Comparative Public Policy

Institution: International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Year/Term: Year 1, Term 1
Course type: Core course
ECTS: 5

Brief description (including learning outcomes):
Comparative public policy has become an important field of study within the Policy Sciences more in general. By promoting the exchange of knowledge, expertise and ‘best practices’ across Europe it is also playing an important role in the process of Europeanization of public policies itself. Yet, comparative public policy faces many empirical, theoretical and methodological difficulties. To overcome such difficulties, this course develops a theory-driven approach to the comparative study of public policies.

Lecture 1: Introduction to Comparative Public Policy
Lecture 2: Agenda Setting & Policy Formulation
Lecture 3: Decision Making & Policy Implementation
Lecture 4: Policy Analysis and Evaluation
Lecture 5: Comparative Policy Research
Lecture 6: Comparing Policy Dynamics: the advocacy coalition framework and the punctuated equilibrium framework
Lecture 7: Poster presentations

The course will be completed with a poster session. Students will present in small teams the design and findings of their research paper with the help of poster in class. The feedback may be used to revise and to update the research paper that is due within two weeks after the poster presentation.

At the end of the course, students:
- are able to discuss the difficulties as well as opportunities of comparative public policy for policy learning;
- are familiar with the comparative dynamics of agenda setting;
- can compare processes of policy implementation by looking at instrument choices and implementation styles;
- can distinguish ‘theory-driven’ and ‘utilization-focused’ evaluation studies;
- are familiar with the design and execution of policy research from a comparative perspective and with instruments as international surveys, multi-case studies, benchmarking and best practices and use of international statistics;
- can compare the Advocacy Coalition Framework and the Punctuated Equilibrium Framework and discuss their implications for comparative policy analyses;
- can discuss the prospects for policy-oriented learning and policy lobbying depicted by these frameworks and can develop effective strategies for promoting policy-oriented learning based on comparative analyses and for strategic policy lobbying.