



SOC 810

Developing Social Policy

S1 Evening 2014

Sociology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MPASR or PGDipPASR or PGCertPASR or MAppAnth or PGDipAppAnth or PGCertAppAnth or MSocEntre or PGCertSocEntre

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces and advances major topics in social policy – the policies that governments make to improve individual and public welfare. The idea of social policy can be narrow, involving giving cash benefits and social services to the most needy. But our understanding of social policy might be broader, and encompass the provision of social infrastructure – health, housing and education services. Sometimes, social policy can be 'disguised' in other policies entirely, such as the policy of life-long employment promoted in industrial Japan, minimum wages in Australia, and guaranteed prices for food staples. This semester, we consider how different social policies shape different welfare states. The unit will have three parts. The first part engages with key concepts of social policy and the welfare state. The second part outlines three historical welfare models (Australia, Sweden, and the United States) and offers tools for classifying welfare states. The third part looks at the contemporary political and social dynamics surrounding welfare states. Across the semester, we keep a focus on welfare policymaking in Australia and recent social policy changes.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- critically assess, use and synthesise information

- discuss key social theories and frameworks used to understand the development of social policies

- locate and retrieve reliable and high quality information and analysis through individual research

- further develop communication skills to convey your own ideas simply, directly and respectfully

- challenge your preconceptions about welfare and other areas by engaging in policy debates

- demonstrate effective time management and work organisation skills

- apply and adapt knowledge to 'real world' problems in an ethical and consistent manner

- develop vocational skills such as writing policy briefs for government departments and non-government organisations

- contextualise Australian social policy by reflecting on international developments

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Policy Brief 1	20%	Week 5 Workshop
Policy Brief 2	20%	Week 8 workshop
Policy Analysis Report	50%	Week 13 workshop
Workshop Engagement	10%	Ongoing

Policy Brief 1

Due: **Week 5 Workshop**

Weighting: **20%**

The first two assignments for SOC810 require you to write policy briefs. Writing policy briefs is a particular skill, used widely in government and non-government agencies to provide guidance to policy makers. The aim is to give a short summary of an issue, identify possible courses of action, identify arguments for and against, identify the parties involved and their opinions, and to highlight any possible implications. The briefs should strictly remain within the 1,000 word limit, but they may refer to additional material that can be supplied as an attachment.

For the first brief, imagine that you work in the relevant government department. Your job is to read an article/report and to let your Minister know if there is any action needed. This action could be as simple as 'noting' the report, or it might involve some government action, such as considering funding or policy changes. You will need to identify an issue for the brief by searching policy forums (e.g. *Australian Policy Online* <<http://www.apo.org.au>>). You should select an issue that relates to social policy (such as housing, health, education, welfare, etc).

N.B. While the policy brief is primarily concerned with one issue, you need to read more widely to familiarise yourself with existing policies, the nature of reforms, the existence of current debates and the positions of key stakeholders.

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Policy Brief 2

Due: **Week 8 workshop**

Weighting: **20%**

The second policy brief should be written for an NGO. You will need to identify an issue and find an article to focus on using a policy forum such as Australian Policy Online (<http://www.apo.org.au>). For this brief, imagine you are working in a large non-profit organization (this can either be a service provider, an advocacy body). But you need to identify a real organization. Your job is to read the article/report and to report to either the Executive Officer or the Board on actions that might be required. The action might simply be 'noting' the report, but it may be issuing a press release about the issue or organising a meeting with the relevant Minister to press a case. You should select a different policy issue than the one selected for the first policy brief.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- critically assess, use and synthesise information
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Policy Analysis Report

Due: **Week 13 workshop**

Weighting: **50%**

This major assignment for SOC810 should be presented in the format of a research report. This report requires you to select a social policy problem and to critically evaluate current policies or proposals. You will need to select ONE of the following four options:

- * income support for unemployed people;
- * the Family Tax Benefits Part A and B
- * the Paid Parental Leave Scheme
- * Medicare

This report involves critically examining how the policy problem has been defined and critiquing proposals for government action. This should involve consideration of the following...

- a) Provide a brief overview of recent developments in the policy area and outline the main features of current policy.
- b) How has the problem been defined in policy and why is there a call for government action?
- c) Who are the various stakeholders involved and what are their positions on the policy problem?
- d) What is the prevailing policy approach? Consider whether the policy reflects values and stakeholder positions.
- e) Critically evaluate the policy in terms of its stated outcomes and some possible alternative approaches to policy.

This task should be written up as an assignment of 1,800 to 2,000 words. Please feel free to use headings, write in paragraphs and double-space submitted work. You should use an introduction and conclusion to help organise and link your ideas. Keep in mind that we will be assessing you on your ability to concisely and precisely present information within the word limit.

N.B. You should use another topic than that selected for the policy briefs.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- contextualise Australian social policy by reflecting on international developments

Workshop Engagement

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

The weekly workshops are compulsory. To meet the requirements of this course, you are required to attend at least 80 per cent of workshops. In addition to attending, you are also expected to actively participate. As an incentive, 10 percent of your final mark will be awarded for your attendance and your participation. We will look for evidence that you have done the readings and your ability to engage respectfully with other students.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- discuss key social theories and frameworks used to understand the development of social policies
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- contextualise Australian social policy by reflecting on international developments

Delivery and Resources

Delivery

This course is delivered as a two-hour seminar on Tuesday evenings from 6pm during semester.

