

CENTRE OF SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES (CSPS)

PH.D SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES

Background

The Centre of Social Policy Studies (CSPS) runs a coursework based PhD in Social Policy Studies. The main objective of the programme is to provide a platform for students who desire to pursue academic and professional careers in social policy. Among other things, the programme will address the absence of higher level training opportunities in social policy in the sub-Saharan Africa.

Programme Structure

Table 1 illustrates the structure of the programme:

Table.1: Structure of PhD (Social Policy Studies)

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours
First Semester Core Courses		
FSSP701	Philosophy of the Social Sciences	3
CSPS 705	Comparative Social Policy Theories	3
CSPS 706	Financing Social Policy	3
CSPS 710	Seminar I	3
First Semester Elective Courses		
CSPS 707	Human Capital Development	3
CSPS 709	Comparative Health Policy	3
Second Semester Core Courses		
CSPS 702	Advanced Quantitative Analysis and Data Management	3
CSPS 703	Advanced Qualitative Analysis and Data Management	3
CSPS 704	Advanced Public Policy Analysis	3

CSPS 720	Seminar II	3
Second Semester Elective Courses		
CSPS 708	Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Inclusion	3
CSPS 712	Contemporary Spatial Issues in Social Policy	3
Total Expected credit from taught courses		24
CSPS	Seminars	9
CSPS 700	Thesis	48
Total Credit for Graduation		81

Course Description for PhD Social Policy Studies

FSSP 701: Philosophy of the Social Sciences

This is a Faculty required course which aims at exposing and deepening doctoral students' understanding of the epistemological underpinnings of the social sciences. It focuses on the differences and similarities between the social and the natural sciences, causal relationships, social laws, and the ontological significance of structure and agency. It also seeks to elucidate the nature of scientific inquiry and evaluate the grounds of their validity. Students will be exposed to social science explanatory frameworks such as the humanistic approach, realism, post-modernism and post-structuralism. The course will enable students to identify, analyze and take a stand on the ideological, theoretical and methodological issues informing their research work.

CSPS 702: Advanced Quantitative Analysis and Data Management

This course aims to provide students with a broad knowledge of a range of quantitative methodological and analytical skills, which they can apply in a variety of research contexts. The course is aimed at students who have previously studied basic quantitative techniques such as regression analysis. The course highlights approaches to collecting quantitative data, data management and analysis using software such as STATA and SPSS.

CSPS 703: Advanced Qualitative Analysis and Data Management

The course aims to enhance PhD candidates' approach to thinking through, doing and evaluating qualitative research in the social sciences. Students will be introduced to the range of methods of data collection and analysis in qualitative research to provide the grounding necessary for designing their own research. Emphasis will be placed on longitudinal and triangulated methods which enhance deeper understanding of the complex processes of social policy development and evaluation. Students will be introduced to the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis Software (CAQDAS) such as NVIVO and Atlas.ti.

CSPS 704: Advanced Public Policy Analysis

This course will introduce students to the theoretical underpinnings of public policy, the step-by-step approach in public policy formulation and the multiplicity of internal and external factors that impact on the policy formulation process. Analytical tools and models for determining which policy options are appropriate in a given context will be discussed. Students will review existing public policies in Ghana and other low and middle income countries. They will be pointed to ways by which such policies can be made more conducive to the material conditions of the people to whom the policies are applicable. Focus will be on policies on public finance, social accountability, health, education and environment, and special interest groups such as women, the aged, children and youth.

CSPS 705: Comparative Social Policy Theories

This course focuses on a review of the landscape of social policy paradigms or theoretical frameworks in different regions and societies. Students will be introduced to core concepts in comparative social policy, focusing on the historical articulation of social thought and practice in this field. This process has been influenced by political as well as economic realities in various countries, leading to tensions between leftist and rightist leaning states. Special attention is focused on the significance of value systems, governance arrangements, culture, religion and economy in society. Their implications for the provision of support to vulnerable and socially excluded groups such as the aged, disabled persons, as well as the general population are given special attention. The course will also address the international debate on public goods and social policy.

CSPS 706: Financing Social Policy

This course focuses on the debate over sources of financing for social policy for overall national development. The discussion is centred around the general discourse on economics of social policy, with special reference to public finance and Public/Private Partnership (PPP). Issues to be discussed include financing options and associated trade-offs, the role of market forces and political ideologies in shaping financing mechanisms, globalization and its effects on social policy financing, addressing social inequalities through social policy financing and challenges associated with social policy financing. The role of non-state actors in financing social policy will also be examined, using a comparative approach and drawing examples from high, middle and low income countries across the world.

CSPS 707: Human Capital Development (3 Credits)

This course is designed to introduce students to the analysis of global and local demographic and economic trends that have necessitated accelerated human capital development, human capital theories, the role of the state and the private sector in human capital development as well as investment options for human capital development. The important role of policy in the process of human capital development is emphasized along with the complementary components such as social capital. The importance of basic education, ICT, teacher quality, gender, public/private partnerships, national policies, etc. will be discussed. Issues such as returns to human capital investments for the individual and for societal development, will also be addressed.

CSPS 708: Poverty, Vulnerability and Social Inclusion

This course introduces students to contemporary debates on the subject of vulnerability due to poverty, infirmity and social exclusion. It further exposes students to the dynamics of chronic poverty, and provides advanced analytical insights and skills into the issues of discrimination, stigma and abuse and how different social groups are affected by these conditions. Finally, the course devotes attention to the implications of vulnerability for equity, social policy and social inclusion, using rights-based frameworks.

CSPS 709: Comparative Health Policy

This course will introduce students to the structures and challenges of health policy development in Ghana and low, middle and high income countries. The course will focus on traditional themes in health policy, a historical overview of health reforms in Ghana and selected countries, and introduce students to contemporary discussions from the field of health policy and systems research (HPSR). A mixed approach to teaching will include the use of country and subject case studies and guest lectures with health policymakers to emphasise the complex dimensions of health policy development, implementation and evaluation within the Ghanaian and African contexts as well as the wide-ranging impact of health policies on the everyday lives of citizens. .

CSPS 712: Contemporary Spatial Issues in Social Policy (3 Credits)

This course aims to address critical well-being issues associated with rural / urban transformations in developing countries such as: changes in social relations and welfare arrangements due to migration; changes in livelihoods linked to land use trends; changes in economic activity and governance. The course also addresses challenges associated with urbanization such as environmental pollution, slum development, congestion, ill-planned settlements, crime and urban transport. The course will also examine the origins and growth of cities from a comparative perspective, focusing on the social, economic, cultural, environmental and political issues related to urbanization. At the end, students will be expected to acquire skills in analyzing spatial transformation and its implications for social welfare in rural and urban areas. Development options for maximizing the positive outcomes of these processes will be studied, such as sustainable development.