



UNU
MERIT



Maastricht University

MSc Public Policy and Human Development

Course Catalogue

2025/26

Curriculum

The programme includes the following educational units and related study load. In **bold** and without brackets are the courses organised by Maastricht University. Other courses are organised by United Nations University (UNU) and become part of the programme as decided by the Board of Examiners, given proof by the Board of Admissions and Exams of UNU that the student fulfilled the necessary requirements and that the learning objectives of the courses were achieved.

1. Core Courses (Content classes), 16 ECTS credits in total:
 (MPP4301 Public Policy, 4 ECTS credits)
 (MPP4302 Public Economics, 4 ECTS credits)
MPP4504 Public Policy Analysis, 8 ECTS credits
2. **Research & Analysis Skills (Applied research), 12 ECTS credits in total:**
SKL4106 Methods for Policy Analysis, 6 ECTS credits
 (SKL4205 Advanced Methods for Policy-Relevant Research and Analysis, 6 ECTS credits)
3. Specialisation Courses (Content classes), 16 ECTS credits in total:
 - a. 2 courses from an elective specialisation track, 8 ECTS credits each; *or*
 - b. one of the pre-approved elective tracks consisting of 2 courses from two different specialisations, 8 ECTS credits each.

The name of the specialisations with the corresponding courses are mentioned below:

Specialisation	Specialisation course 1 (Period 4)	Specialisation course 2 (Period 5)
Global Governance for Development	(Global Governance and Human Development) [GGD4401]	Governing Global Challenges [GGD4502]
Governance of Innovation	(Innovation and Innovation Policy from a System Perspective: Global and Local Perspectives) ([GOI4401])	(Innovation for Twin Transitions) [GOI4502]
Migration Studies	Migration Studies: Concepts, Theories and Trends [MGR4401]	Migration Effects, Policy and Governance [MGR4502]

4. Master Thesis (Applied research), 16 ECTS

The aim of the Master Thesis, the learning goals, assessment criteria, assignments/thesis deadlines, procedures and requirements are described in the Master Thesis syllabus, available on the Student Portal/Canvas.

Outline of the Programme

2025 - 2026	Semester 1	1a	Public Policy (MPP4301)	Methods for Policy Analysis (SKL4106)
		1b	Public Economics (MPP4302)	
		2	Public Policy Analysis (MPP4504)	Advanced Methods for Policy-Relevant Research and Analysis (SKL4205)
	Semester 2	3	Thesis track	Thesis track
		4	Specialisation Course 1	
		5	Specialisation Course 2	
		6	Thesis track	

PUBLIC POLICY MPP4301

1. BASICS

Period	1A
Start Date	1 Sep 2025
End Date	26 Sep 2025
ECTS credits:	4
Instruction language:	English
Coordinator:	E Lebon-McGregor
Link:	Dr. Elaine Lebon-McGregor United Nations University
Teaching methods:	Assignments; Lectures; PBL; Work in subgroups; Presentation
Assessment methods:	Participation; Final Paper;
Keywords:	Actors; Governance; Public Policy; Policy Process

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as a cornerstone for the Master of Public Policy and Human Development (MPP), providing students with a comprehensive introduction to the key concepts, processes, and dynamics of public policy. It offers an interdisciplinary perspective, equipping students with the tools to understand the policymaking process, structure complex policy problems, conduct stakeholder analyses and systematically assess policy decisions. Using real-world case studies from diverse international contexts, students will use the policy cycle as a heuristic tool to critically examine the role of different actors in the policymaking process. Designed to foster student-centred learning, this course encourages critical engagement with contemporary policy challenges, preparing students for deeper exploration in subsequent coursework.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to understand how and by whom public policy is made through the perspective of different theories. Additionally, the course aims at training students to improve their communication skills (verbal and written) to work in teams. By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Identify, classify, and explain the stages of the public policy process.
2. Identify, classify, and explain the role of actors and institutions involved in the public policy process.
3. Describe the role of the state in the public policy process.
4. Understand how and by whom public policy is made through the perspective of different theories.
5. Choose theories and apply them to different policy settings.
6. Engage constructively in oral group communication.
7. Provide, receive, and self-reflect on constructive feedback from peers.
8. Complete a well-structured academic paper on a practical policy problem with critical analysis and appropriate referencing.