Required and recommended resources

There is no required text set for this unit. The readings will be available on e-reserve. Many are already available. Make sure that you try searching for the course code 'SOC810', 'SOC1 704' and the author's surname of the relevant reading (search for each separately).

While there is no need to buy a textbook, we have put together a list of recommended texts that should help you throughout the semester. These sources are online and can also be ordered through the Co-op bookshop:

Alcock, P. and G. Craig (2009) *International Social Policy: Welfare regimes in the developed world*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

Fawcett, B., Goodwin, S., Meagher, G. and R. Phillips (2010) *Social Policy for Social Change*, Palgrave Macmillan: Melbourne.

Marston, G., Macdonald, C. and L. Bryson (2013) *The Australian Welfare State: Who Benefits Now?* Palgrave Macmillan: South Yarra.

McClelland, A. and P. Smyth (2010) *Social Policy in Australia: Understanding for Action*, Oxford University Press: Melbourne.

Pierson, C. and F.G. Castles (2010) *The Welfare State Reader*, 2nd Edition, Polity Press: Cambridge.

Technology used

The following technologies are used in this course...

Information about iLearn

Important information about the weekly schedule, course readings and assessment are all available on the course *iLearn* page. If you do not have access, please contact IT help. You are required to check iLearn and your student email regularly for course updates and information.

Information about Turnitin

All written assessments need to be submitted online via Turnitin only. A link to Turnitin is available via the Assessments tab on the iLearn page. Please contact the convenor if you cannot find it (do not leave it until the day of the assessment). Written assessments are due by 6pm at the start of the relevant workshop. But, there is no need to submit a hard copy of the assessment or to include a cover sheet.

Grademark

Feedback will be made available online via GradeMark. It will take four majors forms (in no particular order): specific comments in the text of your paper; overall comments; a score on a qualitative rubric (that cannot be used to calculate your mark numerically); and a numeric score. Once you have received your assignment back, please make sure that you have access to these forms of feedback.

Readings on e-reserve

The readings for the course should be available free-of-charge via e-Reserve. e-Reserve can be accessed via the Macquarie University library website.

Changes since the last offering of this unit

The recommended texts, assessment structure and the course readings have changed since the last offering of this unit.

Unit Schedule

Wk	Date	Lecture Topics	Lecturer
1	4 Mar	Introduction to <i>Developing Social Policy</i>	AS
2	11 Mar	Poverty and Inequality: Key social policy concepts	AS
3	18 Mar	The Great Risk Shift? Risk, markets and new social policies	AS
4	25 Mar	Developing Social Policy: From policy cycles to 'muddling through'	TF
5	1 Apr	Developing Social Policy II: Welfare, markets and the state	BSB
6	8 Apr	Analysing Social Policy: Frameworks for understanding	AS
7	29 Apr	An Australian Story: The wage-earners model and beyond	AS
8	6 May	The US Model vs. the Swedish <i>folkshemmet</i>	AS
9	13 May	Closing the Gap? Recent developments in Indigenous social policy	AS
10	20 May	Reforming Income Support: Dependency, deservingness & surveillance	AS
11	27 May	Population Ageing, Retirement and Social Policy	AS
12	3 Jun	Health Policy in Australia and Around the World	AS
13	10 Jun	Course Conclusion	AS

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.ht

[ml](#)

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy

applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- discuss key social theories and frameworks used to understand the development of social policies
- challenge your preconceptions about welfare and other areas by engaging in policy debates
- develop vocational skills such as writing policy briefs for government departments and non-government organisations
- contextualise Australian social policy by reflecting on international developments

Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief 1
- Policy Brief 2
- Policy Analysis Report

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- critically assess, use and synthesise information
- discuss key social theories and frameworks used to understand the development of social policies
- locate and retrieve reliable and high quality information and analysis through individual research

Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief 1
- Policy Brief 2
- Policy Analysis Report

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- critically assess, use and synthesise information
- locate and retrieve reliable and high quality information and analysis through individual research
- challenge your preconceptions about welfare and other areas by engaging in policy debates
- apply and adapt knowledge to 'real world' problems in an ethical and consistent manner

Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief 1
- Policy Brief 2
- Policy Analysis Report

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- discuss key social theories and frameworks used to understand the development of social policies
- further develop communication skills to convey your own ideas simply, directly and respectfully
- demonstrate effective time management and work organisation skills

- develop vocational skills such as writing policy briefs for government departments and non-government organisations

Assessment tasks

- Policy Analysis Report
- Workshop Engagement

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- challenge your preconceptions about welfare and other areas by engaging in policy debates
- apply and adapt knowledge to 'real world' problems in an ethical and consistent manner
- contextualise Australian social policy by reflecting on international developments

Assessment tasks

- Policy Analysis Report
- Workshop Engagement

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- critically assess, use and synthesise information
- demonstrate effective time management and work organisation skills
- develop vocational skills such as writing policy briefs for government departments and non-government organisations

Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief 1

- Policy Brief 2
- Policy Analysis Report