POIX207

Australian Public Policy

SP4 OUA 2016

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

Contents

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Course Convenor and Lecturer
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Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
Explore policy studies and analysis by examining the process of policy making within governmental and other organisations. Questions are raised about the state in contemporary society and the distribution of power in the stages of policy development, implementation and evaluation. The unit draws on analytical literature from a variety of sources, but its empirical content is supported mainly by Australian examples. Knowledge of the institutions of Australian government is important for the unit. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/

Learning Outcomes

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

Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain

Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the

development of policy

Demonstrate written communication skills

Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

General Assessment Information

Prerequisites: 12cp or (3cp in HIST or MHIS or POL units)

Please note that this unit was previously coded PLT370 and PLTX270. If you have successfully completed PLT370 or PLTX270, you should not enrol in POIX207.

Knowledge of the institutions of Australian government is important for the unit.

Successful Completion of the Course

All assessment tasks must be attempted and an overall minimum pass mark of 50% must be achieved in order to successfully complete this course.

Assignment submission

This unit uses a combination of submission methods. Please check the individual assignment guidelines in the Assessments and Guides section of the course to find out which method that particular assignment uses.

Turnitin Submission Procedure

iLearn Assignment Upload Procedure

Required and Recommended Weekly Readings

These are listed in the unit. All required and most recommended readings can be found under the unit code in Unit Readings in the Macquarie Library or are available via weblinks in the unit.

There is one **required textbook** for this unit:

Althaus, Catherine, Bridgman, Peter and Davis, Glyn 2007, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 4th edition, Crows Nest, Allen and Unwin.

OR

Althaus, Catherine, Bridgman, Peter and Davis, Glyn 2012, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 5th edition, Crows Nest, Allen and Unwin.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Reflective Participation	25%	Weekly/Week 10

Name	Weighting	Due
Short Essay	20%	Friday Week 6
Research Essay	30%	Friday Week 11
Examination	25%	5pm Friday Week 13

Reflective Participation

Due: **Weekly/Week 10**
Weighting: **25%**

1. Weekly Discussion participation (10% discussion; 10% blog exercise):

Each week you will be prompted to contribute to a discussion relating to the week's topic and readings using a number of questions. This assessment task is designed to test your understanding of the issues involved and to encourage you to think about their implications for policy-making.

- You must contribute to at least **THREE** of the discussions to pass the course. *You cannot pass the course unless you do this, even if you have achieved high marks in other components*.

- You need to contribute to **EIGHT** weekly discussions to pass this the discussion component of this Assessment. Contributing once to each of 8 weeks will achieve 5%; a further 5% can be earned for quality of engagement.

Blog: In **Weeks 4, 7 and 9** there are also brief pre-discussion blog research exercises to facilitate discussion. Doing these exercises and incorporating them into the week's discussion will contribute an additional 10% to the final Assessment 1 mark.

NOTE: if there is some *very good reason* why you cannot do this assessment task in the way that is set up, please contact the tutor as soon as the course starts, or as soon as you realize there is a difficulty so that something can be arranged to assist you. Very good reasons include: disability; unreliable, unstable or non-autonomous access to the internet. These reasons must be documented.

2. Written Report (5%)

A 200 word report on **one** weekly discussion between Weeks 2 and 10. This is an analytical exercise. The report should *not* be a summary of the readings or lecture but an analysis of the full discussion that took place in the week. An attempt should be made to draw some inferences from what is discussed/avoided regarding the material being covered in the week. The report can be submitted at any time but must be submitted via Turnitin **no later than Sunday of Week 10**.

NOTE: All three components must be attempted.

See Assessments and Guides for further information on this assessment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills

Short Essay

Due: **Friday Week 6**
Weighting: **20%**

All students are required to submit a short essay (1,100 words) in response to questions to be made available in Week **2**.

Essays must be fully referenced using Harvard (Author Year) in-text style (no footnote referencing). A Bibliography is required. See Assessments and Guides for further information.

