Overview of the Class
In 2016, Denmark was the happiest country in the world according to a United Nations happiness report. Denmark, along with Sweden and Finland have shared 20 years of relative prosperity and now are among the wealthiest countries in the world in terms of GDP per capita. They are also “welfare states” with very high levels of taxation and redistribution—policies at odds with traditional views on the power of incentives to encourage prosperity. The influence of this model is evident in policy discussion in the US on issues ranging from educational subsidies to family-friendly workplaces. What can policy makers in other countries learn from the successes and failures of the Welfare State? This class has three goals: 1. to familiarize you with Welfare State taxes and subsidies, 2. to help you understand why these policies are successful (or appear to be successful), and 3. to give you the tools to critically evaluate suggestions for similar policy implementation in the US. You will be evaluated primarily on 2. and 3.

Text
There is no required text. Instead, we will be sampling from a host of books and articles that will be made available on the University’s Library Course Reserves. A list of readings and associated dates is attached to the end of this syllabus. I encourage you to read through the material marked with a ** the day before class so that you can participate in any discussion.

Logistics
This class meets on Thursdays from 3-5:50 in 140B. I will hold office hours on Thursdays from 1:30-3PM in room 161. A Chalk website for the class has been set up. I will post readings and handouts there, make announcements, etc.

Formal Requirements
Formal requirements for this class are policy briefs, one short presentation, and one longer final project/presentation, as well as class participation. You will be given points based on the style and level of professionalism in your slides, as well as the content. Part of the goal of these projects is to get you practice in public speaking and writing, as well as presenting information effectively. To this end, I will make templates available and spend some time discussing expectations. Your final grade will be given by the following weights:

- Midterm presentation: 20%
- Policy briefs (2): 30%
- Final project: 25%
- Participation: 25%

Policy Brief
Your final project will include a written summary due 8th week and a presentation during the last day of class. You will be able to choose from any topic which we did not discuss at length in class. When you
decide on a topic, send me an email and I will tell you if this topic is feasible and available (no 2 people should be working on the same topic). You should aim to have something chosen by 4th week. If you are having trouble thinking of something, please email me. Some possible examples include:

- Retirement
- Paternity leave
- Shortened workday (France, Sweden)
- Education (the Finnish model, for example)
- Guaranteed sick leave (Sweden)
- Flexitime (Sweden)
- State Educational Support Grants—SU (Denmark)

Your brief should begin with a 3-4 page description of the policy you are studying as it currently stands, as well as its history and a discussion of recent changes to the policy. You should spend an additional 2-3 pages discussing interest in applying a related policy in the US or another country of your choice (if any), how much this would cost, and whether it would be a good policy in that country, suggesting any modifications to make it so. You will also be asked to present your findings and recommendations in class. Presentations will be 30 minutes long.
Tentative Outline and Reading List

Thursday 1/4: Introduction: a brief history, globalization, and can we all be Nordic?

- Course Notes
- Audio discussion of the Autor, Dorn, and Hanson paper: http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2016/03/david_autor_on_1.html

Thursday 1/11: Taxes and Transfers

- Course Notes

Thursday 1/18: Unemployment and Welfare Services

- Course Notes


• Homework 1 due Thursday 1/25: Collective bargaining


**Thursday 1/25: Collective bargaining**

**Thursday 2/1: Job market flexibility/policies towards firms**

• Employment protection policy brief due

• **Bjuggren, Carl Magnus (2015).** “Employment Protection and Labor Productivity.”

**Thursday 2/8: Family leave policies**


• **Kottelenberg, M. J. and Lehrer, S. F. (0).** Targeted or universal coverage? assessing heterogeneity in the effects of universal child care. *Journal of Labor Economics, 0*(0):000–000

**Thursday 2/15: Universal child care**


• **Kottelenberg, M. J. and Lehrer, S. F. (0).** Targeted or universal coverage? assessing heterogeneity in the effects of universal child care. *Journal of Labor Economics, 0*(0):000–000

**Thursday 2/22: The gender equality paradox**


**Thursday 3/1: Immigration**


• **Aslund, O., Bohlmark, A., and Skans, O. N.** Age at migration and social integration. Discussion Paper 4263, IZA


**Thursday 3/8: Project presentations**