4. PREREQUISITES

(none)

5. RECOMMENDED READING

The main textbook used for this course will be:

Bekkers, V., Fenger, M., & Scholten ENG, P. (2017). Public policy in action: perspectives on the policy process. Edward Elgar Publishing

Recommended readings for each lecture will be reported in the course manual.

PUBLIC ECONOMICS MPP4302

1. BASICS

Period	1B
Start Date	29 September 2025
End Date	24 Oct 2025
ECTS credits:	4
Instruction language:	English
Coordinator:	B Martorano
Link:	https://www.merit.unu.edu/about-us/profile/?staff_id=3126
Teaching methods:	Lectures; PBL; Presentations
Assessment methods:	Participation; Presentation; Written exam
Keywords:	Public Economics; Taxation; Public expenditure; Redistribution; Inequality

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course analyses the public sector, including the allocation of resources and the redistribution of income. It discusses the role of the public sector, the difference between private and public goods, public choice and externalities. Tax policy is introduced, relying on two broad principles: equity and efficiency. The key public expenditure categories are analysed. Finally, the course looks at the situation of developing countries and the role of public finance in such a context.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to allow students to understand the role of the government and the way public sector intervention influences individuals and the economy. This is achieved by applying the tools of microeconomic and macroeconomic analysis to government actions, both on the revenue and the expenditure side. After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the key concepts in the field of public economics
- Identify and discuss policy problems, explain market failures and provide policy responses
- Analyse the functioning of key tax instruments and expenditure programmes
- Analyse and explain the impact of government intervention on development and socioeconomic indicators

4. PREREQUISITES

- (none)

5. RECOMMENDED READING

Gruber, Jonathan. 2015. Public Finance and Public Policy, 5th edition. Worth. ISBN: 978-1464143335.

Students may use other editions (3rd or 4th) of the book. We provide the chapter/section titles below, so students can match them with the book they have.

Moreover, some chapters are extracted from:

- Atkinson, A. B. (2015). Inequality: What can be done?. Harvard University Press.
- Banerjee, A., and Duflo, E. (2011). Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty. New York: Public Affairs..
- Piketty, T. (2014). Capital in the twenty-first century. Harvard University Press..

PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

MPP4504

1. BASICS

Period	2
Start Date	27 Oct 2025
End Date	18 Dec 2025
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	E. Nillesen
Link	https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/prof-dr-eleonora-nillesen
Teaching methods	Work in subgroups, Research; Skills
Assessment methods	Assignment; Written Exam
Keywords	Poverty and Inequality Analysis; Impact evaluation; Evidence-based decision making

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies are an important responsibility of modern governments. Policy objectives and instruments are determined in the interactions between public authorities and stakeholders. Actors and institutions such as branches of government (including the executive, legislative, and judiciary), political parties, interest groups, regulatory agencies, non-governmental organisations and citizens are involved in policymaking to varying degrees, depending on the particular policy domain and phase of the policy process. In this course, students will explore ways in which public policies and their impact are analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The results serve as a basis to formulate informed evidence-based policies, or to improve existing policies.

The aim of this course is to provide a practical introduction to students to learn and understand how public policy is analysed. In particular, it is designed to develop the skills required to critically analyse policy issues, evaluate current programmes, and articulate relevant policy recommendations.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Assess and apply different measures and concepts of poverty and inequality
- Explain basic concepts related to Survey Design
- Evaluate the advantages and limitations of impact evaluation analysis in terms of causality

- Select and apply experimental and non-experimental methods in their research problems
- Select and apply qualitative approaches used as complementary tools in impact evaluation
- Analyse and carefully interpret results and implications for policy

4. PREREQUISITES

- Attendance of the course of Methods for Policy Analysis (SKL4106)
- Attendance of the course of Public Economics (MPP4302)
- Attendance of the course of Public Policy (MPP4301)

5. RECOMMENDED READING

Gertler P., Martinez S., Premand P., Rawlings L. and C. Vermeersch (2016). Impact Evaluation in Practice, Second Edition. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Haughton J. and S. Khandker (2009). Handbook on Poverty and Inequality. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Stock, J. H. and M. W. Watson (2015), Introduction to Econometrics, Update, 3rd Edition

Additional recommended readings for each lecture will be reported in the course manual.

