



# POL 822

## Evidence and Expertise in Policy

S2 Evening 2017

*Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Francesco Stolfi <a href="mailto:francesco.stolfi@mq.edu.au">francesco.stolfi@mq.edu.au</a>
Credit points 4
Prerequisites Admission to MPPP or GradDipPP or GradCertPP or MSc in Environmental Health
Corequisites
Co-badged status
Unit description This unit examines the use of and reliance upon research and expert opinion in policy making, in the context of the pressure for 'evidence-based' policy and contestability of advice. It explores issues around reliability and validity of research and develops skills in assessing quality and relevance of evidence related to specific policy problems. The unit considers theoretical debates around participation, engagement and knowledge politics with respect to policy making, and it critically examines a range of contemporary case studies demonstrating the use of evidence in policy formulation and evaluation.

## 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:

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process
- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the

empirical cases covered in the readings

## General Assessment Information

**Assignment Submission** All written assignments must be submitted using the “Turnitin Assignments” facility on the iLearn website. This facility includes software which scans the uploaded assignments for plagiarism. Follow the instructions on the screen carefully. Your assignment should be uploaded before midnight on the due date. **In all cases**, you should ensure that you keep a copy of the assignment.

**Return of marked work** Marked assignments will be returned via the same facility on iLearn. When marks are released, you will need to go back in to the assignment submission box, and open your uploaded assignment. When you click on the “GradeMark” button, you will be able to see the marker’s comments on your work. You can save or print the essay with the comments.

**Extensions** Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and will require documentary evidence such as a medical certificate to support the request for an extension. You should contact the convenor as early as possible if you think you may need an extension. While we do understand that most students are engaged in paid employment, extensions cannot be granted on this basis alone.

### Penalties for late submission

Assignments which are submitted after the due date, without having an extension granted by the convenor, will be penalised, at a rate of 3% of the mark for each week day after the due date. Any paper submitted more than 3 weeks after the due date will not be marked, and the student will be failed for the assignment.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#"><u>Quizzes on the readings</u></a>	30%	No	Weeks 33, 35, 37, 40, 42, 44
<a href="#"><u>Research design</u></a>	20%	No	Week 45
<a href="#"><u>Final research paper</u></a>	40%	No	Week 47
<a href="#"><u>Attendance and Participation</u></a>	10%	No	Weekly

### Quizzes on the readings

Due: **Weeks 33, 35, 37, 40, 42, 44**

Weighting: **30%**

A fortnightly quiz will be held on the readings. 6 quizzes worth 5% each. More information about the quizzes will be provided at the lecture in Week 1.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcome:

Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

## Research design

Due: **Week 45**

Weighting: **20%**

Essay detailing the research design for the final paper (1000 words). The essay must be fully references according to professional standards.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcome:

Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making

## Final research paper

Due: **Week 47**

Weighting: **40%**

Original research paper. The paper must be comparative, i.e. it must be based on the comparison of at least two elements (e.g. countries, regions, state, times/periods, policies etc.).

Length: 4000

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making

Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem

Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument

Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process

Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy

problem

- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process

## Attendance and Participation

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

Attendance and participation in weekly seminars will be assessed based on participation in class and small group discussions and activities.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings.

Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

## Delivery and Resources

**Delivery:** For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

**Internal students** are expected to attend the following classes each week: Lecture: Tuesday 6-7pm Seminar: Tuesday 7-9pm

**External students:** The lecture is digitally recorded and can be downloaded from the ILearn website shortly after it is delivered. You will also find lecture slides on the website. External students are also required to attend two compulsory on-campus sessions of four hours each over the semester.

External students are encouraged to attend weekly lectures and seminar classes whenever they can.

**Resources:** This unit has a unit webpage which is accessible only to currently enrolled students. Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>

There is no text book for this unit. All required readings will be accessible electronically via the

Macquarie University Library iShare system. Links will be posted on the iLearn site.

## 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.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Assessment Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.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](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html)

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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/>

## 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 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](http://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/](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 - 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

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process
- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

#### Assessment tasks

- Research design
- Final research paper
- Attendance and Participation

## 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

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process
- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

### Assessment tasks

- Quizzes on the readings
- Research design
- Final research paper
- Attendance and Participation

## 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

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved



around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process

- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

## **Assessment tasks**

- Research design
- Final research paper
- Attendance and Participation

## **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**

- Apply comparative methodology to an original piece of research on policy making
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process
- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

## **Assessment tasks**

- Research design
- Final research paper
- Attendance and Participation

## **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 around the role of institutions, interests and ideas in the policy process
- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

## Assessment tasks

- Final research paper
- Attendance and Participation

## 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 outcome

- Show competent knowledge of methodological and theoretical literature as well as of the empirical cases covered in the readings

## Assessment task

- Attendance and Participation