SOCX810

Developing Social Policy

S2 OUA 2017

Dept of Sociology

Contents

Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit convenor
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By appointment

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Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status
SOCI 704 Developing Social Policy

Unit description
Given the rapid expansion of social policy in recent decades, and its expected growth with an ageing population, this unit introduces students to analysing social policy. It aims to bring practical and theoretical knowledge about policy formation and development together. The unit will cover general frameworks for considering social policy and the welfare state and will foster an understanding of the debates, interests and problems that will shape the future of welfare states and social policy-making. The unit will analyse wider themes through the prism of concrete issues that have been thrown up for policy makers in contemporary Australia. 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:

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

General Assessment Information

Submission and return of assessments

Written assessments need to be submitted online using the Turnitin link on the SOC810 iLearn page. Assignments will be marked using Grademark. Where possible, feedback and results will be made available online within 3 weeks of the assessment being submitted (excluding assignments submitted before the due date) via Turnitin.

Late submissions - penalties and disruption to studies

Assessment tasks worth 10% or less of the overall grade for the unit. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the deadline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the task, except for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved. No extensions will be granted.

Assessment tasks worth more than 10% of the overall grade for the unit. Students who submit late work without an extension will receive a penalty (5 per cent for the first day or weekend, 1 per cent for each day thereafter). This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Disruption to Studies is made and approved. No extensions will be granted.

Assessment Grades

GRADE	RANGE	STATUS	DESCRIPTION
HD	85-100	Pass	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality, insight or creativity in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the program.

D	75-84	Pass	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality or creativity in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the program and the audience.
CR	65-74	Pass	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the program.
P	50-64	Pass	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the program; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the program. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes.
F	0-49	Fail	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the program.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Policy Brief 1	20%	No	Saturday of Week 6
Policy Brief 2	20%	No	Saturday of Week 9
Policy Analysis Report	50%	No	11th November
Online Engagement	10%	No	Ongoing

Policy Brief 1

Due: **Saturday of Week 6**
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. There are many types of brief - but, we ask you to provide a brief intended for an internal audience (that is, for the Minister and senior staff within the department). This type of brief would generally not be published. 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 ONE article/report, provide a neutral summary, and to let your Minister know if there is any action needed.The article selected should be the primary focus of your brief. In practice, an action could be as simple as advising the Minister to 'note' the report, but we encourage you to go further here. It might involve some government action, such as putting together an advisory committee on the issue, organising meetings with stakeholders and/or considering whether a discussion paper should be commissioned to canvass funding or policy changes. But, please make sure that your recommendations are appropriate for a brief (i.e. it would be inappropriate to suggest policy change). 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).

While the policy brief is primarily concerned with one article on one issue, you need to read more widely to familiarise yourself with existing policies, the nature of reforms, current debates and the positions of key stakeholders. This should involve consideration of relevant government policy.

N.B. You should also select a different policy issue for the two briefs (and policy analysis task)! And, please follow the format outlined in the 'What is a policy brief?' document on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- critically assess, use and synthesise information
- 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

Policy Brief 2

Due: **Saturday of Week 9**
Weighting: **20%**

The second policy brief should be written for an NGO. You will need to identify an issue and find ONE 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 by a service provider or an advocacy body). You need to identify a real

organization and do some research on it. 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, organising a standing committee on 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.

N.B. For the second brief, you should follow the format set out in the 'What is a policy brief?' link (as you did for the first brief). You should also select a different policy issue than the one selected for the first policy brief.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Due: **11th November**
Weighting: **50%**

The 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;

* age pension

* childcare policies

* 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, a particular theoretical orientation and/or 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.

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- contextualise Australian social policy by reflecting on international developments

Online Engagement

Due: **Ongoing**
Weighting: **10%**

The weekly online discussions are compulsory. To meet the requirements of this course, you are required to participate in at least 80 per cent of workshops. For participation to count, you will need to do this before the Monday of the next week. We will look for evidence that you have done the readings, engaged with social policy theories and debates as well as your ability to discuss social policy topics respectfully with other students (by initiating and responding to online posts). As an incentive, 10 percent of your final mark will be awarded for your participation.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- 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
- challenge your preconceptions about welfare and other areas by engaging in policy debates
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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 Monday evenings from 6pm during semester.

Required and recommended resources

The required textbook for SOC810 is: McClelland, A. and P. Smyth (eds.) (2014) *Social Policy in Australia: Understanding for Action*, 3rd Edition, Cambridge University Press: Melbourne.

Other required readings will be available via the 'unit reading' tab on the Library webpage, online thru the Library webpage or on the world wide web. Most are already available.

Before contacting teaching staff, make sure that you try searching for the course code 'SOC810', 'SOCI 704' and the author's surname of the relevant reading in Unit Readings (search for each separately) on the library website.

Other 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.

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...

Email

Make sure that you regularly check your student email for correspondence with teaching staff

and course announcements.

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.

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). 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.

Unit Schedule

Wk	Seminar Topics	Date
1	Introduction to *Developing Social Policy*	1 Aug
2	Poverty and Inequality: Key social policy concepts	8 Aug
3	The Great Risk Shift? Social citizenship, social risks and new social policies	15 Aug
4	Developing Social Policy: Welfare, markets and the state	22 Aug
5	Developing Social Policy II: From policy cycles to 'muddling through'	29 Aug
6	Analysing Social Policy: Frameworks for understanding	5 Sep

7	An Australian Story: The wage-earners model and beyond	12 Sep
	Mid-semester study period	
8	The US Model vs. the Swedish *folkshemmet* (Public holiday - no on-campus session)	3 Oct
9	Reforming Income Support: Dependency, deservingness & surveillance	10 Oct
10	Closing the Gap? Recent developments in Indigenous social policy	17 Oct
11	Population Ageing, Retirement and Social Policy	24 Oct
12	Health Policy in Australia and Around the World	31 Oct
13	Course Conclusion	7 Nov

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.

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

Macquarie University provides a range of health and wellbeing services for students. For details, visit:

http://students.mq.edu.au/support/health_and_wellbeing/

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 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

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
- Online 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
- Online Engagement

Changes from Previous Offering

The required and recommended texts, lecture contents, and assessment structures have changed since the last offering of this unit.