METHODS FOR POLICY ANALYSIS SKL4106

Period	1
Start Date	1 September 2025
End Date	24 October 2025
ECTS credits	6
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	Lutz Krebs
Link	Dr. Lutz F. Krebs United Nations University
Teaching methods	<i>Assignments, paper, presentation, research, skills, work in subgroups</i>
Assessment methods	<i>Attendance, presentation and paper, written exam</i>
Keywords	Research design; Methodology; Methods; Qualitative; Quantitative; Theory; Samples; Quality criteria; Operationalization; Measurement, variable and data; Data visualization; Descriptive statistics; Probability theory; Confidence intervals; Hypothesis tests; OLS regression; Stata.

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to familiarise students with the foundations of evaluating and designing academic, policy-relevant social science research. The course familiarises students with the process of designing their own research projects (such as their Master's thesis), leading them through the intuition behind specific research design approaches that will support alignment among components such as research questions, methodological approach, theory, data, and data collection/analysis methods. The course will combine theoretical knowledge and hands-on applications, with students encouraged to build up the intuition and reasoning behind specific research design choices through lectures and tutorials focusing on study cases.

The study cases expose students to qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches, and students will focus in this course (which is the first of two skills courses) on building and consolidating knowledge related to quantitative methodological approaches. Hence, students will learn how to clean data and to describe its properties using statistics and visualization. The course also introduces basic forms of inferential statistics and ordinary least squares regression. Throughout the course, the Stata statistical package will be used, and students will build up hard skills related to this programme. The course prepares the student directly for Advanced Methods for Policy Analysis and Public Policy Analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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1. Construct relevant research problem framings and appropriate research questions to guide research within the public policy cycle;
2. Understand the role of theory in policy-relevant research, and use theory to guide research choices;
3. Propose appropriate methodological approaches for addressing specific policy-relevant research objectives;
4. Use Stata to extract relevant information from data using basic summary and inferential statistics, and;
5. Estimate and interpret OLS models to test policy-relevant research questions.

PREREQUISITES

None.

READINGS

- Smith, Gary. 2015. *Essential Statistics, Regression, and Econometrics*, 2nd edition. San Diego, CA: Academic Press
- Stock & Watson (2019), *Introduction to Econometrics*, 4th Ed. Pearson Education Limited
- Matthews, R., & Ross, E. (2010). *Research methods: A practical guide for the social sciences*. Pearson Education Ltd

ADVANCED METHODS FOR POLICY-RELEVANT RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SKL4205

Period	2
Start Date	27 October 2025
End Date	18 December 2025
ECTS credits	6
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	Pui-Hang Wong
Link	Dr. Pui Hang Wong United Nations University
Teaching methods	<i>Assignments, paper, research, skills, work in subgroups</i>
Assessment methods	<i>Attendance, Final Paper, Written Exam</i>
Keywords	Philosophy of science; Research paradigms; Research ethics; Multi- and mixed-methods research; Internal and external validity; Endogeneity; Causality; Nonlinear effects; Probit; Panel data; Survey; Interviews; Thematic analysis; Discourse analysis; Atlas.Ti; Stata

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds on the foundation laid by *Methods for Policy Analysis* and aims to equip students with the methodological knowledge to start their thesis research and the specialisation track. A first module on quantitative research approaches furthers students' understanding of selected models in regression analysis (probit, multinomial, ordered probit), including with regard to panel data and associated quality criteria. A module on qualitative research provides students with a more in-depth understanding of qualitative research methods and associated quality criteria, while the practical exercises and assignment focus on building students' skills to conduct and analyse interviews. *Advanced Methods for Policy-Relevant Research and Analysis* also gives students a more detailed understanding of research ethics and data management principles, and introduces the methodological theory and philosophical positionings that serve to deepen students' understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand and apply appropriate research ethics principles
- Apply causal inference framework to critically assess validity of a study
- Apply appropriate regression technique and model frameworks for public policy analysis

- Choose from and evaluate different qualitative approaches for policy-relevant research
- Conduct and analyse qualitative interviews

PREREQUISITES

SKL4106 Methods for Policy Analysis.

