POL 801
Public Policy Dissertation
S2 External 2016
Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Lecturer
Diana Perche
diana.perche@mq.edu.au
Contact via (02) 9850 8805
W6A 432
By appointment

Credit points
8

Prerequisites
(16cp at 800 level including POL820 and POL822) and permission of Executive Dean of Faculty

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit is available only to students expressly invited by the convenor of the Master of Politics and Public Policy program to undertake it. It will provide an opportunity to those students with demonstrated skills and capacity to conduct a major piece of research into some aspect of public policy, and write a minor thesis of 15,000–20,000 words. Guidelines for thesis preparation and presentation are the same as those for MRes or Honours theses.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/enrolmentguide/academicdates/

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge and scholarly understanding about public policy and politics, particularly in your chosen area of policy
2. Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area • Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area • Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources
3. Develop the ability to identify research problems or gaps in extant knowledge • Identify the appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge • Self-locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-related evidence from a range of sources

4. Synthesise your research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument to be presented in referenced, grammatically-correct writing appropriate to an academic dissertation

General Assessment Information

Supervision
Students accepted for POL801 will be assigned a supervisor by the Convenor. If you have informally canvassed a topic with a member of staff and wish to have him/her as a supervisor, ensure that you discuss this with the Convenor. However, a student’s first choice of supervisor cannot be guaranteed. Please note that your supervisor will not be the examiner for the dissertation.

You should have an idea of a topic before you enrol and ensure that it is one that is (a) focused on public policy; and (b) can be adequately supervised within the department. Additional information/guidance on choosing and developing a topic is provided below.

The supervisor’s role is to guide you in the choice of topic and development of the dissertation, not to read every draft of every chapter. Just as members of the teaching staff do not read draft essays, your supervisor will not necessarily read a whole final draft of a dissertation. Supervisors should, however, advise on whether the structure of the dissertation is more or less suitable and that it follows a coherent line of discussion.

You should keep in touch with your supervisor throughout the semester, let him or her know how the dissertation is developing, and ask for guidance when you need it. Don’t expect the supervisor to contact you, it is up to you to contact the supervisor.

Submission of Dissertation
Two copies of the dissertation should be submitted in the following form:

• Provide two bound copies (this can be soft-bound, eg in a simple plastic spine with plastic cover, or hardbound). Note that these copies are not returned so if you want to have a copy to keep, you should print off a third.

• ensure there is a title page, table of contents and a separate bibliography at the end

• include a plagiarism declaration (using the words on the Faculty of Arts assignment cover sheets)
The copies of your dissertation must be submitted to the MPP Administrator, Kelli-Lee Drake, in the Politics Office. Do not submit copies to your supervisor or to the Arts Faculty office on the ground floor.

Examination of Dissertation
Two examiners will be appointed by the Department, usually one examiner from within the Department and one external examiner. The supervisor is not an examiner.

Examiners will evaluate the dissertation with attention to the grading scale used for Masters of Research or Honours theses.

Assessment Tasks

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Week 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>First Monday of exam period</td>
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Research proposal

Due: **Week 2**
Weighting: 0%

Your proposal should contain:

• a working title
• an abstract
• a preliminary literature review
• the proposed methodology
• a preliminary bibliography
• a work plan
This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area
• Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area
• Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources
• Develop the ability to identify research problems or gaps in extant knowledge
• Identify the appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge
• Self-locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-related evidence from a range of sources

Literature review

Due: **Week 5**  
Weighting: 0%

A literature review is a demonstration of your reading, comprehension and analytical skills. The literature review will enable you to more narrowly define your topic and to identify some key research questions.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• Develop a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge and scholarly understanding about public policy and politics, particularly in your chosen area of policy
• Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area
• Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area
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• Synthesise your research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument to be presented in referenced, grammatically-correct writing appropriate to an academic dissertation

Dissertation

Due: **First Monday of exam period**  
Weighting: 100%
POL 801 requires students to undertake an advanced research project of between 15,000 and 20,000 words. The dissertation represents a piece of independent research produced over an extended period, demonstrating elements of originality in the selection of the topic, the use of sources and the development and presentation of analysis and argument.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• Develop a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge and scholarly understanding about public policy and politics, particularly in your chosen area of policy
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• Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area
• Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources
• Synthesise your research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument to be presented in referenced, grammatically-correct writing appropriate to an academic dissertation

**Delivery and Resources**

There are no formal classes for this unit. Students will be assigned a supervisor, and it is up to the student to maintain regular contact with the supervisor as needed through the course of the semester.

There are no set readings for this unit.

**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


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/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Results**

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**Learning Skills**

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://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 Enquiry Service**

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

**Equity 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.

**IT Help**

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/). When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources 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

- Develop a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge and scholarly understanding about public policy and politics, particularly in your chosen area of policy
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area
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Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

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

- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area
- Understand and explain theories of public policy which are
relevant to your chosen policy area • Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources • Synthesise your research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument to be presented in referenced, grammatically-correct writing appropriate to an academic dissertation

**Assessment tasks**

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

**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**

- Develop a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge and scholarly understanding about public policy and politics, particularly in your chosen area of policy
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area • Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area • Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources
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**Assessment tasks**

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation
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**

- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area
- Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources
- Develop the ability to identify research problems or gaps in extant knowledge
- Identify the appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge
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- Synthesise your research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument to be presented in referenced, grammatically-correct writing appropriate to an academic dissertation

**Assessment tasks**

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

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**

- Develop the ability to identify research problems or gaps in extant knowledge
- Identify the appropriate strategies to conduct research that will solve these research problems or generate new knowledge
- Self-locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-related evidence from a range of sources
• Synthesise your research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument to be presented in referenced, grammatically-correct writing appropriate to an academic dissertation

Assessment tasks

• Research proposal
• Literature review
• Dissertation