SOCI8075

Policy Ideas in Focus: Framing Policy Problems

Session 1, Weekday attendance, North Ryde 2020

Department of Sociology

Contents

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General Information

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Per appointment

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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
Admission to MPSP or MPASR or GradCertPASR or GradDipPASR

Corequisites
POIR8090 and SOCI8080

Co-badged status

Unit description

Policies embody ideas about what governments can and should do, and how. These ideas 'frame' the problems policies address and how those problems will be solved. Policy ideas vary between policy domains and between countries and they change over time. Policy ideas are mobilised and contested by policy actors seeking changes that align with their own interests or those of their constituencies. When new ideas enter the policy process, they may offer genuinely novel solutions to old problems or renew the attractiveness of discarded approaches. New ideas can also function as solutions in search of problems. In this unit, students study policy documents and research resources to gain a critical understanding of how ideas can frame the definition of policy problems and their solutions. Because policy ideas travel, the unit considers the mechanisms and actors involved in what researchers call policy transfer or policy mobilities. Following an introduction to the role of ideas in policy, the unit is taught in three modules, each exploring the history, contours and impacts of a 'big idea' that has come into public and social policy in recent decades. Ideas in focus may include a subset of: brain and mind sciences, New Public Management, big data and governance by algorithm, social investment and asset-based social policy, user choice, sustainability, resilience, and well-being.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates

Learning Outcomes

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

ULO1: Demonstrate understanding of theory and debates about the role of ideas in shaping policy.

ULO2: Demonstrate understanding of the history, contours and impacts of some important policy ideas.

ULO3: Develop a critical appreciation of alternative ways policy problems can be framed.

ULO4: Apply theoretical and substantive knowledge to analyse policy documents.

ULO5: Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of written and spoken techniques.

Assessment Tasks

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students should consult iLearn for revised unit information.

Find out more about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and potential impacts on staff and students

General Assessment Information

There are 5 assessments in this unit. Taken together, the tasks are designed to aid your learning, test your understanding of the unit material, and give you core skills that are applicable to your current or future work life.

The four case studies must be submitted via Turnitin.

Students should be aware of the following policies in regard to assignments:

Academic Honesty Policy: http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html. *The university takes plagiarism very seriously and there are penalties for using other people's work as your own. This includes directly quoting other people's work without quotation marks and/or acknowledgement. Please check this unit's iLearn site for resources on how to cite your sources properly and avoid plagiarism.*

Special Consideration Policy: https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/ university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration

Assessment Policy: https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment. For specifics on Grading Policy, click on the "Schedule 1" tab.

Requests for Extensions

To request an extension for a period up to and including 5 working days, please email teaching staff

To apply for an extension of more than 5 working days please complete a Special Consideration request and submit it online through AskMQ. For more information see the Special Consideration Policy above and find further details here: https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration/disruption-to-studies.

Late Assessment 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.

All written assignments should be submitted through Turnitin. The links will be provided closer to the due dates.

If you are finding it difficult to meet the set due dates please contact your teaching staff as soon as possible.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery

This unit is taught in four modules which wrap around the on-campus teaching sessions in weeks 2, 5, 8 and 11. Students engage in three separate, but related activities to get the most out of their learning.

Those activities are **preparation, participation and reflection.**

Preparation tasks consist mainly of engaging with the set and extended readings. It is better to start preparing early as we the list of readings is quite extensive (often in excess of 10 readings).

Participation tasks consist predominantly of in-class (or adjusted online) activities, such as lectures, discussion, exercises, listening to podcasts, walk-while-talking and more.

Reflection tasks predominantly take place after the on-campus sessions and predominantly consist of assignments. These assignments align closely with the lecture and reading material and it is therefore not advised to attempt the assignments without engaging in the previous two forms of activities.

Resources

Readings are available through Leganto which you can access via link on the right hand side of Ilearn.

There is no textbook.

