



SOCX8075

Policy Ideas in Focus: Framing Policy Problems

Session 1, Online-flexible 2024

Macquarie School of Social Sciences

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Amanda Wise

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Lecturer

Ben Spies-Butcher

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

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

Corequisites

POIX8090 or SOCX8080

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 Submission Penalty

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 non-timed written assessments (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc) is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams/quizzes, 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.

General Information

Associate Professor
Shaun Wilson

shaun.wilson@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

By email appointment or Zoom

Associate Professor & Lecturer
Ben Spies-Butcher

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Professor
Amanda Wise

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POIR8090 and SOCI8080
<p>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.</p>

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- **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.

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Assessment Tasks

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type **1**: Case study/analysis Indicative Time on Task **2**: 30 hours 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.
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- 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**: 30 hours 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.
- 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: 10 hours Due: **Weekly**
Weighting: **10%**

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.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Policy idea analysis	30%	No	Monday 1st April
Policy idea analysis	30%	No	Monday 2nd June
Policy theory analysis	30%	No	Monday 12 May
Active participation	10%	No	Weekly

Policy idea analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis
Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours
Due: **Monday 1st April**
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 idea analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Monday 2nd June**

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: **Monday 12 May**

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.

Active participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **Weekly**

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.

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 2024, the Unit runs in a "two-mode" format that provides access and information to all students in both SOCI 8075 and SOCX 8075. This means we will have classroom and Zoom access to the 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 Week 1, which will also be recorded.

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.

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.

Unit information based on version 2024.01 of the [Handbook](#)