

GD906-10 Sustainable Development Policy

21/22

Department

Global Sustainable Development

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Nicholas Bernards

Credit value

10

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module introduces students to key debates, research methods, and analytical skills for policy analysis, with a focus on sustainability issues. It will build on in-depth knowledge of particular global challenges considered elsewhere on the programme, by helping students develop a capacity for more nuanced and critical analyses of policy processes themselves.

Module aims

Policies aimed at promoting positive transition and transformation are often subject to significant gaps in both contents and implementation. While students are often well-prepared to identify the weaknesses of policy contents in their areas of specialization, they are sometimes less well-equipped to understand how policy processes produce the outcomes they do. This module is aimed at introducing students to policy processes, and developing their capacity to critically analyse policy discourse. This is done with a particular focus on the critical interrogation of the mainstream Sustainable Development agenda as promoted by the United Nations and others. It encourages students to think beyond the critique of policy contents, developing the skills, conceptual and theoretical tools, and understandings necessary for students to engage with the 'how' and 'why' of policy making.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The module will be taught in three parts. The first part of the module, weeks 1-4, will cover foundational information about key actors and institutions in policy processes at local, national, and global levels. The second part of the module, weeks 5-6, will introduce key methodologies (including e.g. case study and comparative analyses, historical analysis) and analytical tools (e.g. process tracing, historical institutionalism, 'follow the policy', content analysis) to be used in policy analysis. The third and final part of the module in weeks 7-10 will encourage students to apply the skills and knowledge developed in the first two parts of the course to specific cases within the Sustainable Development agenda, selected and presented by students.

Student presentations will briefly outline a selected policy or policy framework of relevance to global sustainable development challenges and might include, e.g. emissions reduction schemes, transportation policies, housing policies, poverty reduction strategies, industrial policy. Successive weeks will focus on policy at local, national, and global levels, and on policy diffusion/circulation. Students will work in groups in class to develop critical analyses of the selected policy drawing on the tools taught in the first two parts of the module.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand and critically engage with key concepts and theoretical frameworks around key actors, institutions, and dynamics in policy and policy processes at local, national, and global levels
- Understand, assess, and apply different methods of analysis relevant to policy processes
- Produce critical analysis of socially, economically and environmentally normative policy, informed by independent research, with a particular focus on the mainstream policy discourse of Sustainable Development
- Demonstrate advanced writing and oral communication skills in the sphere of policy analysis and critique

Indicative reading list

Readings would consist of advanced texts, primarily research monographs and journal articles, dealing primarily with the critical analysis of policy processes. They would draw from a number of relevant disciplines including political science, international relations, geography, and public administration and planning. Readings would be primarily focused on concepts, theories and methods rather than empirical studies, as the latter aspects of the module content are to be delivered primarily by students.

Readings may include, for instance:

Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell (2010) *Who governs the globe?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tanja A Borzel and Thomas Risse (2007) 'Governance Without a State? Can it work?', *Regulation and Governance* 4 (2): 113-134.

John Braitwaite and Peter Drahos (2000) *Global Business Regulation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (2011) 'Understanding the Global Dimensions of Policy' *Global Policy* 1(1): 16-28.

Barbara Norman (2018) *Sustainable Pathways for our Cities and Regions: Planning Within Planetary Boundaries*, London: Routledge.

Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2012) 'Follow the Policy: A Distended Case Approach', *Environment and Planning A* 44 (1): 21-30.

Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2015) *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neoliberalism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Research element

Healey & Jenkins (2009) propose that Research-led-teaching design should consider four discrete opportunities. This module has been designed to include these opportunities.

1. Research-led learning, where the module syllabus is developed from current research in relevant fields, being based on contemporary and seminal, peer reviewed and other high quality research literature.
As such, all knowledge for student engagement will be consciously and specifically chosen for its merits in reference to broader academic understanding. This will initially include engagements with foundational literature on policy-making and policy processes at local, national, and global levels.
2. Research-tutored learning, where students engage actively in discussing high quality, contemporary and seminal research literature.
This module will provide students with the opportunity to discuss and critically engage with the above literatures, as it is primarily taught in a participatory, seminar format. Students will also engage in depth with a selected issue in these literatures in writing their Short Essays.
3. Research-orientated learning, where students are actively taught methodological understanding and skills for the independent creation of new knowledge.
This module will provide students with specific training on methodological and analytical tools used in policy analysis in weeks 5-6 .
4. Research-based learning, where student use developing methodological skills to create original knowledge of their own.
This module will provide students with the opportunity to develop and apply the above skills in both the Case Study Presentation and Critical Policy Analysis assessments.

Interdisciplinary

Positive global transformations are widely recognised to require transdisciplinary approaches. This module has been designed according to our signature problem-based, response focused pedagogy, and as such will draw on a transdisciplinary knowledge in the design and delivery of

learning opportunities.

(Authentic) assessment will require students to demonstrate transdisciplinary aptitude. In particular, students will need to be able to synthesize, critique, and apply knowledge about policy processes, drawn from a range of disciplines in social sciences including political science, international relations, sociology and organization studies, and geography, to real world cases.

International

This is a module on the Master's in Global Sustainable Development which offers a transdisciplinary and international learning experience allowing students to achieve breadth and depth of knowledge.

Subject specific skills

- Understanding of policy processes relevant to global sustainable development.
- Understanding of key actors in policy-making processes at local, national, and global levels, as well as debates about scale of policy and implications for democracy and accountability.
- Ability to understand and critically analyse policy processes, alongside policy contents.

Transferable skills

Critical analysis

Written communication

Research skills and methods

Oral communication

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (20%)
Private study	30 hours (30%)
Assessment	50 hours (50%)
Total	100 hours

Private study description

Assigned reading and preparation for seminars.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Short essay	25%	10 hours
Students will write a short critical essay engaging with some of the themes raised in the foundational literature taught in weeks 1-4. The essay will assess students against intended learning objectives #s 1 and 2, as well as their written communication skills (ILO #4)		
Critical Policy Analysis	50%	30 hours
Students will prepare a critical analysis of a chosen policy addressing a challenge relevant to global sustainable development, applying theoretical and methodological tools learned on the module. The Critical Policy Analysis will assess against all ILOs.		
Case study presentation	25%	10 hours
Students will prepare a short presentation on a self-selected case study of a policy relevant to global sustainable development. The presentation will assess against ILOs #2 and 3, and the oral communication skills in ILO #4.		

Feedback on assessment

Students will receive written feedback on all assessments, and will be able to obtain further feedback in person from the instructor(s) upon request.

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of TGDA-L801 Postgraduate Taught Global Sustainable Development