



SOCX8075

Policy Ideas in Focus: Framing Policy Problems

Session 1, Online-flexible 2023

Macquarie School of Social Sciences

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General Information

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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
Admission to MPSP or MPASR or GradCertPASR or GradDipPASR (OUA)

Corequisites

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 techniques.

General Assessment Information

Late penalties

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A

1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Policy idea analysis	30%	No	Monday 3 April at 9pm
Active participation	10%	No	Monday 8 May at 9pm
Policy idea analysis	30%	No	Saturday 3 June at 9pm
Policy theory analysis	30%	No	weekly

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Monday 3 April at 9pm**

Weighting: **30%**

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 techniques.

Active participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **Monday 8 May at 9pm**

Weighting: **10%**

Do reading preparation for online discussions, contribute to online discussions, actively participate in any designated collaborative 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.
- Apply theoretical and substantive knowledge to analyse policy documents.
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of written techniques.

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type **1**: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task **2**: 30 hours

Due: **Saturday 3 June at 9pm**

Weighting: **30%**

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 techniques.

Policy theory analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **weekly**

Weighting: **30%**

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.
- 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 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 2023, the Unit runs in a "two-mode" format that provides access and information to all students in both SOCX 8075 and SOCI 8075. This means we will have classroom and Zoom access to the four day-long sessions as well as an online-flexible format for students where learning is focused on lone activities. I will cover this in more detail in our first day session on Friday 3 March, which will also be recorded.

NB: For students in SOCX 8075, you do not need to attend classes on campus at Macquarie, but you are welcome to access these sessions on Zoom.

The goal is to address major themes in the policy literature -- how ideas matter to the shaping of policy -- and then how 'ideational' processes are reflected in actual policy areas. This year we're joined by A/Prof Ben Spies-Butcher (who will convene the Third module on 5 May on the theme of social investment) and Prof Amanda Wise (who will convene the 4th module on 2 June on multiculturalism).

Looking forward to meeting you in person, Shaun Wilson (Convenor)

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) Lecturer in A/Prof Shaun Wilson, Sociology	Friday 3 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) Lecturer in A/Prof Shaun Wilson, Sociology	Friday 31 March 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, Sociology	Friday 5 May 10am to 5pm
Four	Multiculturalism as a policy idea (a closer look at the evolution of the idea of multiculturalism means and its application to public and social policy). Lecturer is Prof Amanda Wise, Sociology	Friday 2 June 10am to 5pm
<i>lecture content will be recorded for online-flexible students in SOCI 8075 and SOCX 8075</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 Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

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.