



SOCX865

Political Economy for Social Policy and Research

S2 OUA 2017

Dept of Sociology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit examines the interaction of economic and social forces relevant to policy and social research. It introduces students to economic concepts and forms of analysis from a range of different theoretical perspectives. It also introduces students to economic frameworks that are relevant to social policy analysis, such as macro economic policies to boost employment and the use of price competition to promote efficiency. There is no assumption of prior economic study, and the unit takes a broad and critical approach to economic analysis as it might be used in social research. Finally, the unit examines a number of contemporary debates, such as sustainability, work, gender discrimination and consumerism. 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:

Understand and interpret concepts from political economy

Understand the historical development of different theoretical traditions in political economy

Critically apply concepts from political economy to understanding contemporary policy issues

Explain in verbal and written forms the economic implications of policies clearly to an educated, non-expert audience

Identify and integrate policy and theoretical information for a specific topic

Read critically across social scientific disciplines

General Assessment Information

You have a choice of either the Issue Analysis OR Budget Analysis. You are not required to do both.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Short Exercise</u>	20%	No	24th August
<u>Budget Analysis</u>	30%	No	13th October
<u>Policy Analysis</u>	40%	No	10th November
<u>Discussion Board Participation</u>	10%	No	Ongoing

Short Exercise

Due: **24th August**

Weighting: **20%**

Word length: 750-1,000 words

This exercise is designed to familiarise you with some of the key economic concepts in the course. The task is to take one of the key concepts from the beginning of the course and relate it to the interests of social policy and research. You will need to explain what the concept is and how the reading develops it. You then need to link this concept to a current policy or social research concern. You are not expected to go into depth. Rather the exercise is designed to demonstrate your understanding and ability to apply concepts. Briefly explaining the key aspects of the concept and one potential implication is all that is required. The key concepts and readings are available in iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and interpret concepts from political economy
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Budget Analysis

Due: **13th October**

Weighting: **30%**

Word limit: 1,200

For this exercise you will be required to do an analysis of the Commonwealth Budget. You should look to the readings in Weeks 5 and 8 in particular to assist you.

A detailed brief template is included in the resources under the Assessment tab in iLearn.

The exercise is in two parts. The first involves a short brief (400 words) that is designed to give the reader a quick overview of the main changes in the budget and a quick assessment of likely impacts. This section would cover the material in the 'Key Points', 'Summary', and 'Key Changes' sections of the template. You can use different headings and dot points if you think it will convey the information more clearly, but this part should be kept to 1 A4 page. It can also reference material in the longer second section (see below). The analysis should be largely factual and objective in tone, similar to a report.

The second section (800 words) reflects the material under the 'Discussion' heading in the template, and should provide more detail on the main changes. As a general guide you should be looking to cover 4-6 areas in the budget (a change being a particular spending initiative, change in tax rates or change in rules governing a program). Then give a brief discussion of what the likely effects of the changes are in terms of both over fiscal policy (is it net expansionary or contractionary), and in terms of the distribution of resources (who wins and who loses). It should end with an overall assessment on the budget. This may involve drawing conclusions about overall effects and impacts.

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Policy Analysis

Due: **10th November**

Weighting: **40%**

Word length: 2,500

In this assignment you will explore the application of market economics to social and environmental policy making. You will need to select a case study where policy has changed (or

is proposed to change) to provide a greater role for market forces in the production or allocation of resources. This should ideally be related to the topic of your last assignment.

Your analysis will need to outline the policy changes and the rationale for the change. You should then explore the effects (or predicted effects) of the policy change and address arguments both in favour and against the policy change. You should conclude by suggesting ways forward, has the policy been effective and what might make it more effective?

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Discussion Board Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Your participation in the online discussion boards over the study period will contribute to the mark you receive for this course.

This part of the assessment requires you to make **three substantial contributions** to the course discussions that respond to any of the discussion questions outlined for the week of **400 words**.

In week one the convener will assign you a week. In this week you will need to make an initial post, drawing on the readings and lecture materials to answer at least one of the questions for the week. You will need to do this **during the week in question**.

In addition, you will need to make at least **two** other contributions in response to other people's posts in other weeks. You can make as many contributions as you like, but at the end of the semester the best **two responses and your original contribution for your week** will be used to give you your assessment mark.

