

Subject card

Subject name and code	Architecture of Aspiration. Exploring Upward Mobility, PG_00206979						
Field of study	International Business, Logistics and Mobility						
Date of commencement of studies	October 2026		Academic year of realisation of subject		2026/2027		
Education level	Master's studies		Subject group		Obligatory subject group in the field of study Optional subject group Humanistic-social subject group		
Mode of study	full-time studies		Mode of delivery		at the university		
Year of study	1		Language of instruction		English		
Semester of study	2		ECTS credits		2.0		
Learning profile	academic		Assessment form		credit		
Conducting unit							
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor		mgr Christian Orobello				
	Teachers						
Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						
Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan		Participation in consultation hours		Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30		0.0		20.0	50
Subject objectives	The aim of the course is to familiarize students with selected theories and concepts from the social and economic sciences explaining the relationships between human needs, poverty, social inequality, and socioeconomic mobility. The course provides knowledge of the social, economic, and institutional factors influencing opportunities for the development of individuals and societies.						

Learning outcomes	Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
	[LMMU2_W11] knows the detailed principles of establishing and developing forms of individual entrepreneurship, using the knowledge of economics, finance, management, logistics and mobility	The student knows and understands the roles of opportunity structures, social capital, and institutional factors in shaping economic activity and the development of individuals and communities.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW2] presentation/project/paper/report
	[LMMU2_W05] has a knowledge of the human being as a manufacturer and consumer and extended knowledge of the human being as a creator of culture and social structures	The student knows and understands the relationships among human needs, the functioning of society, and the socio-economic determinants of social mobility and individual development.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/conversation/discussion
	[IBMU2_W03] knows and understands in an advanced manner the terminology and concepts appropriate to international business, international economics and international finance, as well as related disciplines.	The student knows and understands the terminology and key concepts used to analyze human needs, socioeconomic mobility, and social inequality.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/conversation/discussion
	[IBMU2_W04] knows and understands in an advanced manner contemporary theories of international business and international economics, including the differences between their main schools of thought, the principal trends in their development, and their implications for economic practice.	The student knows and understands selected contemporary theories explaining the relationships between human needs, social inequality, and socioeconomic mobility, as well as their implications for public policy.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW2] presentation/project/paper/report
Subject contents	1. Human Needs and the Problem of Mobility a) Socioeconomic mobility b) Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs c) Individual agency vs. structural barriers d) Needs as psychological and political categories 2. Maslow's Hierarchy: Origins, Appeal and Migration into Policy a) Humanistic psychology b) Self-actualization c) The pyramid as a normative model d) Policy implications 3. Four Critiques: Linearity, Universality, Invisibility and Capability a) Critical perspectives on Maslow's model b) Universality and cultural assumptions c) Structural inequality and capability approach 4. Political Economy and the Capability Approach a) Capability approach b) Institutional economics c) Capability deprivation and poverty 5. Stratification and Theories of Mobility a) Social stratification b) Social reproduction c) Theories of upward mobility 6. Research Design: Mixed Methods, Discourse Analysis and Comparative Approaches a) Mixed methods research b) Comparative policy analysis c) Secondary data analysis 7. Testing Theoretical Validity of Human Needs Models a) Non-sequential need satisfaction b) Cross-cultural perspectives c) Belonging and social inclusion 8. Empirical Findings: Wages, Poverty and Social Connection a) Social capital b) Poverty and mobility c) Correlation and causation 9. Structural and Intersectional Perspectives on Mobility a) Intersectionality b) Gender, class and race c) Geographic disadvantage 10. Financialization of Basic Needs: The California Water Case a) Rights versus markets b) Financialization c) Distributional consequences 11. Opportunity, Community and Social Connection a) Opportunity structures b) Social responsibility c) Community engagement 12. The Architecture of Aspiration Model a) Rights and opportunities b) Reciprocal social contract c) Policy implications and future directions.		

Prerequisites and co-requisites			
Assessment methods and criteria	Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
	Final Project implementation	51.0%	50.0%
	Mid Term Test	51.0%	50.0%
Recommended reading	Basic literature	Orobello, C. (2024) "Homeless in Europe: A Closer Look at the Homeless in a Cash-free Economy: The Example of Poland". <i>Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs</i>, 4/2024, pp. 279-300. DOI: 10.33067/SE.4.2024.13 Orobello C and Cirella GT (2021) Financialization of Water: Conceptual Analysis of the California Water Crisis. <i>Front. Environ. Sci.</i> 9:739180. doi: 10.3389/fenvs.2021.739180 Selected academic articles, book chapters, policy reports and case studies provided by the instructor.	
	Supplementary literature	Cirella Giuseppe, Domańska Agnieszka, Orobello Christian, W: Smart technologies in urban engineering: proceedings of STUE-2023 / Arsenyeva Olga [i in.] (red.), <i>Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems</i>, 2023, vol. 2, nr 808, Cham, Springer, s.14-25, ISBN 978-3-031-46876-6. DOI:10.1007/978-3-031-46877-3_2	
	eResources addresses		

Example issues/
example questions/
tasks being completed

1. Human Needs and the Problem of Mobility

Discussion Question:

When a policy assumes people rise by satisfying needs "in order," whom does that assumption serve, and whom does it render invisible?

2. Maslow's Hierarchy: Origins, Appeal and Migration into Policy

Discussion Question:

What made the pyramid image so persuasive, and how does an intuitive picture end up doing argumentative work its author never intended?

3. Four Critiques: Linearity, Universality, Invisibility and Capability

Discussion Question:

Which of the four critiques is the hardest to defend empirically, and what evidence would it take to convince a skeptic?

4. Political Economy and the Capability Approach

Discussion Question:

If two people have the same income but very different freedoms to act, what does the hierarchy miss that a capability lens captures?

5. Stratification and Theories of Mobility

Discussion Question:

How much of mobility is decided before a person makes any choice at all—and how would we even measure that?

6. Research Design: Mixed Methods, Discourse Analysis and Comparative Approaches

Discussion Question:

When a model is both a psychological claim and a policy instrument, what mix of methods is required to test it fairly?

7. Testing Theoretical Validity of Human Needs Models

Discussion Question:

Can you satisfy "higher" needs while "lower" ones go unmet—and what real cases prove or complicate the point?

8. Empirical Findings: Wages, Poverty and Social Connection

Discussion Question:

If social connection predicts mobility better than wages do, should anti-poverty policy fund relationships as seriously as it funds income?

9. Structural and Intersectional Perspectives on Mobility

Discussion Question:

Is "self-actualization" a universal human aim, or a class-marked ideal—and what changes in policy if it is the latter?

10. Financialization of Basic Needs: The California Water Case

Discussion Question:

	<i>Which basic needs, if any, should be placed beyond the reach of markets—and on what principled grounds do we draw that line?</i> 11. Opportunity, Community and Social Connection Discussion Question: <i>Where exactly does society's obligation end and individual responsibility begin—and can that boundary be designed rather than assumed?</i> 12. The Architecture of Aspiration Model Discussion Question: <i>Does reframing needs as rights genuinely change what policy can do—or does it relabel the same hard trade-offs in more appealing language?</i>
Work placement	Not applicable

Document generated electronically. Does not require a seal or signature.