



POL 801

Public Policy Dissertation

FY1 External 2018

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Francesco Stolfi

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Credit points

8

Prerequisites

(16cp at 800 level including POL820 and POL822) and permission by special approval

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

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

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

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

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

generate new knowledge • Self-locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-related evidence from a range of sources

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

General Assessment Information

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.

Supervision

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

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

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

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

Submission of Dissertation

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

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

have a copy to keep, you should print off a third.

- ensure there is a title page, table of contents and a separate bibliography at the end
- include a plagiarism declaration (using the words on the Faculty of Arts assignment cover sheets)
- number all pages
- do not exceed the word limit (which includes all notes and references).
- include a word count on the title page.
- set line spacing: space and a half, or double spacing

The copies of your dissertation must be submitted to the MPP Administrator, Kelli-Lee Drake, in the Politics Office. Do not submit copies to your supervisor or to the Arts Faculty office on the ground floor.

Examination of Dissertation

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

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

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Research proposal	0%	No	Week 2
Literature review	0%	No	Week 5
Dissertation	100%	No	First Monday of exam period

Research proposal

Due: **Week 2**

Weighting: **0%**

Your proposal should contain:

- a working title
- an abstract

- a preliminary literature review
- the proposed methodology
- a preliminary bibliography
- a work plan

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Literature review

Due: **Week 5**

Weighting: **0%**

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

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Dissertation

Due: **First Monday of exam period**

Weighting: **100%**

POL801 requires students to undertake an advanced research project of between 15,000 and 20,000 words. The dissertation represents a piece of independent research produced over an extended period, demonstrating elements of originality in the selection of the topic, the use of sources and the development and presentation of analysis and argument.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Delivery and Resources

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

There are no set readings for this unit.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)

- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge and scholarly understanding about public policy and politics, particularly in your chosen area of policy
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area • Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area • Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and

learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources

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

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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

Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in your chosen policy area
- Understand and explain theories of public policy which are relevant to your chosen policy area
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn to integrate or synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources
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Assessment tasks

- Research proposal
- Literature review
- Dissertation