POL 822

Using Research

S2 External 2014

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Geoffrey Hawker
geoffrey.hawker@mq.edu.au

Diana Perche
diana.perche@mq.edu.au

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MPP or PGDipPP or PGCertPP or MSc in Environmental Health or PGDipSc in Environmental Health or PGCertSc in Environmental Health

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit examines the use of and reliance upon research in policy making, in the context of the pressure for 'evidence-based' policy and contestability of advice. It introduces the links between epistemology and methodology in research, and provides a critical review of the use of research methods in the social sciences. The unit explores ethical issues in research, and develops skills in designing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative research relevant to the policy process.

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:

- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
- Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for "evidence-based" policy.
- Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
- Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy
Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>See description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27 Oct / 1 Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14 November</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment 1
Due: 5 September
Weighting: 20%
Epistemology and ethics principles applied to 4 research situations, total 2000 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.

Assignment 2
Due: See description
Weighting: 35%
Design and conduct qualitative research. Students will individually create a set of interview questions on public transport, comment on three other students' sets of questions, then determine a collective set of questions based on individual questions in class, then conduct the research and write a 1500-word report. Individual questions are due on 29 August, comments on questions on 12 September and the research report on 10 October (internal students)/17 October (external students). The determination of a set of collective question as well as discussion on how to conduct interviews and write a research report will take place during a qualitative research workshop on Monday, September 8, usual class time (6 to 9pm) and class room for internal students, and for external students on Saturday, September 20 from 2 to 6pm in X5B 143. The latter class will be led by Kathe Boehringer.

The generation of individual questions is worth 10% of the final mark, the research report worth 25% of the final mark.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the
use of research in policy-making.
- Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.

Assignment 3
Due: 27 Oct / 1 Nov
Weighting: 20%

30-minute quiz on readings and workshop session on quantitative methods. The workshop and quiz for internal students will take place at the usual class time (6-9) in the usual room on Monday October 27, and for external students on Saturday November 1 in X5B 143 from 2 to 6pm.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
- Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
- Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

Assignment 4
Due: 14 November
Weighting: 25%

Short essay of 2000 words on evidence-based policy.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
- Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
- Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
- Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

Delivery and Resources
Internal students: Lecture times and locations
Lecture: Monday 6-7pm, in room W6B 315
Seminar: Monday 7-9pm, in room W6B 315
External students: The lecture is recorded and available via the ECHO recording system immediately after the end of recording.

External students are also required to attend two on-campus sessions of three hours each over the semester. The dates for these two “weekend schools” are:

Saturday 20 September 2013, 2-5pm - Venue X5B 143 Saturday 1 November 2013, 2-5pm – X5B 143.

External students are also welcome to attend weekly lectures and seminar classes whenever they can.

Attendance

University regulations prescribe regular attendance at classes. Students are expected to attend all lectures and seminars, or on-campus sessions for external students.

For internal students, failure to attend at least three-quarters of seminars risks exclusion from and no credit for the unit.

For external students, failure to attend the first on-campus session (weekend school) will risk exclusion from and no credit for the unit.

If you are unable to attend a class, you should provide documentary support for your absence (eg medical certificate). If you know that you will be unable to attend a class, or on-campus session, you should contact the convenor as early as possible.

ilearn website

The unit has an ilearn website which will be accessible only to students enrolled in the unit. Students will have to log in using their Student ID number. The restricted access site has a private e-mail facility and a discussion board so that students can communicate with each other, and with the teaching staff. Students will also be able to listen to the lecture via the website, and review any overheads used in lectures. You can enter the website via

http://ilearn.mq.edu.au

Students are recommended to consult the website on a regular basis as additional material and any announcements will be posted there.

For all students, as a general rule, the more students put into a unit, the more they will get out of it. Reading as widely as possible (beyond the required readings) is a good way to get the most out of a unit. This includes reading of current newspapers and other media sources, to keep up with current developments in Australian politics and policy-making.
## Unit Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture/tutorial</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Assessment schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 August</td>
<td>Research in policy making</td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 August</td>
<td>Evidence-based policy I</td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18 August</td>
<td>Guest lecture: The Evidence for Sydney at Night</td>
<td>Tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25 August</td>
<td>Epistemology – Theories of Scientific Knowledge</td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td>Individual questions for assignment 2 due on Aug 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 September</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Ethics in research</td>
<td>Department of Philosophy, Macquarie University</td>
<td>Assignment 1 due on September 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8 September</td>
<td>Qualitative methods I: Discourse analysis and participant observation</td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td>Comments on individual questions for assignment 2 due on September 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15 September</td>
<td>Qualitative methods II: surveys and interviews – internal students workshop (3h)</td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mid-semester break, during which the qualitative methods workshop for external students take place (see below)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 September</td>
<td><strong>Compulsory workshop for external students</strong>&lt;br&gt;Qualitative methods: surveys and interviews (3h)</td>
<td>Kathe Boehringer</td>
<td>2-5pm, X5B 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 October <strong>Public Holiday</strong> : no lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>13 October <strong>Guest lecture: Public opinion research and policy</strong></td>
<td>Murray Goot, Australian Research Council Australian Professorial Fellow &amp; Emeritus Professor, DMHPIR, Macquarie University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20 October <strong>Guest lecture: Program Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>27 October <strong>Evidence-Based Policy II – Challenges to Evidence-Based Policy</strong></td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 November <strong>Quantitative methods – internal students workshop</strong></td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td>2-5pm, Y3A218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>10 November <strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Geoffrey Hawker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/14917/unit_guide/print). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


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/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit  [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](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 Enquiry Service**

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at  [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.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**

Graduate Capabilities

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

• Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
• Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
• Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
• Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

Assessment tasks

• Assignment 1
• Assignment 2
• Assignment 3
• Assignment 4

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

• Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
• Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
• Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

**Assessment tasks**

- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2
- Assignment 3
- Assignment 4

**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**

- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
- Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
- Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
- Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

**Assessment tasks**

- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2
- Assignment 3
- Assignment 4

**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

- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
- Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.

Assessment tasks

- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2
- Assignment 4

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

- Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
- Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
- Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
- Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

Assessment tasks

- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2

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

• Understand the significance of ontology, epistemology, ethics and methodology for the use of research in policy-making.
• Understand the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy.
• Identify the relevance and apply a range of qualitative methods in particular contexts.
• Be able to use and interpret samples and simple statistics at the core of the policy process.

Assessment tasks

• Assignment 1
• Assignment 2
• Assignment 3
• Assignment 4