



POIR2010

Australian Politics, Inequality and Wellbeing

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of International Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convener

A/Prof Geoffrey Hawker

geoffrey.hawker@mq.edu.au

Tutor

Dr Luke Mansillo

luke.mansillo@mq.edu.au

Owain Matthews

owain.matthews@mq.edu.au

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above OR (10cp in POL or POIR or POIX units)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

When asked why they are involved in politics, many Australian politicians will answer that they want to make the country a better place, that they want to improve people's welfare and wellbeing, that they want to make a difference. We don't have to look far, however, to observe entrenched inequality, social division, unmet human needs and unfulfilled lives. This tension between the promise of politics and the lack of responsiveness of the political system to a large portion of the Australian population, and its consequences for inequality and human wellbeing, is the focus of this unit. Students explore these inequalities, and their political causes and consequences, through the lenses of race, nation, class and gender.

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 the ability to peer below the surface feature of Australian politics

and its discourses to identify the underlying inequalities at play

ULO2: Understand and identify linkages between class, race, gender and Australian nationhood

ULO3: Critically analyse Australian politics and assess the ways in which it reinforces, reduces or normalises inequality

ULO4: Demonstrate capacity to assess the extent that the media and new technologies impact – if at all – on the reproduction of existing social relations

ULO5: Demonstrate critical understanding of the interplay between discourse, ideology, structures and agency in shaping the makeup of Australian society in terms of race, nation, class and gender

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
<u>Take-home exam</u>	50%	No	27/09/2026	Individual	No	Open
<u>Major essay</u>	50%	No	08/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Take-home exam

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 22 hours

Due: **27/09/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

Online take-home exam

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and identify linkages between class, race, gender and Australian nationhood
- Critically analyse Australian politics and assess the ways in which it reinforces, reduces or normalises inequality
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the interplay between discourse, ideology, structures and agency in shaping the makeup of Australian society in terms of race, nation, class and gender

Major essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 50 hours

Due: **08/11/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

2500 word research essay

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to peer below the surface feature of Australian politics and its discourses to identify the underlying inequalities at play
- Understand and identify linkages between class, race, gender and Australian nationhood
- Critically analyse Australian politics and assess the ways in which it reinforces, reduces or normalises inequality
- Demonstrate capacity to assess the extent that the media and new technologies impact – if at all – on the reproduction of existing social relations
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the interplay between discourse, ideology, structures and agency in shaping the makeup of Australian society in terms of race, nation, class and gender

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
- [Academic Success](#) 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.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

Welcome to Australian Politics, Inequality and Wellbeing.

Australia has often been imagined as a nation where egalitarianism and a "fair-go" have shielded the general population from the inequalities and injustices faced in many other countries. This is a myth that is still prominent in our politics and public discourse, and one that does not stand up

to even the mildest of scrutiny. This unit will interrogate this myth through the lens of key dimensions of inequality, including race, nation, class and gender. We will explore the ways in which these categories have been constructed historically, how they impact the well-being of different groups, and how they manifest themselves in contemporary Australian politics.

Unlike most other courses you will do at university, the unit will trace developments in its subject matter in real time and discuss new issues as they arise on a week-to-week basis. This will occur in conjunction with the main substantive themes of the unit. The aim is then to give students an experience of contemporary Australian politics that explores the possibilities of agency and choice for individuals and groups.

There is no set text for the unit. Instead, key weekly readings will be posted on iLearn, as well as any supplementary readings. In addition, the week's recorded lectures and power point slides will be found on iLearn, as well as a variety of other resources. To do well in the unit it is essential that students engage with the lectures and the readings as well as with each other in the weekly tutorials (in-person cohort) or in the weekly online discussion forums (online and in-person cohort).

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 connect.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/>

Academic Success

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

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [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 the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

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 2026.02 of the [Handbook](#)