Please note that our preference is for **quality** over quantity. And, we will take into consideration exceptional discussion board participation over the study period.

It is also important that everyone contributes in a way that promotes reasoned discussion and includes all. If you find it easy to contribute, be careful not to dominate debate. If you find it difficult, make an effort to get involved, or discuss the issue with your tutor so they can help you participate fully. Debating and discussing ideas is an important part of academic life and

sociological inquiry.

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Delivery and Resources

This year we are integrating OUA units more fully with our on campus program. This means that lecture content will be uploaded progressively through the semester as lectures are given on campus, rather than pre-uploaded at the beginning of the unit. We expect you to listen to the lecture content.

All reading material for the course is available through e-reserve and the iLearn unit.

All written assignments for this unit are to be submitted through iLearn and Turnitin. Feedback and results will also be given through iLearn. There is no hard copy marking in this unit.

You may also want to consult Stilwell (2012), *Political Economy: The contest of economic ideas*, 3rd ed. Oxford. Copies are available from the Co-op Bookshop. This book covers much of the economic content of the course in an accessible way.

Some of the more sociological content is also covered in Spies-Butcher, Paton & Cahill (2012), *Market Society: History, theory, practice*, Cambridge, also available from the Co-op Bookshop.

Unit Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturer
1	31st July	Introduction	BSB
2	7th August	Competition and Trade	BSB
3	14th August	Embeddedness and Market Society	BSB
4	21st August	Marx, Commodification and Exploitation	BSB
5	28th August	Keynes and the Role of the State	BSB
6	4th September	Inequality	AS

7	11th September	Fiscal Limits of Welfare/ PUBLIC HOLIDAY	
8	2nd October	Fiscal Limits of Welfare/ PUBLIC HOLIDAY	BSB/TBC
9	9th October	Sustainability	BSB
10	16th October	Quasi-markets and Marketisation	BSB
11	23rd October	Financial Crisis	BSB
12	30th October	Case Study	BSB
13	6th November	Conclusion	BSB

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

Assessment Policy 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

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): 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/

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.

Sociology Policies

Referencing guide http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments_of_sociology/current_students/undergraduate/useful_links/sociology_reference_guide/

Late Submission of Work

To help students submit their work on time, staff will endeavour to hand out essay and assignment questions at least three weeks in advance of the due date.

All assignments which are officially received after the due date, and where no extension has been granted by the course convenor or tutor, will incur a deduction of 5% for the first day, and 1% for each subsequent day including the actual day on which the work is received. Weekends and public holidays are included.

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

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 apply concepts from political economy to understanding contemporary policy issues
- Read critically across social scientific disciplines

Assessment tasks

- Budget Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Discussion Board 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

- Understand and interpret concepts from political economy
- Understand the historical development of different theoretical traditions in political economy
- Identify and integrate policy and theoretical information for a specific topic

Assessment tasks

- Short Exercise
- Budget Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Discussion Board 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

- Understand and interpret concepts from political economy
- Understand the historical development of different theoretical traditions in political economy
- Critically apply concepts from political economy to understanding contemporary policy issues
- Identify and integrate policy and theoretical information for a specific topic
- Read critically across social scientific disciplines

Assessment tasks

- Short Exercise
- Budget Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Discussion Board 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

- Understand the historical development of different theoretical traditions in political

economy

- Critically apply concepts from political economy to understanding contemporary policy issues
- Identify and integrate policy and theoretical information for a specific topic

Assessment tasks

- Short Exercise
- Budget Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Discussion Board 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

- Explain in verbal and written forms the economic implications of policies clearly to an educated, non-expert audience
- Identify and integrate policy and theoretical information for a specific topic
- Read critically across social scientific disciplines

Assessment tasks

- Short Exercise
- Budget Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Discussion Board 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 outcomes

- Critically apply concepts from political economy to understanding contemporary policy issues
- Explain in verbal and written forms the economic implications of policies clearly to an educated, non-expert audience
- Read critically across social scientific disciplines

Assessment tasks

- Short Exercise
- Budget Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Discussion Board Participation

Changes from Previous Offering

The most significant change is a complete integration of the OUA and on campus versions of the unit. This has changed the timing of the course and when lecture material becomes available. It has also meant a degree of reorganising material across different weeks.

In addition, a number of readings have been updated to reflect advances in various debates.