SOC 223

Introduction to Social Policy

S2 External 2018

Dept of Sociology

Contents

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Associate Prof in Dept of Sociology | Convenor, lecturer and tutor
Shaun Wilson
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Contact via email
Australian Hearing Hub Building, Level 2 South
11am Wednesdays (after the lectures)

Lecturer
Emma Mitchell
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Tutorial staff - to be advised

Credit points
3

Prerequisites
12cp at 100 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
Few areas in sociology generate as many questions and as much debate as the role of social policy and the welfare state. Can we afford generous social policies or is the 'age of entitlement' over? What role should governments, families, the community and individuals play in providing welfare? Does tighter scrutiny of welfare benefits improve efficiency and independence or is it intrusive and unfair? And, how is social policy developed in a world of competing interests and power? This unit addresses these questions as it introduces students to the history, design and institutions of social policy. We look particularly at current Australian social policy and consider how policymakers deal with problems such an ageing population, precarious work and housing, the provision of care, and the targeting and financing of a welfare state. We also explore the role that power, ideas and institutions play in shaping policy debates. The unit is especially useful for students interested in policy practice and analysis, care and human services, social inequality, and political economy.

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:

Understand the conceptual problems in measuring and evaluating social and economic inequality

Understand the differences between poverty, inequality, injustice, and unfairness

Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.

Apply basic concepts of social policy to a range of contemporary welfare debates, dilemmas and problems

Understand the dynamics that shape different trajectories of national welfare states and their social policies

Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy

Understand the connections between work (labour markets), families and social security systems.

Gain basic understanding of key areas of Australian social policy: health & Medicare, housing, unemployment (welfare-to-work) programs, disability support, family payments, parental leave and childcare, superannuation and retirement.

General Assessment Information

There are two major assessment tasks in this course. Together they are designed to aid your learning, encourage you to engage with the course material and test your knowledge. We hope you find them enjoyable and interesting to complete.

The main assignment can be submitted via Turnitin.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Policy Brief	25%	No	7 October 2018
Exam	60%	No	Exam period (end of semester)
Classwork	15%	No	Across semester, week 13

Policy Brief

Due: **7 October 2018**

Weighting: **25%**

A 2,000 word Policy Brief on a topic in an area social policy reform. See the separate Tab 'Policy Brief for Externals' on the I-Learn website for this Unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy
- Gain basic understanding of key areas of Australian social policy: health & Medicare, housing, unemployment (welfare-to-work) programs, disability support, family payments, parental leave and childcare, superannuation and retirement.

Exam

Due: **Exam period (end of semester)**
Weighting: **60%**

An exam is the main assessment task for this unit. It will be held in the exam period that follows the end of semester.

You will have 2 hours plus reading time to complete:

-- 20 multiple questions (20 minutes in total)

-- 5 short answer questions (20 minutes each)

A detailed study guide plus practice papers are made available to help ensure stress-free preparation for this exam.

On successful completion you will be able to:
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Classwork

Due: **Across semester, week 13**
Weighting: **15%**

Your classwork participation is assessed out of 15.

Online contributions

10 marks will be determined by your contribution to the Social Policy Blog on the I-Learn page for this Unit.

Workbook

A workbook is available for this Unit and you need to submit your tutorial workbook contributions as part of this assessment. They are submitted in class in week 13, and will be marked out of 5. See details on the I-Learn page for this Unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the differences between poverty, inequality, injustice, and unfairness
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- Apply basic concepts of social policy to a range of contemporary welfare debates, dilemmas and problems
- Understand the dynamics that shape different trajectories of national welfare states and their social policies
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- Understand the connections between work (labour markets), families and social security systems.
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Delivery and Resources

Lectures will be on Mondays 8 am to 10 am. The classroom is: **E7B T2.**

Lectures will be recorded.

Tutorials start in week 2.

All teaching materials (articles, book chapters, etc) will be available on SOC 223 e-reserve.

There are two recommended (but not compulsory) texts, which Shaun will cover in week 1's lecture.

Unit Schedule

1 - Aug 1	Introduction to social policy	**No tutorial in week 1**	SW
2 - Aug 8	Social risks, social policy	Social risks over the life-course	SW
3 - Aug 15	Poverty, food security and homelessness	Why are people poor?	SW
4 - Aug 22	The dynamics of inequality	New Census data, inequality and social planning	SW
5 - Aug 29	Social class	Does class matter today?	SW
6 - Sep 5	Australia's welfare state	Young people and the politics of welfare	SW
7 - Sep 12	The Nordic model versus the USA	**No tutorial in week 7**	SW
	mid semester break	**17 September through to 28 September**	
8 - Oct 3	Classifying welfare states	How the Australian welfare state works	SW
9 - Oct 10	Precarious work and workfare	Is Newstart too low? (P)	SW
10 - Oct 17	Indigenous Australians and social policy	A look at the Closing the Gap scorecard (P)	Emma Mitchell
11 - Oct 24	Women, work & welfare	A look at the National Disability Insurance Scheme (P)	SW
12 - Oct 31	Health & Medicare	A look at the relationship between inequality and health (P)	SW
13 - Nov 7	Ageing and social policy/ unit wrap	Exam preparation plus release of study guide (P)	SW

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). 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). 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 (https://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

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

- Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy

Assessment task

- Classwork

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 outcome

- Gain basic understanding of key areas of Australian social policy: health & Medicare, housing, unemployment (welfare-to-work) programs, disability support, family payments, parental leave and childcare, superannuation and retirement.

Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief
- Classwork

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

- Understand the conceptual problems in measuring and evaluating social and economic inequality
- Understand the differences between poverty, inequality, injustice, and unfairness
- Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.
- Apply basic concepts of social policy to a range of contemporary welfare debates, dilemmas and problems
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Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief
- Exam
- Classwork

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

- Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.
- Apply basic concepts of social policy to a range of contemporary welfare debates, dilemmas and problems
- Understand the dynamics that shape different trajectories of national welfare states and their social policies
- Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy

Assessment tasks

- Exam
- Classwork

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 outcomes

- Understand the conceptual problems in measuring and evaluating social and economic inequality
- Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.
- Apply basic concepts of social policy to a range of contemporary welfare debates, dilemmas and problems
- Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy
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Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief
- Classwork

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 outcome

- Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.

Assessment tasks

- Policy Brief
- Exam
- Classwork

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

- Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.
- Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy
- Gain basic understanding of key areas of Australian social policy: health & Medicare, housing, unemployment (welfare-to-work) programs, disability support, family payments, parental leave and childcare, superannuation and retirement.

Assessment task

- Classwork

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

- Understand why societies tolerate certain levels and types of inequality, poverty and injustice.
- Assess and analyse future problems confronting welfare states and the design of social policy
- Gain basic understanding of key areas of Australian social policy: health & Medicare, housing, unemployment (welfare-to-work) programs, disability support, family payments, parental leave and childcare, superannuation and retirement.

Assessment task

- Classwork

Changes from Previous Offering

A closer focus on how social policy works across different levels of government in Australia.