your continuous inquisitiveness and your social and communicative skills. These skills will especially be used in the alternative way of learning in which students will learn to solve practical cases in small groups (problem-oriented education).

Contents

Lectures

The first theme 'welfare state' starts with an introduction: definition, characteristics, functions, a short history and the size of the welfare state. Afterwards the possible goals of governments will be discussed and several visions on society will briefly be explained. Classical divisions of welfare states will also be looked at. Finally, the

challenges for the welfare state will be examined, as will the active welfare state. A second lecture discusses the economy of insurances. We point out the difference between insurances and solidarity and we briefly discuss the moral hazard and adverse selection problems. In that context, the Belgian social security will be looked at in detail. Last but not least, we will examine the population ageing (using several indicators) and its consequences. A third lecture studies the role of Europe in social and labour market policies of the member states. We examine the Belgian position compared to other European countries for numerous indicators.

The second theme deals with the measurement of wellbeing. According to Nobel Prize Winner (1998) Economics A. Sen income, consumption or satisfaction (this is the classic welfare economics triangle) is insufficient to measure 'well-being'. He chooses to use the concepts of 'functionings' and 'capabilities'.

Problem-oriented education

Linked to the central concepts in the course: 'welfare state' and 'well-being'. Possible subjects are a thematic approach of wellbeing, employment policy in handling the crisis, reform of child benefits.... Following these sessions there could be a reflection moment.

Theme classes with guest lecturers/visits

The aim of these guest lectures or visits is to offer a practical component or alternative vision to subjects handled during the lectures or the problem oriented education.

Specific skills

The specific skills are clustered around two themes: presenting and applying for a job. For both themes an information session and an individual exercise are organised.

Initial competences

The final competences of the courses 'labour economy' and 'public finances'.

Final competences

- 1 *Have an insight in the challenges and possible adaptations for our welfare state.*
- 2 *Know the pro and contra arguments of different approaches to well-being.*
- 3 *Being able to situate the Belgian socio-economic position in a European perspective.*
- 4 *Being able to distinguish the normative and positive aspects in policy proposals.*
- 5 *Have a critical attitude towards the learning process of oneself and other students.*
- 6 *Being able to work independently and in group on problems.*
- 7 *Further development of social and communication skills in presenting and applying for a job*

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Excursion, group work, lecture, PDE tutorial, self-reliant study activities

Extra information on the teaching methods

Interactive lectures with computer presentations, problem oriented education and guest lecturers/visits.

Learning materials and price

Slides of the lectures + recent and accessible articles from literature + possible transport costs for visits

Cost 15.0 EUR

References

Barr, N. (2012). Economics of the welfare state.
Vandenbroucke, F. (2012). The Active Welfare State revisited.
Decancq, K. & Schokkaert, E. (2013). Beyond GDP. Measuring social progress in Europe.

Course content-related study coaching

Content related support: Elsy Verhofstadt
Pedagogical support: Fanny Buysschaert

Evaluation methods

end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Oral examination

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Participation, assignment, peer assessment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods

The periodical evaluation for this course encompasses an oral exam with written preparation;

The continuous assessment encompasses the assignments of the problem oriented education and the participation during the lectures and theme classes.

Presence during problem-oriende sessions and supervisions is required.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous assessment (60%) and periodical evaluation (40%).