READINGS

- Stock & Watson (2019), Introduction to Econometrics, 4th Ed. Pearson Education Limited
- Matthews, R., & Ross, E. (2010). Research methods: A practical guide for the social sciences. Pearson Education Ltd

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

GGD4401

1. BASICS

Period	4
Start Date	2 February 2026
End Date	2 April 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	T. Skripka
Link	https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/dr-tatiana-skripka
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Assignment(s); Research; Skills; Presentation(s), Work in subgroups
Assessment methods	Final paper; Participation; Presentation; Assessment
Keywords	Global governance; Human development; International organizations; Participation; International negotiations

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human development is profoundly influenced by the rules set in international agreements. Global governance has the potential to address some of the most difficult policy challenges that affect people and communities across the globe. Negotiating policy solutions at a global level however presents a challenge of its own. This course explores the role of global governance institutions in fostering the development of human potential and equality. Working with real-life case studies, the participants of the course examine the roles, structure and functioning of global governance institutions. They get an opportunity to develop and exercise a set of skills relevant for working in an international environment, and gain experience, in a simulated setting, of negotiating and drafting a global treaty that safeguards fundamental human rights. The course is built as a series of topical lectures, workshops and tutorials that build on each other. This enables the students to progressively deepen their theoretical and policy-relevant knowledge and professional skills and apply them to topical policy cases.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify relevant global governance organisations and transnational efforts that address human development objectives

2. Use appropriate analytical and policy tools to explain, assess and design multi-stakeholder efforts fostering human development
3. Develop, plan, execute and reflect on the application of tailor-made negotiation strategies in a multi-stakeholder international environment
4. Find and use policy-relevant information to develop policy positions and prepare effective policy papers

4. PREREQUISITES

None

5. RECOMMENDED READING

A reader will be prepared with the literature relevant for each class.

General literature:

- Browne, Stephen and Thomas G. Weiss (eds.) (2021) Routledge Handbook on the UN and Development, Routledge.
- Nelson, Paul (2021) Global Development and Human Rights: The Sustainable Development Goals and Beyond, University of Toronto Press.
- Ponzio, Richard and Arunabha Ghosh (2016) Human Development and Global Institutions: Evolution, Impact, Reform, Routledge.
- United Nations (2022) The SDG Partnership Guidebook: A Practical Guide to Building High Impact Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations.

GOVERNING GLOBAL CHALLENGES GGD4502

1. BASICS

Period	5
Start Date	13 April 2026
End Date	12 June 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	M. Natorski
Link	https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/dr-michal-natorski
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Assignment(s); Research; Skills; Work in subgroups, Working visit(s)
Assessment methods	Attendance; Portfolio; Final paper; Oral exam; Presentation.
Keywords	Global governance, project management, crises, climate change, conflicts

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the institutional and procedural complexity of governing global policy challenges. The functioning of global institutions is studied through the prism of case studies, for instance green transitions in the context of climate change and climate crises management, including conflicts and disasters. The course further considers the economic constraints and ramifications of global action and crises, and their effects on inclusive development in low-income countries. Students discuss the changing roles of states and non-state actors in global institutions. They acquire essential knowledge, analytical tools and professional skills related to the governance of global challenges in partnerships with global, regional, national, and local actors. For this purpose, they gain practical skills in developing project-oriented interventions to address global policy challenges and get acquainted with the technological tools such as GIS and AI employed in global crisis management, in particular in application to climate change. The course builds on the skills developed by the students in the first specialization course and combines analytical knowledge with practical professional skills to develop a comprehensive understanding of global governance processes.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Define and discuss the role of global governance institutions in tackling global policy challenges and crisis management
- 2) Identify and interpret the relations between the policies of global governance institutions tackling global governance challenges and accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals
- 3) Identify and apply an appropriate analytical approach and research methods to analyse the complexity of the governance of global challenges
- 4) Design a project-based solution to a real-life societal problem emerging from the climate-energy-environmental nexus and justify its contribution to accomplishing SDGs

4. PREREQUISITES

None

5. RECOMMENDED READING

Reader with selected academic readings and practitioner guidelines and handbooks

INNOVATION AND INNOVATION POLICY FROM A SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE: GLOBAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES GOI4401

