



SOCI8075

Policy Ideas in Focus: Framing Policy Problems

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2022

Macquarie School of Social Sciences

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	3
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	6
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	7

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Associate Professor and Unit Convenor
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Contact via Email

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By email appointment or Zoom

Associate Professor & Lecturer

Ben Spies-Butcher

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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://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-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.

General Assessment Information

Important note about late penalties in the School of Social Sciences

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – 10 marks out of 100 credit 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.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Policy idea analysis	20%	No	Thurs 24 March at 9pm
Policy theory reflection	20%	No	Thurs 28 April at 9pm
Policy idea analysis	20%	No	Thurs 19 May at 9pm
Policy idea analysis	20%	No	Thurs 9 June at 9pm
Active participation	20%	No	weekly

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **Thurs 24 March at 9pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Apply theories in analysis of a policy idea and/or document

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of theory and debates about the role of ideas in shaping policy.
- Demonstrate understanding of the history, contours and impacts of some important policy ideas.
- Develop a critical appreciation of alternative ways policy problems can be framed.
- Apply theoretical and substantive knowledge to analyse policy documents.
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of written and spoken techniques.

Policy theory reflection

Assessment Type ¹: Reflective Writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **Thurs 28 April at 9pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Critical reflection on theories of the role of policy ideas in policy development and change

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of theory and debates about the role of ideas in shaping policy.
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of written and spoken techniques.

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **Thurs 19 May at 9pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Apply theories in analysis of a policy idea and/or document

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of theory and debates about the role of ideas in shaping policy.
- Demonstrate understanding of the history, contours and impacts of some important

policy ideas.

- Develop a critical appreciation of alternative ways policy problems can be framed.
- Apply theoretical and substantive knowledge to analyse policy documents.
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of written and spoken techniques.

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **Thurs 9 June at 9pm**

Weighting: **20%**

Apply theories in analysis of a policy idea and/or document

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of theory and debates about the role of ideas in shaping policy.
- Demonstrate understanding of the history, contours and impacts of some important policy ideas.
- Develop a critical appreciation of alternative ways policy problems can be framed.
- Apply theoretical and substantive knowledge to analyse policy documents.
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of written and spoken techniques.

Active participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **weekly**

Weighting: **20%**

Do reading preparation for seminars, engage with online materials, contribute to online discussions, actively participate in on-campus class activities.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of theory and debates about the role of ideas in shaping policy.
- Demonstrate understanding of the history, contours and impacts of some important policy ideas.
- Develop a critical appreciation of alternative ways policy problems can be framed.

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

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Welcome to this Unit -- in 2022, it runs in a "two-mode" format that provides access and information to all students depending on their circumstances.

I will cover this in clear detail in my first day session on Friday 18 March, which will also be recorded.

Looking forward to meeting you in person, Shaun Wilson

Unit Schedule

SOCI/X 8075 Schedule of teaching this Semester

Module number	Day-long lecture/ seminar topics	Date and times
One	Introduction to basic concepts (we cover why ideas matter in policy and how they are framed and include illustrations)	Friday 18 March 10 am to 5pm
Two	Choice as a policy idea (analysis of Australian social policy and the role of choice in framing, policy design, and service delivery)	Friday 22 April 10am to 5pm
Three	Value and social investment as policy ideas (how 'values' are measured and how those decisions affect policy. Broad benefit of a social investment model focused on wellbeing). Lecturer is A/Prof Ben Spies-Butcher	Friday 13 May 10am to 5pm
Four	Welfare to work as a policy idea (a close look at the ideas promoting work over welfare dependence and their long-term consequences for welfare and employment)	Friday 3 June 10am to 5pm
	<i>All sessions recorded on Zoom</i>	

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

The [Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the 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 Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.