

## Course description «The Politics of Education and Research Policies»

Credits: 10

Level: Master

Teaching: Spring

Teaching language: English

### Course content

Education and research policies are very important for modern societies, because institutions such as kindergartens, schools and universities are supposed to educate people to become good citizens, prepare them for the labour market, or find answers to societal challenges like climate change. However, education and research policies show a large variance in many countries and the politics, meaning the political dynamics that shape these policies, play out differently depending on the context. This opens up interesting questions like:

- Why do pupils in some countries go through a unified secondary school system, while in others they are separated based on their grades in primary school?
- Why do you have to pay high tuition fees in some countries, while others are mostly tuition free?
- Why do some countries provide extensive student support in the form of grants, why others use loans or do not provide any support?
- What is the impact of these differences for educational trajectories or for societal inequality?

All these questions and many others will be in the focus of this course on the politics of education and research policies. The course will not only introduce students to the differences between education and research systems in different (mainly OECD) countries, but also analyse and discuss factors that can explain the variation such as path-dependence of national education systems, party politics, Europeanization, or international reform trends that are promoted by organizations like the World Bank or the OECD. In doing so, the course will cover the complete breadth of the policy field from early childhood education over school education, vocational education, up until higher education and research policy. The course will have an international comparative focus, which will concentrate on the OECD countries, but also provide room for looking at other world regions.

## Learning outcomes

### *Knowledge*

Having completed this course, students:

- Have detailed knowledge of different education systems, relevant actors, and international processes in the policy field as well as the state of the art of research
- Have in-depth knowledge on the most important conceptual approaches used to study education and research policies, including party politics, neo-institutional approaches, or policy diffusion
- Are familiar with recent international reform processes, such as the Europeanization of higher education and research or the role of the PISA studies for the policy field; in addition, they are able to assess their consequences for national reforms
- Understand the interaction of education and research policies among one another and with other policy fields

### *Skills*

Having completed this course, students can:

- conduct independent empirical studies on education and research policies
- contribute to policy debates in the area of education and research through their knowledge of the policy field as well as international reform trends
- assess strengths and weaknesses of specific reforms as well as their consequences
- present academic ideas and write academic texts

### *Competence*

Having completed this course, students can:

- analyse policies and policy-making processes and reflect critically about central arguments for specific policies or reforms
- recognize and critically assess the relations between different actors in the policy field
- use academic research to inform actors in the policy field about strengths and weaknesses of specific reforms

## Teaching

Lectures and two seminars. In the seminars, students will present an outline of their term paper and provide comments to the other students' outlines.

## Compulsory activities

Attend the seminars, comment on other students' outlines.

## Examination

Policy brief and term paper.

Policy brief:

- Students prepare a policy brief in small groups. The paper is presented and discussed in the last lecture of the course. The policy paper and the presentation are assessed together.
- The policy brief must have a limit of 1200-1600 words.

The term paper:

- must be between 4000-6000 words
- must have a topic that reflects the course readings and curriculum but selected by the student
- have a topic cleared with the course's main lecturer
- is prepared by writing an outline of the paper of 1000-1500 words which is presented in the seminars
- must meet the formal requirements for submission of written assignments

Both elements are each graded on a scale from A to F. Students have to pass all individual elements to pass the course, and all individual elements have to be delivered in the same semester. For the final grade, the policy brief (including presentation) counts one third and the term paper two thirds.

Syllabus:

### **Relevant monographies:**

Ansell (2010)

Austin and Jones (2016)

Busemeyer (2015)

Clark (1983)

Dobbins and Knill (2014)

Garritzmann (2016)

Gingrich (2011b)

**Relevant edited volumes:**

Busemeyer and Trampusch (2012b)

Chou and Gornitzka (2014b)

Gornitzka, Kogan, and Amaral (2005)

Maassen and Olsen (2007)

Mattei (2014)

Moe and Wiborg (2017)

Mundy, Green, Lingard, and Verger (2016)

Steiner-Khamsi (2004)

Verger, Novelli, and Altinyelken (2012)

**Literature:**

Aagaard, K. (2015). How incentives trickle down: Local use of a national bibliometric indicator system. *Science and Public Policy*, 42(5), 725-737. doi:10.1093/scipol/scu087 %J Science and Public Policy

Aagaard, K., Bloch, C., & Schneider, J. W. (2015). Impacts of performance-based research funding systems: The case of the Norwegian Publication Indicator. *Research Evaluation*, 24(2), 106-117. doi:10.1093/reseval/rvv003 %J Research Evaluation

Aberbach, J. D., & Christensen, T. (2018). Academic Autonomy and Freedom under Pressure: Severely Limited, or Alive and Kicking? *Public Organization Review*, 18(4), 487-506. doi:10.1007/s11115-017-0394-2

Ansell, B. W. (2008). University Challenges: Explaining Institutional Change in Higher Education. *World Politics*, 60(02), 189-230. doi:doi:10.1353/wp.0.0009

Ansell, B. W. (2010). *From the Ballot to the Blackboard : the Redistributive Political Economy of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ansell, B. W., & Lindvall, J. (2013). The Political Origins of Primary Education Systems: Ideology, Institutions, and Interdenominational Conflict in an Era of Nation-Building. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 505-522. doi:doi:10.1017/S0003055413000257

Austin, I., & Jones, G. A. (2016). *Governance of Higher Education. Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices*. London: Routledge.

Benner, M. (2011). In Search of Excellence? An International Perspective on Governance of University Research. In B. Göransson & C. Brundenius (Eds.), *Universities in Transition: The Changing Role and Challenges for Academic Institutions* (pp. 11-24). New York, NY: Springer New York.

Benner, M., & Sörlin, S. (2007). Shaping strategic research: power, resources, and interests in Swedish research policy. *Minerva*, 45(1), 31-48. doi:10.1007/s11024-006-9019-6

Borrás, S., & Edquist, C. (2013). The choice of innovation policy instruments. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 80(8), 1513-1522. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2013.03.002>

Borrás, S., & Edquist, C. (2014). Education, training and skills in innovation policy. *Science and Public Policy*, 42(2), 215-227. doi:10.1093/scipol/scu043 %J Science and Public Policy

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- Busemeyer, M. R., Garritzmann, J. L., Neimanns, E., & Nezi, R. (2018). Investing in education in Europe: Evidence from a new survey of public opinion. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 28(1), 34-54. doi:doi:10.1177/0958928717700562
- Busemeyer, M. R., & Schlicht-Schmälzle, R. (2014). Partisan power, economic coordination and variations in vocational training systems in Europe. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 20(1), 55-71. doi:10.1177/0959680113512731
- Busemeyer, M. R., & Seitzl, L. (2018). The partisan politics of early childhood education in the German Länder. *Journal of Public Policy*, 38(2), 243-274. doi:10.1017/S0143814X16000313
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- Busemeyer, M. R., & Trampusch, C. (2012a). The Comparative Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation. In M. R. Busemeyer & C. Trampusch (Eds.), *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation* (pp. 3-38). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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- Busemeyer, M. R., & Vossiek, J. (2016). Global Convergence or Path Dependency?: Skill Formation Regimes in the Globalized Economy. In K. Mundy, A. Green, B. Lingard, & A. Verger (Eds.), *The Handbook of Global Education Policy* (pp. 145-161). Hoboken: Wiley.
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- Capano, G., Pritoni, A., & Vicentini, G. (2019). Do policy instruments matter? Governments' choice of policy mix and higher education performance in Western Europe. *Journal of Public Policy*, online first, 1-27. doi:10.1017/S0143814X19000047
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