Submission is through Turnitin.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Research Essay

Due: **Friday Week 11**
Weighting: **30%**

A fully referenced formal academic research **essay** of 2100 words in response to a question relating to a central theme of the unit. You are expected to demonstrate that you understand and can explain and use the relevant theoretical tools and concepts provided by the course.

Questions will be posted to the course in Week **4.**

Essays must be fully referenced using the Harvard (Author Year) in-text style. A Bibliography is required. See Assessments and Guides for further information.

Submission is through Turnitin.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the

development of policy

- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Examination

Due: **5pm Friday Week 13**
Weighting: **25%**

A non-invigilated take-home exam requiring reflection on the course and the tools and concepts it has provided.

The examination questions will be released at 9am Monday of Week 13. You must submit your exam by **5pm** Friday of Week 13.

Submission in through Turnitin.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills

Delivery and Resources

Unit webpage and technology used and required

Online units can be accessed at: http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

Please contact teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Unit Schedule

Weekly schedule

Week 1	**Introduction**
	This is an introductory week that aims to orient you to the approach the Unit takes to the study of public policy. The emphasis is on the processes of policymaking in contemporary Australia rather than a description or analysis of particular policy areas in a technical way. Politics is at the heart of our subject, but understanding political processes can show what is common to all policy areas and what a policy actor must know in pursuing 'technical' objectives.

Week 2	**The Roles of Government**
	Are there services that should only be delivered by government? Is there a satisfactory demarcation line between the public and private delivery of services? Can accountability be adequately retained with outsourced delivery of services? What considerations might apply in choosing between public and private service delivery? Why has privatisation happened almost everywhere? Are there services that should only be delivered by government? Is there a satisfactory demarcation line between the public and private delivery of services? Can accountability be adequately retained with outsourced delivery of services? What considerations might apply in choosing between public and private service delivery? Why has privatisation happened almost everywhere? The advance of privatisation throughout the world is often presented as a result of the quest for "efficiency" in government, and that is no doubt part of the story (whether or not specific cases of privatisation lead to efficient outcomes). But privatisation can also be seen as just the most recent and leading case of ongoing political struggles around the constitution and activities of "the state". In the lecture and exercises this week we consider the nature of "the state", and see it from a variety of theoretical perspectives. The aim is to give a broad context to our study of public policy, casting doubt on the idea that there is "one best way" to do things in policy-making. This does not mean that everything is equal or the same: policy can be done "better", but our theoretical framework is what will give meaning to such a term.
Week 3	**The Abbott Government – a progress report using the "Policy Cycle"**
	We look at the policy-making activities of the Abbott Government in the light of the policy cycle model presented by Althaus, Bridgman and Davis. Is it a descriptive or a normative model - or a satisfactory blending of both? How useful is it to the study of public policy? We look at some of the criticisms of the model and consider whether there might be more useful ways of analysing and explaining or modelling public policy processes.
Week 4	**Agendas and Decisions - Policy Development, Issue Identification, Interest Groups/Lobbying/Think Tanks**
	What are pressure groups? interest groups? think tanks? lobbyists? Are think tanks different to lobbyists? Might some interest groups be considered to be altruistic?
Week 5	**The Political Executive and Parliament**
	Who administers policy for the government? In recent times there have been marked changes to the management of the public service that have abolished the old machinery (such as the Public Service Boards) that guaranteed certain terms and conditions of public sector employment. Contract employment, performance indicators and powers of termination in political hands now mark the public service. Has the capacity of the public service to serve elected ministers of all persuasions been affected? How is accountability to be understood now? Have the Australian public service(s) become "politicized"?
Week 6	**Bureaucracy - The Public Service**
	Has 'reform' of the Australian public service led to the politicisation of the senior ranks of the bureaucracy? If so, is this a necessarily undesirable development? How are the bureaucracy held accountable? Are the mechanisms of accountability effective? What changes might improve accountability without impeding the development of good policy?
Week 7	**Implementation**
	This week we are looking at the stage of the policy cycle concerned with implementation. This has often been neglected in favour of other more glamorous stages of the policy cycle, but practitioners and scholars are increasingly aware of the importance of planning and managing effective implementation. This week we will consider the necessary features of successful implementation, and will explore the ways in which politics can interfere. We will focus on the example of the ceiling insulation program which was poorly implemented by the Rudd government, and is now the subject of a Royal Commission inquiry instigated by the Abbott government.
Week 8	**Evaluation; Policy Instruments**
	What types of evaluation are there and what tools are available to implement policy? Policy Evaluation: we look at a short history of evaluation - its technical and political approaches. Is policymaking an art or a science? Of course the practice of policymaking has elements of each, as a study of evaluation shows. On the one hand, evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of specific policies can draw on scientific methods of research, including quantitative methods, and much of the work of individual analysts and the private companies considered in an earlier week proceeds in this way. On the other, many sceptics claim that political values determine the evaluation of policy and even that scientific approaches are merely a cloak for hidden biases and personal preferences. In this week we attempt to see beyond these simple dichotomies, suggesting that policy evaluation is a meaningful activity if the shifting weight of "science" and "value" is specified in specific contexts.