Unit Schedule

This unit is taught in four modules. Each module includes three related topics.

Module 1: Introduction to the concepts, focussing on neo-liberalism and new public management

In this first module, we start by map different types of ideas. Such ideas include 'big ideas', such

as Keynesianism or neo-liberalism, but also second tier ideas such as prevention, new social risks, social exclusion, activation, new public management, or the three ideas that we explore in more detail in this unit, user choice, mutual obligation and social investment. We begin by establishing what we mean by idea before exploring where ideas come from, who helps to spread them and how they spread across time, space and policy areas. To ground the conversation, we finish this module by exploring the shift from Keynesianism to neo-liberalism.

Module 2: User choice

In this second module, we focus on user choice. Choice is framed differently depending on whether choice is imagined within liberal/economic framework or within a human rights framework, for example. In both frames, choice is seen to be an inherent good. But the operationalisation of the concept varies immensely. Within a liberal framework, the policy response to more user choice is outsourcing, personal budgets and similar, while choice within a human rights framework is used to call for removal of barriers to participation and more support. To get a grip on how the framing matters for policy outcomes, we mostly focus on aged care and disability care to investigate how choice has influenced how care is now organised and carried out.

Module 3: Social Investment

Since the late 1990s, new ideas and strategies concerning the role and shape of the Welfare State have been formulated. Policy developments point towards a similar policy logic based on 'social investment'. In fact, the idea of social investment has been central to recent social policy debates in several OECD countries. In this module, we explore this new perspective. First, we ask what a social investment approach is. That entails exploring the concept at the ideational level. Later in the module we explore how the idea has been operationalised in terms of the policies implemented; when and where can social investment paradigms be applied. A related question is about where and where it should be applied. We also focus on how this particular idea has spread across countries and investigate the achievements as well as the shortcomings.

Module 4: Welfare-to-work

In this last module, we closely consider the 'welfare-to-work' paradigm that has influenced work and social policy in countries like Australia and the US. We investigate how this paradigm emerged as central to an emerging policy monopoly in social policy that emphasised tough -- even harsh -- policies to compel working-age people to participate in low-wage labour markets. Has 'welfare-to-work' reduced 'welfare dependence' and encouraged employment? What problems persist? We take a look at the ongoing impact of tougher welfare-to-work policies on poor communities in a cross-national perspective and consider alternative policies.

The following table sets out the activities for each of the 13 teaching weeks, according to preparation, participation and reflection tasks, see 'Delivery and Resources' for more explanation about those three forms of activities.

	Weeks, correspond to MQ teaching weeks	Prepare	On-campus participation	Reflect (Assignments)
Module 1	**Week 1** **(from Monday 24 Feb)**	Welcome material. Commence reading in preparation for module 1		Participatory tasks begin. Online introductions.
	Week 2	Continue reading for module 1	Module 1, topic 1-3: Basic concepts, Neoliberalism and NPM	
	Week 3			Commence Case study/ analysis 1
Module 2	**Week 4**	Read in preparation for module 2		Submit Case study/ analysis 1
	Week 5		Module 2, topic 4-6: User choice	
	Week 6			Commence Case study/ analysis 2
Module 3	**Week 7**			Submit Case study/ analysis 2
Recess for two weeks				
Module 3, continued	**Week 8** **(from Monday 27 April)**	Finish reading in preparation for module 3	Module 3, topic 7-9: Social Investment	
	Week 9			Commence Case study/ analysis 3
Module 4	**Week 10**	Read in preparation for module 4		Submit Case study/ analysis 3
	Week 11		Module 4, topic 10-12: Welfare-to-work	
	Week 12			Commence Case study/ analysis 4
	Week 13			Submit Case study/ analysis 4 Completion of participatory task

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://staff.m q.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-centr al). 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.)*

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the Student Policy Gateway (https://students.m q.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 s://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 published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://stu dents.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Getting help with your assignment
- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

Student Enquiry Service

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Equity 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.

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.