1. BASICS

Period	4
Start Date	2 February 2026
End Date	2 April 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	F. Visentin; R. Cowan
Link	https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/dr-fabiana-visentin ; https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/prof-dr-robin-cowan
Teaching methods	Assignment(s), Coaching, Paper(s), Presentation(s), Research, Skills, Work in subgroups, Study visit
Assessment methods	Debate, Policy workshop, Assignment, Final paper
Keywords	Innovation, Innovation systems, Global and Local perspectives, Networks, Measuring innovation, Incentives to innovate

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves to offer an overview of what innovation is and why it is important in various contexts (developed economies and emerging markets). Who are the relevant actors involved in the innovation process? How can innovation contribute to socio-economic development? How can we guide policymakers around the world to design, monitor, and evaluate policy interventions aimed to enhance productivity, sustainable growth, or social and environmental goals, depending on the specific objective or given scope? These are the main questions our course intends to look at.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the nature of innovation, types of innovation, impact, and source of innovation
2. Access the systemic nature of innovation systems, identifying actors of the system and their roles

3. Debate the incentives to innovate
4. Evaluate relevant policy instruments related to innovation.
5. Describe in detail the factors that feature in a local or regional innovation system;
6. Understand policy considerations relevant to national and regional policy-makers.
7. Be familiar with policy measures, both actual and potential, aimed at nurturing a regional innovation system;
8. Generate ideas relevant to innovation policy design and improvement.
9. Be comfortable with basic social network analysis using R and igraph software.

As additional skills, students will acquire hands-on knowledge on a broad range of quantitative indicators to measure the innovation performance (firm, industry, country) and learn how to apply them critically. They will also learn how to conduct a debate on a resolution of relevant policy interest.

4. PREREQUISITES

None

5. RECOMMENDED READING

Greenhalgh, C., & Rogers, M. (2010). Innovation, intellectual property, and economic growth. Princeton University Press.,

INNOVATION FOR TWIN TRANSITIONS GOI4502

1. BASICS

Period	5
Start Date	13 April 2026
End Date	12 June 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	L. Wang; S. Türkeli
Link	https://cris.maastrichtuniversity.nl/en/persons/lili-wang ; https://cris.maastrichtuniversity.nl/en/persons/serdar-turkeli
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Research; Skills; Work in subgroups
Assessment methods	Participation; Presentation and paper; Oral exam.
Keywords	Emerging Technologies; Digital and Green Innovation; Sustainability; Twin transitions; Innovation Policy; Circular Economy; Digital Economy

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the critical role of innovation in driving the twin (green and digital) transitions towards a sustainable and digital economy, crucial for limiting global warming to 1.5°C. It explores the challenges of achieving these transitions, such as sunk costs advantages of existing technologies, infrastructure needs of new technologies, emerging innovations, institutional and international rigidities, resistance from incumbents and entrenched practices. The course highlights how Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, -such as AI, IoT, 3D printing, robotics, and blockchain-, new business models, boundary work, collective system building activities, circular economy and multi-level perspective provide solutions for both digital transformations and sustainability transitions towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Special emphasis is placed on the opportunities and risks of digital technologies, as well as societal and ethical concerns such as data privacy, job displacement, and inequality. It also addresses key elements and drivers of transformations, emphasizing the need for coordinated public policies and governance to ensure just transitions. The goal is to maximize the benefits of both digital and green transitions for an equitable and sustainable economy and tackle the climate change. The course includes case studies not only from developed countries, but also from emerging markets.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Explain what is meant by the digital and green technologies and the twin transitions that are involved.
- 2) Explain why digital and green innovation is important for the economy and the SDGs.
- 3) Understand the impact of digitalisation and climate change on the economy and society.
- 4) Identify the potential opportunities and threats that these technologies have on society and development opportunities and potential negative consequences to society and to individuals of emerging technologies and identify appropriate policy responses to mitigate these consequences.
- 5) Explain the role of policy as a development tool in the context of emerging technologies (e.g., related to AI, digitalisation, and use of big data).
- 6) Identify the sources of the carbon lock-in and the lock-in to the linear economy, in transition to circular economy.
- 7) Explain why innovation missions are needed for sustainable development, why they require strategic collective system building activities and be able to research such aspects.
- 8) Develop skills of detecting and assessing emerging digital and green technologies (e.g., MySQL skills for exploring patent databases) and acquire knowledge on data analysis techniques
- 9) Study the dynamics of specific digital and green innovations and the need for new business models and alignment of multiple activities and strategies.
- 10) Identify the set of policies that are relevant to encourage the appropriate development of new technologies
- 11) Assist policymakers to design better policies to support digital and green innovation and a circular economy, digital transformation, and sustainability transitions.

