



Ageing, Inequality and Rights

EC5151

Module Outline 2026

Objective	Adopting an overall focus on public policy and its transversal concern with ageing-related matters, the aim of this programme is to provide a research-informed overview of ageing and inequalities in later life, through the lens of a rights-based approach and in the context of international policy debates. The programme addresses 3 core pillars. Ageing: attendees will consider the significance of demographic ageing for contemporary societies, assessing key ageing-related frameworks and policy constructs and their framing of later life policy challenges and solutions. Equality: attendees will examine the theory and evidence related to the construction of inequality and implications for equality amongst older populations, and for individuals and policy systems. Rights: attendees will explore the emergence of ageing as a human rights area, critically assessing the potential for a UN treaty on the rights of older people to support diverse ageing populations across international jurisdictions. In doing so, attendees will review examples of the application of selected human rights norms to key inequities and mistreatments experienced by older people.			
Interdisciplinary focus	This course draws on a range of disciplines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social and public policy• Critical social gerontology• Demography• Economics• International human rights law			
Lecturer(s)	Name	Office	Ext	E-mail
	Dr. Nena Georgantzi	-	5460	Nena.georgantzi@universityofgalway.ie
	Prof. Kieran Walsh	LCI-2004 (ILAS Building)	5461	Kieran.walsh@universityofgalway.ie
	(Prof. Walsh will serve as module coordinator).			
Student Queries	You can arrange an online meeting with the module coordinator and any of the lecturers of this module by e-mailing them directly.			
Overall Module Learning Outcomes	By the end of the programme attendees will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the impact of inequalities on the fairness of ageing societies, and policy systems.2. Assess the relevance of theoretical and policy constructs in addressing inequalities.3. Understand human rights in the context of ageing and the implications of applying a rights-based approach to public policies			

	<div>4. Critically engage with human rights scholarship and international human rights law to assess its influence and application on ageing policies.</div> <div>5. Understand potential applications and gaps in the existing international human rights law framework with respect to ageing and later life experiences.</div>												
<div>UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</div>	<div>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a “shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”.</div> <div>This module examines the following SDGs:</div> <table><thead><tr><th>Sustainable Development Goal</th><th>Examined in Learning Outcome</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>SDG 1 – No poverty</td><td>LO 1-3</td></tr><tr><td>SDG 3 – Good health and wellbeing</td><td>LO 1-3</td></tr><tr><td>SDG 5 – Gender Equality</td><td>LO 1-6</td></tr><tr><td>SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities</td><td>LO 1-6</td></tr><tr><td>SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions</td><td>LO 1-6</td></tr></tbody></table>	Sustainable Development Goal	Examined in Learning Outcome	SDG 1 – No poverty	LO 1-3	SDG 3 – Good health and wellbeing	LO 1-3	SDG 5 – Gender Equality	LO 1-6	SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities	LO 1-6	SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions	LO 1-6
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<div>Delivery Format</div>	<div><div>Schedule and Delivery</div><div>This online programme will be delivered remotely form over 8 weeks, with synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded, self-directed review) delivery. Please see full workload details below. The programme involves 15 sessions overall, comprising traditional lectures, peer-learning contributions, workshops, panel discussions and a weekly discussion board.</div><div><div><div>• Participants are required to engage with all asynchronous materials, discussions amd recordings.</div><div>• Participants are required to participate in all synchronous live sessions.</div><div>• Participants are required to complete and engage with all assessments.</div><div>• All live sessions will be recorded and available from Canvas for review. This is only as a learning aid and not as a substitute for live lecture attendance.</div><div>• Recognising the value of attendees’ own perspectives and experience, the delivery of this programme is designed to draw on the tacit knowledge of participants, and will provide space for peer-discussion and learning exchange.</div></div></div><div>Classes are scheduled as follows (please see full topic breakdown and schedule below):</div><table><tbody><tr><td><div><div>Synchronous Sessions – March 10th (10:00-11:30 CET – including breaktimes)</div><div><div>1. Introduction and overview</div><div>2. Peer-critical reflection: Ageing’s big challenges and opportunities</div></div></div></td></tr><tr><td><div><div>Asynchronous Sessions –March 10th and March 24th (4 hours)</div><div><div>3. Pillar 1: Ageing and key frameworks</div><div>4. Pillar 2: Equality in later life and drivers of inequality</div><div>5. Pillar 3: Ageing and human rights I</div><div>6. Pillar 3: Ageing and human rights II</div></div></div></td></tr><tr><td><div><div>Synchronous Live Sessions – March 24th (10:00-12:50 CET – including breaktimes)</div><div><div>7. Peer-critical reflection – relevance of ageing frameworks</div><div>8. Peer-critical reflection –relevance of rights-based approaches</div><div>9. Workshop 1 – rights and equality in practice</div></div></div></td></tr><tr><td><div><div>Asynchronous Session – March 24th and April 7th (1 hour)</div></div></td></tr></tbody></table></div>	<div><div>Synchronous Sessions – March 10th (10:00-11:30 CET – including breaktimes)</div><div><div>1. Introduction and overview</div><div>2. Peer-critical reflection: Ageing’s big challenges and opportunities</div></div></div>	<div><div>Asynchronous Sessions –March 10th and March 24th (4 hours)</div><div><div>3. Pillar 1: Ageing and key frameworks</div><div>4. Pillar 2: Equality in later life and drivers of inequality</div><div>5. Pillar 3: Ageing and human rights I</div><div>6. Pillar 3: Ageing and human rights II</div></div></div>	<div><div>Synchronous Live Sessions – March 24th (10:00-12:50 CET – including breaktimes)</div><div><div>7. Peer-critical reflection – relevance of ageing frameworks</div><div>8. Peer-critical reflection –relevance of rights-based approaches</div><div>9. Workshop 1 – rights and equality in practice</div></div></div>	<div><div>Asynchronous Session – March 24th and April 7th (1 hour)</div></div>								
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	<p>10. Application of rights norms</p> <p>Synchronous Sessions – April 7th (10:00-14:35 CET– <i>including breaktimes</i>)</p> <p>11. Policy preparedness</p> <p>12. Panel discussion - transversal versus focused approaches</p> <p>13. Class presentations</p> <p>14. Peer-critical reflection – future challenges and opportunities in policy</p> <p>15. Assignment clinic</p> <p>In addition to these sessions an assignment clinic will be run on the following dates, to allow students to discuss their assignment on a one-to-one basis. Scheduling a time within these slots is encouraged if participants require direction.</p> <p>Assignment clinics</p> <p>March 13th 13:00-14:00 CET</p> <p>March 27th 13:00-14:00 CET</p> <p>April 10th 13:00-14:00 CET</p> <p>April 24th 13:00-14:00 CET</p>														
Course Material	<p>The course outline, lecture notes, announcements, assignments and other relevant materials will be posted on Canvas/Share point folder.</p> <p>Live and recorded lecture sessions can be accessed via Canvas zoom meeting room: click on 'Zoom' on the left menu bar and enter the learning session for the specified date.</p> <p>https://www.universityofgalway.ie/information-solutions-services/services-for-students/canvas/</p> <p>A class discussion board dealing with key questions arising during lecture sessions will be maintained and monitored on a weekly basis. Participants are strongly encouraged to engage with this discussion.</p>														
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Attendance	<p>Attendance is required for the duration of the full live delivery of the programme</p> <p>Monitoring attendance has a positive impact on engagement, especially when you can review your own attendance on Canvas and receive emails about absence. The J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics will monitor attendance at classes to identify those that may be failing to engage with the programme. Quickly Attendance will be used within Canvas to allow lecturers to take attendance at the module level. Lectures will outline instructions for attendance in class.</p> <p>Principles on general attendance can be found here</p>														

