



## Module Descriptor

<b>Title</b>	Contemporary Social Issues & Policy Responses		
<b>Session</b>	2025/26	<b>Status</b>	
<b>Code</b>	SOCY09054	<b>SCQF Level</b>	9
<b>Credit Points</b>	20	<b>ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)</b>	10
<b>School</b>	Education and Social Sciences		
<b>Module Co-ordinator</b>	L Poole		

### Summary of Module

This module explores in detail the idea of social policy as a contested terrain. Students engage with a problem-solving approach to present-day social issues by focusing on dominant constructions and discourses and identifying the assumptions that underpin them. The module explores the links between explanations of social issues, powerful constructions/discourses and the shape and focus of the policy responses of government policymakers. Students will be asked to deconstruct 'social issues' and policy responses, critically assess them and consider alternative ways of conceptualising, understanding and tackling these 'problems' in society, with reference to competing constructions and counter discourses. In doing so, they will also be asked to consider the strengths and weaknesses of particular approaches and the barriers to adopting new ones.

The issues that are explored vary from year to year depending on what is of contemporary interest and the focus of public debate as well as staff research and expertise. Examples of possible topics include:

- asylum and refugee policy
- Drug use and drug deaths
- Economic change, labour markets and basic income
- unemployment and welfare to work strategies
- policy responses to benefit fraud and tax avoidance
- food poverty, food insecurity and the rights-based approach to food
- constructions of 'crises' and policy responses to the politics of austerity
- Urban policy and city regeneration

Each topic/case study example is examined with reference to the concepts of social divisions, inequality, power and contestation with a view to widening the student's critical gaze.

Learning materials are delivered face-to-face, on campus, through a mix of interactive lectures, seminars/workshops, independent learning and reflection activities and guided independent study.

<b>Module Delivery Method</b>	<b>On-Campus<sup>1</sup></b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Hybrid<sup>2</sup></b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Online<sup>3</sup></b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Work -Based Learning<sup>4</sup></b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Campuses for Module Delivery</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ayr <input type="checkbox"/> Dumfries	<input type="checkbox"/> Lanarkshire <input type="checkbox"/> London <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paisley	<input type="checkbox"/> Online / Distance Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	
<b>Terms for Module Delivery</b>	Term 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Term 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Term 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term</b>	Term 1 – Term 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Term 2 – Term 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Term 3 – Term 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	
<b>L1</b>	Develop knowledge about a range of current social issues.
<b>L2</b>	Understand the processes through which certain issues are defined as social problems in particular societies at particular times.
<b>L3</b>	Understand the relationship between how a social problem is defined and understood, and the policy responses that may follow.
<b>L4</b>	Critically assess the policy responses to these problems, including financial and other constraints, and identify alternative responses that may be available to policymakers.
<b>L5</b>	Engage with the idea that social policy is a contested terrain that can be understood and analysed through the lenses of social division, inequalities and power.

<b>Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills</b>	
<b>SCQF Headings</b>	<b>During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:</b>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)</b>	<b>SCQF 9</b> A broad understanding of social policy debates in present-day Britain. Specific knowledge about of key areas of current social policy.
<b>Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<b>SCQF 9</b> Analysing documents relating to social issues and policy critically. Retrieving a variety of secondary sources on social policy.

<sup>1</sup> Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

<sup>2</sup> The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

<sup>3</sup> Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

<sup>4</sup> Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

<b>Generic Cognitive skills</b>	<b>SCQF 9</b> Analysing academic and government policy documents and interpreting issues relating to social policy.
<b>Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills</b>	<b>SCQF 9</b> Present complex arguments and data in seminars settings; engage in critical debate about policy options; word process; use the internet for research purposes; interpret and understand statistical information; write essays and précis complex academic analysis.
<b>Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others</b>	<b>SCQF 9</b> Demonstrate a capacity for independent research using internet and library sources of data.  Demonstrate a capacity for time management in meeting formal deadlines for the submission of written work.

<b>Prerequisites</b>	<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>
	<b>Other</b>	
<b>Co-requisites</b>	<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>

<b>Learning and Teaching</b>	
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours. 200	
<b>Learning Activities</b>	<b>Student Learning Hours</b>
During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	(Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture / Core Content Delivery	24
Tutorial / Synchronous Support Activity	12
Independent Study	164
n/a	
n/a	
n/a	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>

<b>Indicative Resources</b>
<b>The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:</b>  Given the focus on contemporary issues, reading lists are provided for each individual topic. These are updated each year in line with developments in research, theory and commentary. Academic journals will be key, including:

Critical Social Policy  
Journal of Poverty and Social Justice  
Social Policy and Society

**(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk\*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)**

#### Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the [Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure](#), Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

**For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:**

All full-time students (part-time and distant learning students should check with their programme leader for any queries) are required to attend all scheduled classes and participate with all delivered elements of the module as part of their engagement with their programme of study. Consideration will be given to students who have protection under the appropriate equality law. Please refer to UWS Regulations, Chapter 1, 1.64 – 1.67, available at the following link: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/rights-and-regulations/regulatory-framework/>

#### Equality and Diversity

**The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: [UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code](#).**

Aligned with the overall commitment to equality and diversity stated in the Programme Specifications, the module supports equality of opportunity for students from all backgrounds and with different learning needs. Using Moodle, learning materials will be presented electronically in formats that allow flexible access and manipulation of content (part-time and distant learning students should check with their programme leader for any queries). The module complies with University regulations and guidance on inclusive learning and teaching practice. Specialist assistive equipment, support provision and adjustment to assessment practice will be made in accordance with UWS policy and regulations. The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.uws.ac.uk/equality/>

**(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)**

#### Supplemental Information

<b>Divisional Programme Board</b>	<b>Social Sciences</b>
<b>Overall Assessment Results</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass / Fail <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graded
<b>Module Eligible for Compensation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.</b>
<b>School Assessment Board</b>	Ug Social Sciences

<b>Moderator</b>	D McDonell
<b>External Examiner</b>	E. Matchett
<b>Accreditation Details</b>	
<b>Module Appears in CPD catalogue</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Changes / Version Number</b>	1

<b>Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)</b>
<b>Assessment 1</b>
Short answer questions (25%)
<b>Assessment 2</b>
Essay (2000 words) (50%)
<b>Assessment 3</b>
Slide summary (25%)
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

<b>Component 1</b>							
<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>LO1</b>	<b>LO2</b>	<b>LO3</b>	<b>LO4</b>	<b>LO5</b>	<b>Weighting of Assessment Element (%)</b>	<b>Timetabled Contact Hours</b>
SAA1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25%	50

<b>Component 2</b>							
<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>LO1</b>	<b>LO2</b>	<b>LO3</b>	<b>LO4</b>	<b>LO5</b>	<b>Weighting of Assessment Element (%)</b>	<b>Timetabled Contact Hours</b>
Essay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	50%	100

<b>Component 3</b>							
<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>LO1</b>	<b>LO2</b>	<b>LO3</b>	<b>LO4</b>	<b>LO5</b>	<b>Weighting of Assessment Element (%)</b>	<b>Timetabled Contact Hours</b>
SAA2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25%	50
<b>Combined total for all components</b>						100%	200 hours

#### Change Control

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Who</b>
Transferred to 25/26 Template no other changes	27-01-25	L Poole