4. PREREQUISITES

None.

5. RECOMMENDED READING

Recommended readings will be provided in the course manual.

MIGRATION STUDIES: CONCEPTS, THEORIES AND TRENDS

MGR4401

1. BASICS

Period	4
Start Date	2 February 2026
End Date	2 April 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	M.J. Siegel
Link	https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/melissa.siegel
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Assignment(s); Research; Skills; Work in subgroups
Assessment methods	Final paper; Attendance; Presentation; Assessment; Oral Exam
Keywords	Migration; Immigration; Emigration; Migrant; Refugee; Remittances, Migration Theory, Forced Migration; Incorporation; Irregular Migration; Return Migration; Reintegration

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves to provide students with an introduction to migration studies, to understand different forms of migration and the 'migration life-cycle'. The course covers such topics as the flows and trends of migration and remittances, historical developments, theories of migration from different disciplines such as economics and sociology, different forms and experiences of migration including but limited to labour migration, forced migration, irregular migration, return and reintegration. Students will also gain practical skills such as sourcing migration data and analysing migration trends. The course will follow a modular structure with week 1 focused on the introduction, forced migration and data; week 2 and 3 focus on migration theory; week 4 on irregular migration; week 5 on immigrant incorporation, week 6 on return migration; week 7 on the migration profile and week 8 on the oral exam.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

5. Understand different forms of migration in different contexts
6. Identify and analyse the complex relationships between migration processes, experiences, policies and outcomes at different stages of the migration “lifecycle”
7. Understand, compare, critique and apply theoretical perspectives on different forms of migration, immigrant incorporation and return migration
8. Apply effective time management skills and problem-solving strategies to complete a migration profile, addressing real-life challenges such as working under pressure and managing data limitations.
9. Undertake analytical and independent research (including in a team environment)

4. PREREQUISITES

None

5. RECOMMENDED READING

Course reader

Hein de Haas, Castles, Stephen, and Mark. J. Miller. 2020. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. 6th revised edition. Red Globe Press

Koser, K. (2016) *International Migration: A very short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The recommended readings differ per week and topic. Students will find the recommended readings in the course manual and on Canvas.

MIGRATION EFFECTS, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

MGR4502

1. BASICS

Period	5
Start Date	13 April 2026
End Date	12 June 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	M.J. Siegel
Link	https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/melissa.siegel
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Assignment(s); Research; Skills; Work in subgroups
Assessment methods	Final paper; Presentation; Oral Exam
Keywords	Migration; Migration Policy; Migration Governance; Remittances; Development; Immigration; Emigration; Poverty; Inequality; Migration Effects

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

How can we understand and evaluate the effects of migration on development and development on migration? How does this translate into policy and governance? Which challenges are there in developing evidence-based policies? This course in the migration specialisation deals with migration effects and policy. In this course, special attention is paid to poverty, inequality, labour markets, education, health, corruption and innovation. We will also zoom in on specific effects of diaspora on peace and security. You will learn about the history of global migration governance, examine and critically compare approaches to labour migration governance and bilateral schemes, develop policy indicators and critically examine the different approaches of governments to key migration-related policies issues. Special focus is placed on developing policy recommendations.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze how migration interacts with (affects and is affected by) other aspects of development and other public policy issues (health, education, poverty, inequality, corruption, labour markets, the welfare state, etc.) and the role of different actors here in.
2. Evaluate how migration is connected to the sustainable development goals

3. Critically discuss how governments develop policy in the area of migration and development (e.g. diaspora policies)
4. Develop, apply, and critically assess indicators for systematically comparing migration policies across various country contexts.
5. Analyze the migration policy landscape of a selected country and formulate clear, evidence-based policy recommendations.

PEREQUISITES

None

4. RECOMMENDED READING

Course reader

Hein de Haas, Castles, Stephen, and Mark. J. Miller. 2020. The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World. 6th revised edition. Red Globe Press

The recommended readings differ per week and topic. Students will find the recommended readings in the course manual and on Canvas.