Assessment	<p>The programme will be examined on the basis of an individual assignment and class presentation based on that assignment.</p> <p>Assignment outline: In the context of an ageing population, explain how you would use a rights-based lens and existing human rights standards to justify the need for a public policy reform in a policy areas of your choice (employment, health, pensions, care, etc.).</p> <p>A full assignment brief will be available on programme commencement.</p> <p>The assignment must be a maximum of 5000 words in length submitted via Turnitin by May 1st 2026 on Canvas and e-mailed to nenageorgantzi@universityofgalway.ie and kieran.walsh@universityofgalway.ie.</p> <p>The assessment is carefully designed to examine graduate attributes as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th><th>Graduate Attribute</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Knowledge</td><td>Academic achievement and expertise Problem solving</td></tr> <tr> <td>Skills</td><td>Critical thinking Communication skills</td></tr> <tr> <td>Disposition</td><td>Personal responsibility Global awareness</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Graduate Attribute	Knowledge	Academic achievement and expertise Problem solving	Skills	Critical thinking Communication skills	Disposition	Personal responsibility Global awareness
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Core Texts	<p>This module will be based primarily on lecture notes, but will be supplemented by key readings provided by each of the lecturers. Where readings are provided during learning sessions (synchronous and asynchronous), participants are expected to review them.</p>								
Plagiarism	<p>Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or work without appropriate acknowledgement or credit. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional.</p> <p>If you are unsure of the acceptable methods of acknowledgment you should refer to the University of Galway's Code of Practice for Dealing with Plagiarism, consult with your lecturer or the library staff. Proven plagiarism is a very serious matter which may result in severe disciplinary action and/or exclusion from the University.</p> <p>Ensure all assignment submissions include a signed plagiarism statement – see the programme Sharepoint/Canvas page</p>								
Referencing & Citation	<p>Correct referencing and citation avoids plagiarism. Details on how to reference journal articles, books, electronic information and various other supports is available from the University of Galway Library at the following link:</p>								