Week 9	**Case Study: Indigenous Policy-making** This week we are looking at a key policy problem in the area of Indigenous school education, school attendance. This is a priority area for the Abbott government, and has also received considerable attention in recent years under the Council of Australian Government's Closing the Gap policy agenda. We will consider this issue in terms of competing problem definitions, and the different types of evidence which have been used in formulating policies at the Commonwealth and Northern Territory levels of government. We will look at the challenges of implementation and evaluation in a contested policy environment where policies are arguably working at cross purposes.
Week 10	**Case Study: Domestic Environmental Policy; Uranium Policy** What is so special about environmental policy-making? In what ways does environmental policy-making conform to the usual patterns and exhibit the usual problems inherent in public policy? The history of environmental policy making extends over many years, but the language of environmentalism, in particular, is relatively recent and new issues have emerged to challenge the assumptions of established actors in the policy system.
Week 11	**Participation - Consultation; CIR; Open Government** What are the ways in which citizens can participate in their government? Can citizens effectively participate in the development and implementation of public policy? We look at some instances where citizen participation has brought about some undesirable consequences and ask whether greater citizen participation in public policy decision-making is a desirable development.
Week 12	**Successful and unsuccessful policy-making** How can determined individuals make a difference in policy formulation? Are there limits to the activities of policy entrepreneurs? Can useful rules be formulated as a guide to future policy entrepreneurs?
Week 13	**Review** We review the content of the unit in this final week and pose a set of questions that underpin the final assessment exercise.

Learning and Teaching Activities

Reflective Participation

Engagement in discussion, targeted research and reflection on the learning aspects of the forums

Short Essay

A formal response to questions on course material

Research Essay

An extended essay discussing the findings of a research effort in response to a set question

Examination

The opportunity to reflect on and test understanding of course concepts, theory and analytical tools in relation to public policy

Policies and Procedures

Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extension Request

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable

2. were beyond your control

3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work

4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements

5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit Ask MQ and use your OneID to log in

2. Fill in your relevant details

3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents

4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the

future as part of the assessment process

Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures
Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to the census date (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to apply for Special Circumstances. If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can apply online.

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to apply directly to Macquarie University.

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.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.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/

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.

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://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

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Short Essay
- Research Essay
- Examination

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Short Essay
- Examination

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the

linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Examination

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Short Essay
- Research Essay
- Examination

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the

linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Short Essay
- Research Essay
- Examination

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Short Essay
- Research Essay
- Examination

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Short Essay
- Research Essay
- Examination

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate written communication skills

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Research Essay

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate written communication skills

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Research Essay