SOCIAL PROTECTION: FROM JUSTIFICATION TO INTERVENTION SPP4401

1. BASICS

Period	4
Start Date	2 February 2026
End Date	2 April 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	Zina Nimeh
Link	https://www.merit.unu.edu/about-us/profile/?staff_id=1314 ; https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/prof-dr-zina-nimeh
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Assignment(s); Research; Skills; Work in subgroups; Coaching
Assessment methods	Group Assignments; Individual Assignment; Presentation; Participation and Attendance
Keywords	Poverty & Inequality, Welfare State, Social Justice, Multidimensional Poverty, Capability Approach

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks necessary for defining and measuring an array of global social challenges that policy analysts and practitioners are faced with, and it provides a comprehensive introduction to social protection policy. The course starts by providing students with fundamental academic and practical knowledge and technical skills for understanding and analysing poverty, vulnerability, and inequality. It then considers the logic and design of policies aimed at effectively addressing these societal problems. The course sheds light on how social protection can protect against the risks caused by global and local social challenges. It provides an overview of the main issues, theories and practices regarding the design and implementation of social protection policies and safety nets in advanced economies and contrasts them to emerging and developing economies. In this course, students explore the social challenges and social protection policy interventions both theoretically and empirically by assessing real life examples.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Operationalize theory into practical concepts for measuring poverty, inequality, and vulnerability.
2. Apply and justify measures of poverty and inequality within specific contexts.
3. Identify and explain more complex inequality and mobility measurement methods
4. Create, analyse, and interpret poverty and inequality profiles.
5. Explain social protection frameworks and policy instruments, selecting and justifying interventions based on context.
6. Understand ex post and ex ante policy analysis and apply them to social protection assessments.
7. Develop skills to design and analyse policies, (including constructing and interpreting a micro-simulation of a given policy scenario).
8. Recommend, negotiate, and advocate for poverty reduction and social justice strategies.

4. PEREQUISITES

- Introductory Economics or Public Policy: To ensure they understand fundamental policy concepts and the role of social protection systems.
- Introductory Stata

5. RECOMMENDED READING

- Barr, N. A. (2020). *The economics of the welfare state*. Oxford university press.
- Deneulin, S., & Shahani, L. (Eds.). (2009). *An introduction to the human development and capability approach: Freedom and agency*. Earthscan.
- Grosh, M., Del Ninno, C., Tesliuc, E., & Ouerghi, A. (2008). *For protection and promotion: The design and implementation of effective safety nets*. World Bank Publications.
- Houghton, J., & Khandker, S. R. (2009). *Handbook on poverty+ inequality*. World Bank Publications.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL PROTECTION: GOVERNANCE & FINANCE SPP4502

1. BASICS

Period	5
Start Date	13 April 2026
End Date	12 June 2026
ECTS credits	8
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	Zina Nimeh
Link	https://www.merit.unu.edu/about-us/profile/?staff_id=1314 ; https://unu.edu/merit/about/expert/prof-dr-zina-nimeh
Teaching methods	Paper(s); Assignment(s); Presentation (s); Research; Skills; Work in subgroups; Coaching
Assessment methods	Group Assignments; Individual Assignment; Presentation; Participation and Attendance
Keywords	Social Protection Budgeting and Financing, Strategic Management, Governance, Fiscal Space, Political Economy

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social protection systems can only function sustainably with a stable allocation of financial resources. In any society, social transfers account for a substantial part of national income. Redistributive mechanisms of this scale should be designed and operated with great care to pursue the realisation of socially, economically, and fiscally optimal results. This requires foresight which is obtained through rigorous and precise quantitative analysis of current and future coverage and benefit levels and the required financial needs. This course provides future financial analysts and decision-makers in social protection with the tools for good financial, fiscal, and economic governance of national social protection systems. Efficient governance supported by sound quantitative studies can make a lasting difference in peoples' lives. The course provides knowledge and modelling tools needed for the effective design, management, and monitoring of national social protection systems. It enables students to build simplified country-specific models with an emphasis on social insurance pensions and to deepen their understanding of the design of social protection schemes. At the end of this course, we conclude the specialization by discussing the political challenges of social protection. Even though problem, policy tool, budget needs and fiscal space may be there, in the end it is often a matter of political choice whether social protection policies are implemented.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Develop technical expertise in social protection financing and actuarial modelling for effective system design and monitoring.
2. Understand how to work with actuarial methods.
3. Apply modelling to project future social protection expenditures and revenues.
4. Understand financial connections between government budgets and social protection systems.
5. Grasp political and financial complexities in policy design.
6. Conduct fiscal space analysis for social protection programs.
7. Understand the political economy and governance of social protection, focusing on policy prioritization and consolidation.