	https://openpress.universityofgalway.ie/researchskillsforstudents/chapter/citing-and-referencing-style/
LENS Report	Support is available to students with a disability and is granted on the basis of medical evidence. Where applicable, a LENS Report (Learning Educational Needs Summary) should be completed and the relevant disciplines notified. It is your responsibility to send your LENS report to your lecturers/ course coordinator at the beginning of each semester. Students should let their lecturers know that relevant exam accommodations are required. Lecturers can also request that students let them know if they are registered with the Disability Support Service and have a LENS Report.
Classroom Charter	<p>We are guided by our core values of respect in our actions, excellence in our work, openness in our outlook and sustainability in our approach. We focus on equality by treating people with respect and dignity, and providing everyone with access and opportunities to fulfil their potential. We embrace diversity to enrich our School environment by sparking innovation and creating a rewarding and vibrant student community. Within the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics, at a module-level we aim to create and nurture an environment that is respectful and inclusive for all. To achieve this, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat each other with dignity and respect. • Listen to each other's point of view, recognising that there may be disagreement. • Keep discussion, comments, and module feedback on the topic, and off the people. • Do not use inflammatory or offensive language, sarcasm or raised voices.
Requirements?	This programme is a level 9 (Masters level) module. On that basis, participants are expected to have completed a bachelors degree in a broadly allied area. Entry is also available through a recognition of prior learning and commensurate experience pathway. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis on the basis of University of Galway policy. Please contact the programme coordinator for further information.

Day	Lecture Topic Schedule
1	<p><u>Synchronous Sessions – March 10th</u> (1.5 hours)</p> <p>16. Introduction and overview – N. Georgantzi and K. Walsh (14:00-14:45 (15:00-15:45 CET))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme aim and overall approach • Three pillar programme structure and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous and asynchronous sessions • Readings and discussion board questions • Peer-reflection discussions • Workshops • Demographic ageing – brief trends and critical perspectives <p>17. Peer-critical reflection: Ageing's big challenges and opportunities (14:45-15:30 (15:45-16:30 CET))</p>
	<p><u>Asynchronous Sessions – to be completed between March 10th and March 24th</u> (4 hours)</p> <p>18. Pillar 1: Ageing and key frameworks - K. Walsh (1 hour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical models and frameworks • Policy concepts and goals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the strengths and limitations of these theories, and concepts? <p>19. Pillar 2: Equality in later life and drivers of inequality - K. Walsh (1 hour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allied concepts, age relations and ageism • Cohort and age stratification • Cumulative advantage/disadvantage across the life course • Understanding precarity and risk • Social exclusion domains and drivers • Intersectionality and systems of inequality <p>20. Pillar 3: Ageing and human rights I - N. Georgantzi (1 hour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing as an emerging area of human rights • Older persons as rights holders • Rights-based approaches in policy <p>21. Pillar 3: Ageing and human rights II - N. Georgantzi (1 hour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying a rights-based approach to ageing-related public policy – theory and practice • Towards a new UN convention: debates and implications • Tracking impacts and implications
2	<p><u>Synchronous Sessions – March 24th</u> (2.5 hours)</p> <p>22. Peer-critical reflection – relevance of ageing frameworks (14:00-14:40 (15:00-15:40 CET)) (N. Georgantzi and K. Walsh)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the strengths and limitations of these theories, and concepts? • What are the strengths and limitations of their application in current policy? <p><i>10-minute comfort break</i></p> <p>23. Peer-critical reflection –relevance of rights-based approaches (14:50-15:30 (15:50-16:30 CET)) (N. Georgantzi and K. Walsh)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the cultural and structural barriers to a rights-based approach? <p><i>10-minute comfort break</i></p> <p>24. Workshop 1 – rights and equality in practice (15:40-16:50 (16:40-17:50 CET)) (N. Georgantzi and K. Walsh)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants examples of policy and advocacy challenges • Application of rights-/equality- focused lens • Consideration of assignment topics
3	<p><u>Asynchronous Session – to be completed between March 24th and April 14th</u> (1 hour)</p> <p>25. Application of rights norms- Speaker to be confirmed (1 hour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Convention on Human Rights • Setting legal standards and influencing policy • Case 1: Socioeconomic rights • Case 2: Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment

	<p><u>Synchronous Sessions – April 14th</u> (2-hour sessions; 2-hour presentation assessment)</p> <p>26. Policy capacity and capability (12:00-12:45 (13:00-13:45 CET)) (N. Georgantzi and K. Walsh)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifts in European and International policy apparatus (Guest lecture – TBC) <p><i>5-minute comfort break</i></p> <p>27. Panel discussion - transversal versus focused approaches (12:50-13:30 (13:50-14:30 CET))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended and unintended consequences • Lived experiences and building relevance <p><i>10-minute comfort break</i></p> <p>28. Class presentations (13:40-15:40 (14:40-16:40 CET))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-minute presentations (depending on class size) • Peer-led questions and answers <p><i>20-minute comfort break</i></p> <p>29. Peer-critical reflection – future challenges and opportunities in policy (16:00-16:35 (17:00-17:35 CET))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues for participants • Key challenges and opportunities in applying learning <p>30. Assignment clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one guidance on assignment preparation
	<p><i>Assignment hand-up</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 1st, 2026 • Feedback four weeks later