The European Welfare State
4406G/9710B
Winter Term, 2017

Professor Bruce Morrison
SSC 4137; x84937; bmorris2@uwo.ca
Office hours: Tuesday 2-3, Thursday 10-11, or by appointment

Course Description:

As is perhaps to be expected in the case of a complex political phenomenon subjected to intense politicization, the welfare state has been variously and often erroneously interpreted. It is certainly the case that the conditions that supported the welfare state in earlier decades have weakened, if not dissolved, but the meaning of this remains far from clear. As we will see, the welfare state was always plural, deriving from a number of different social, ideological, and institutional sources, and assuming qualitatively different forms in different contexts. There are at least three welfare ‘worlds’ or regimes rather than just one welfare state. However, in the face of powerful changes which surfaced during the final third of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the argument has been made in many quarters that the welfare state has become unsustainable or, worse, a hindrance to progress. Evaluating such a claim will draw us deeply into the following questions. What contribution, if any, did the welfare state make to the functioning of advanced European economies and polities? Is the welfare state in Europe on the way out, or are the reports of its death greatly exaggerated? Are the pressures for retrenchment directed at the whole of the welfare state, or just at certain of its component parts? Should the welfare state be abandoned, either in whole or in part? Are we seeing a contribution, process of convergence, according to which the welfare regime types will be replaced by a single liberal model? The attempt to treat these questions will also shed light on such related matters as citizenship, ideology, state formation, and economic development.

Learning Outcomes

Participants in this seminar will:
(a) acquire an understanding of the relationship between the welfare state and the key elements of modernity;
(b) become able to critically assess the case for the existence of three or more welfare regime types rather than a singular welfare state, as well as the application of this framework to a significant number of countries;
(c) learn to make sense of and apply the major theories explaining both the emergence and reform of welfare states, and to evaluate the extent to which retrenchment or other forms of change have occurred and may continue to do so.
Assignments and Grading:

In addition to keeping up with the weekly readings, you will be required to provide one substantial presentation and submit two take-home examinations over the course of the term. The presentation and the take-home examinations will require some additional research and reading. I will also expect active, informed, and consistent participation from the members of the seminar. The breakdown of the grade will be as follows:

Undergraduates (4406G):
(a) presentation (15 minutes): 20%
(b) seminar participation: 20%
(c) mid-term take-home exam (8-10 pages): 20%
(d) final take-home exam (14-16 pages): 40%

Graduate Students (9710B):
(a) presentation (20 minutes): 15%
(b) seminar participation: 20%
(c) mid-term take-home exam (12-14 pages): 15%
(d) final take-home exam (20-22 pages): 35%
(e) research and presentation of one additional country case: 15%

Readings

Unit One: Modernity and the Welfare State
(January 18, 25)


Unit Two: The Different Welfare Worlds

A. **Theory**
   (February 1)


B. **Social Democratic**
   (February 8)


C. **Liberal**
   (February 15)


Mid-Term Take-Home Exam Due in Class on March 1st.

D. Conservative Corporatist
   (March 1)


Unit Three: Reforming the Welfare States?

A. Taking Stock, Facing Challenges:
   (March 8)


B. Neo-conservatism and the Sources of Social and Institutional Resistance
   (March 15)


C. *Third Ways, New Ways, No Ways:* (March 22, 29, April 5)

i. *Vices, Virtues, and Path Dependent Change?*


Claes Belfrage and Magnus Ryner, “Renegotiating the Swedish Social Democratic Settlement: From Pension Fund Socialism to Neoliberalization.” *Politics and Society* vol. 37, no. 2 (June 2009).

ii. *Convergence or Regeneration as a Social Investment State?*


iii. *Parties, Electoral Competition, and Welfare Reform*


**Final Take-Home Exam Due April 26th at 5 pm.**