

Social Policy (F000300)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 2)

English

Gent

group work

independent work

lecture

excursion

peer teaching

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Verhofstadt, Elsy

EB21

lecturer-in-charge

Van Ootegem, Luc

EB21

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[Master of Science in Teaching in Economics\(main subject Economics\)](#)

6

A

[Master of Science in Economics](#)

6

A

[Master of Science in Economics \(Double Degree\)](#)

6

A

[Exchange programme in Economics and Business Administration](#)

6

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Welfare state, efficiency, social justice, social security, 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'. 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-based learning).

Contents

Lectures

The first theme 'welfare state' discusses the functioning and characteristics of welfare states, the current challenges for the welfare state and the role of Europe. The second theme deals with the measurement of wellbeing. We discuss different concepts, underlying principles and consequences for policy.

Problem-based learning

Linked to the central concepts in the course: 'welfare state' and 'wellbeing'. Possible subjects are a thematic approach of wellbeing, the fourth industrial revolution and inclusive growth,

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 based learning. For example, a visit to the European Commission.

Specific skills

We cluster the specific skills around two themes: presenting and applying for jobs, incorporating both a learning path and workshop as well as practice sessions.

Initial competences

Having knowledge about and insight into the basics of (micro-)economic theory and public economics

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

Group work, Excursion, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

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

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Powerpoint presentations of the lectures

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: papers

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: yes

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Excursion

Name: Visit European Commission

Indicative price: € 22

Optional: no

Additional information: price of a standard return ticket Ghent-Brussels (a ticket -26y is cheaper)

References

Course content-related study coaching

Content related support: Elsy Verhofstadt, Luc Van Ootegem
Pedagogical support: Fanny Buyschaert

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods

The end-of-term evaluation for this course encompasses a written exam.

The continuous assessment encompasses the assignments of the problem oriented education. Presence during problem-oriented sessions and workshops is required.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous assessment (60%) and end-of-term evaluation (40%).