GD906-10 Policy, governance and sustainable development

24/25

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 relating to the analysis of policy, policy processes, and governance. 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 governance, and developing their capacity to understand and explain why policy relating to sustainability looks the way that it does . 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.

Topics to be covered in the module include: key structural processes operating in the background of policy making (e.g. neoliberalism, colonialism/coloniality), tools and methods for policy analysis (e.g. case study and comparative methods, documentary research, institutionalist analysis), and key dynamics of policy-making (e.g. policy convergence, transfer, and mobility; policy failure; scale and policy)

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 (40%)
Private study	30 hours (60%)
Total	50 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 A1

	Weighting	Study time
Critical Policy Analysis	70%	35 hours

	Weighting	**Study time**

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 ILOs 1,2,3, and the written communication skills referenced in ILO 4.

Case study presentation	30%	15 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 1, 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 TIPA-LA9Z Postgraduate Taught Community, Engagement and Belonging (MASc)
- Year 1 of TGDA-L801 Postgraduate Taught Global Sustainable Development