

Polish society today. Between post-communism and globalization – dr hab. Agnieszka Kolasa-Nowak

Course duration: one semester

Number of ECTS credits: 4.0

The course will be focused on Polish systemic social change, which defined major processes in last three decades. The transition from communism to liberal democracy and market economy has been a long and winding road. The course will concentrate on contemporary Polish society in which the global influences and convergence to dominant European trends interferes with the heritage of communist past. Several areas of study are available and the student may choose to concentrate on one or two. One topic will cover social stratification, the rise of new middle class, migration problems, regional differentiation and transformation of rural communities. Another issue will tackle new life-styles, future prospects for young people, new family patterns, changes in values and religious beliefs.

Next will concentrate on public sphere, including social activity of Poles, their involvement in voluntary organizations, quality of democracy and the level of participation in public life like new urban movements or grass-root activities,

Others may cover political beliefs and Polish public opinion on EU-integration as well as level of consumerism, marketization and impact of new media on everyday life.

Course content will be based on sociological data from Public Opinion Research Center CBOS, Eurostat, Polish longitudinal surveys and reports (Diagnoza społeczna, PSS, European Social Survey). The interpretations of main social issues are ranging from imitative modernization paradigm through neo-institutional approach to more recent center-periphery conceptual frame. The globalization issues have entered Polish debates, giving the growing concern about hierarchical dimensions of global market and about historical dominance of Western discourse on Polish self-reflection and identity. Critical approach is gaining support and recognition, which can be seen as a step towards reconceptualisation of dominant narratives of Polish recent past and current problems.