4. PEREQUISITES

- SP Specialization Course 1
- Introductory Economics or Public Policy: To ensure they understand fundamental policy concepts and the role of social protection systems.
- Basic Finance and Accounting: To grasp financial planning concepts and the resource management side of social protection financing.
- Introductory Excel

5. RECOMMENDED READING

- Cichon, M., Scholz, W., van de Meerendonk, A., Hagemejer, K., Bertranou, F., & Plamandon, P. (2004). *Financing social protection* (Chapters 4 and 5). Geneva: ILO/ISSA.
- Donahue, J. D. (2017). *Strategic alignment for policy analysis and design* (HKS No. 2090.0). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Kennedy School Case Program.
- ISSA/ILO. (2022). *Guidelines for actuarial work for social security*.
- Moore, M. H. (1995). *Creating public value: Strategic management in government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scholz, W., Cichon, M., & Hagemejer, K. (2000). *Social budgeting* (Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 [pp. 75–79, 83–131, 147–157, 169–180] and chapter 9 [pp. 208–232]). Geneva: ILO/ISSA.
- Van de Meerendonk, A. (2021). Financing. In Loewe, M., & Schüring (Eds.), *Handbook of social protection systems* (Chapter 7). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

MASTERS THESIS MTH4911

1. BASICS

Period	1-6
Start Date	1 September 2025
End Date	31 August 2026
ECTS credits	16
Instruction language	English
Coordinator	Lutz Krebs
Link	Dr. Lutz F. Krebs United Nations University
Teaching methods	Lectures, Workshops, Research, Assignment(s)
Assessment methods	Intermediate Paper, Final paper, Presentation
Keywords	philosophy of science; research design; research methods; evidence-based policy-making; qualitative methods; quantitative methods; policy analysis; policy recommendations

2. FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Master's thesis forms an integral part of the overall Master's programming, accounting for one quarter of the overall degree. Students are required to write an independent Master's thesis that demonstrates their ability to conduct original research. Between October and January, a number of events take place in order to introduce students to research topics and potential supervisors, and to prepare students for the development of their research proposals and related research ethics considerations. The thesis proposal is due in January. Following the approval of the research proposals, students are then supported by their supervisors to further develop and conduct their research projects. The completed theses are due in June and then defended.

The Master's Thesis is therefore divided into three core components:

Periods 1–3 (October–January): Introduction to the thesis, identifying a topic and finding a supervisor and writing the thesis proposal. During this period, students identify a research topic of interest and find a matching supervisor. Students then develop their thesis proposals (due January). Students are offered thesis circles and may reach out to their intended supervisor during this period to support them in the development of their ideas.

Period 3 (January): Methods Workshops. A series of methods workshops is offered to equip students with the advanced methodological knowledge and skills they may need to successfully complete their thesis projects.

Periods 4–6 (February–June): Research, completion of the thesis and defence. Between February and June, students are expected to work on their thesis project and seek the advice and feedback of their selected supervisor. The final thesis is due in June. In addition to submitting their written theses, students are required to present and defend their research.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the master's thesis, students should be able to:

- Choose a policy-relevant topic for their research;
- Match and apply theories, concepts, and knowledge learned in the programme to the thesis topic;
- Express and defend in-depth knowledge on their chosen topic;
- Synthesize existing literature and identify research gaps on a specific topic;
- Formulate a consistent theoretical framework for their topic;
- Develop relevant research design and implement appropriate research methods for a specific research question;
- Identify and collect relevant sources and data directly, or in the form of secondary data;
- Evaluate results from literature and data in order to make contributions to the overall field of study;
- Provide policy recommendations based on the evaluation and synthesis of the research findings, in relation to the field of study and policy area.

4. PREREQUISITES

There are no specific prerequisites for this course.

5. RECOMMENDED READING

There are no specific readings for this course.