



PICT705

Understanding Strategic Thinking

S1 External 2018

Department of Security Studies and Criminology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Tom Waldman

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit addresses the challenges of formulating, assessing and engaging with strategy in historical and contemporary geopolitical contexts. It exposes students to classical and formal approaches to strategic thought, and teaches students how to write policy briefs where they will engage with strategic challenges in relation to real-world policy contexts. Content will include the fundamentals of strategy and the challenges of strategy formulation and assessment given uncertainty and the logic of military operations, the logics of bargaining in different strategic contexts, diplomacy, signalling and strategic narratives, making strategy in conventional and unconventional scenarios given uncertainty about power, credibility and conflict dynamics, the implications of domestic

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:

Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.

Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.

Apply disciplinary knowledge to analyse and critically evaluate real-world historical and contemporary strategic decisions, cases and issues.

Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Critical Topic Review	25%	No	Week 6
Policy Memo	25%	No	Week 8
Research Essay	50%	No	Week 12

Critical Topic Review

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **25%**

This mid-term paper will take the form of a short 1,000 word essay and will primarily be based on the teaching materials provided for the relevant week, in-class and online discussions, and the student's independent research.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading scholars, texts and paradigms.
- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
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- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.

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Policy Memo

Due: **Week 8**

Weighting: **25%**

The policy memo is a 1,000 word written brief addressed to a high-level policy-maker who is considering the use of force in a particular situation to advance the government's interests. The memo will identify and analyze the strategic factors that should inform the policy-maker's decision, and recommend a particular course of action.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading scholars, texts and paradigms.
- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
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- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
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- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

Research Essay

Due: **Week 12**

Weighting: **50%**

The completion of a 2,000 word Research Essay allows students to develop core disciplinary knowledge, enhance research skills, show effective written communication skills, and demonstrate originality and critical thinking.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading scholars, texts and paradigms.
- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
- Apply disciplinary knowledge to analyse and critically evaluate real-world historical and contemporary strategic decisions, cases and issues.
- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

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Delivery and Resources

DELIVERY AND RESOURCES

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes listening to lectures prior to seminar or tutorial, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- Internal students are expected to attend all seminar or tutorial sessions, and external students are expected to make significant contributions to on-line activities.
- In most cases students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks in order to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for all the required readings for this unit are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site, and at Macquarie University's library site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means.

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Computer and internet access are essential for this unit. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.
- This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>
- Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient.
- Information about IT used at Macquarie University is available at http://students.mq.edu.au/it_services/

SUBMITTING ASSESSMENT TASKS

- All text-based assessment tasks are to be submitted, marked and returned electronically. This will only happen through the unit iLearn site.
- Assessment tasks must be submitted as a MS word document by the due date.
- Most assessment tasks will be subject to a 'Turnitin' review as an automatic part of the submission process.
- The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Disruptions Policy. Extensions will not in normal circumstances be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Disruption to Study: http://www.students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/manage_your_study_program/disruption_to_studies/.

LATE SUBMISSION PENALTY

- 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.

WORD LIMITS FOR ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Stated word limits include footnotes and footnoted references, but not bibliography, or title page.
- Word limits can generally deviate by 10% either over or under the stated figure.
- If the number of words exceeds the limit by more than 10%, then penalties will apply. These penalties are 5% of the awarded mark for every 100 words over the word limit. If a paper is 300 words over, for instance, it will lose $3 \times 5\% = 15\%$ of the total mark awarded for the assignment. This percentage is taken off the total mark, i.e. if a paper was graded at a credit (65%) and was 300 words over, it would be reduced by 15 marks to a pass (50%).
- The application of this penalty is at the discretion of the course convener.

REASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER

- Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy in cases where students feel their work was graded inappropriately: <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>
- Conformably to the Grade Appeal Policy, individual works are not subject to regrading.

STAFF AVAILABILITY

- Department staff will endeavor to answer student enquiries in a timely manner. However, emails or iLearn messages will not usually be answered over the weekend or public holiday period.
- Students are encouraged to read the Unit Guide and look at instructions posted on the iLearn site before sending email requests to staff.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 - Introduction

Week 2 - The fundamentals of strategy

Week 3 - Politics, power and reason

Week 4 - Uncertainty, intelligence and surprise

Week 5 - Passion, irrationality and emotion

Week 6 - Context, circumstance and culture

Week 7 - Making strategy

Week 8 - Civil-military relations

Week 9 - Strategic forms and approaches

Week 10 - Coercion and the diplomacy of violence

Week 11 - Asymmetric strategy and irregular war

Week 12 - Strategy and intervention

Week 13 - The future of strategy

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 \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/p\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/p)

[olicy-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

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.
- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
- Apply disciplinary knowledge to analyse and critically evaluate real-world historical and contemporary strategic decisions, cases and issues.
- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

Assessment tasks

- Critical Topic Review
- Policy Memo
- Research Essay

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

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.
- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
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Assessment tasks

- Critical Topic Review
- Policy Memo
- Research Essay

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

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.
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Assessment tasks

- Critical Topic Review
- Policy Memo
- Research Essay

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:

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- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
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Assessment tasks

- Critical Topic Review
- Policy Memo
- Research Essay

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

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.
- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

Assessment tasks

- Critical Topic Review
- Policy Memo
- Research Essay

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

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.
- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

Assessment tasks

- Critical Topic Review
- Policy Memo
- Research Essay