



PICX8050

The Art of Modern Strategy

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

School of International Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Jon Cottam

jon.cottam@mq.edu.au

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to GradCertStrategicPolicy or MStrategySec or MPICT or MCP ICT or GradDipPICT or GradDipCPICT or PGCertPICT or MPICTMIntSecSt or MCP ICTMIntSecSt or MIntSecStud or GradDipIntSecStud or MSecStrategicStud or MCyberSec or MSecStrategicStudMCrim or MSecStrategicStudMIntell or MSecStrategicStudMCyberSec or MSecStrategicStudMCTerrorism

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

In a world where geopolitical tensions and strategic uncertainty define global affairs, this course invites students to dive deep into the art and complexity of strategy—past, present, and future. Bridging classical wisdom with contemporary challenges, it explores the enduring questions of how strategy is formulated, communicated, and enacted under real-world constraints. Students will engage with historical and contemporary strategic thinkers—from Sun Zi and Clausewitz, to Churchill, Stalin, Xi Jinping, Marshall and Soleimani—while also grappling with modern dynamics such as the role of strategic narratives, making strategy in conventional and unconventional scenarios, the impact of domestic political pressures, and the differing approaches to strategy of great powers and small states. Through case studies, interactive discussion, and policy brief writing, students will not only study strategic theory but apply it, assessing how strategy adapts—and sometimes fails—amid the complexities of our turbulent world.

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 specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary

issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.

ULO2: Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.

ULO3: Apply disciplinary knowledge to analyse and critically evaluate real-world historical and contemporary strategic decisions, cases and issues.

ULO4: Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

General Assessment Information

SUBMITTING ASSESSMENT TASKS

- All text-based assessment tasks are to be submitted, marked and returned electronically. This will only happen through the unit iLearn site.
- Assessment tasks must be submitted as a MS word document by the due date.
- Most assessment tasks will be subject to a 'Turnitin' review as an automatic part of the submission process.
- The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

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

WORD LIMITS FOR ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Stated word limits include footnotes and footnoted references, but not bibliography, or title page.
- Word limits can generally deviate by 10% either over or under the stated figure.

REASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER

- Macquarie University operates a Final Grade Appeal procedure as part of the Assessment policy in cases where students feel their work was graded inappropriately: <https://policies.mq.edu.au/document/view.php?id=277>
- In accordance with the Grade Appeal procedure, individual works are not subject to regrading.

STAFF AVAILABILITY

- Department staff will endeavour to answer student enquiries in a timely manner. However, **emails or iLearn messages will not usually be answered over the weekend or public holiday period.**
- Students are encouraged to **read the Unit Guide and look at instructions posted on the iLearn site before sending email requests to staff.**

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Policy Memo	35%	No	22/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Problem set	20%	No	31/10/2026	Individual	No	Open
Research Essay	45%	No	05/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Policy Memo

Assessment Type [1](#): Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task [2](#): 35 hours

Due: **22/09/2026**

Weighting: **35%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension [3](#): Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students will complete a short policy memo for government.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply disciplinary knowledge to analyse and critically evaluate real-world historical and contemporary strategic decisions, cases and issues.
- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

Problem set

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 18 hours

Due: **31/10/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

The online quiz will test students' knowledge and understanding of the unit

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.
- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.

Research Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 45 hours

Due: **05/11/2026**

Weighting: **45%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students will complete a major research essay on a strategic studies topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate specialised knowledge of key concepts, theories and contemporary issues in the field of strategic studies, aligned with the field's leading thinkers, texts and paradigms.

- Comprehend the challenges and complexities of strategy-making as well as the main features, applications and relative merits of various strategic approaches.
- Apply disciplinary knowledge to analyse and critically evaluate real-world historical and contemporary strategic decisions, cases and issues.
- Apply critical thinking skills in order to cogently and effectively defend intellectual positions and to produce well-reasoned, theoretically informed and empirically substantiated written work.

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

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes listening to lectures prior to seminar or tutorial, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- Internal students are expected to attend all seminar or tutorial sessions, and external students are expected to make significant contributions to on-line activities.
- In most cases students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks in order to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for all the required readings for this unit are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site, and at Macquarie University's library site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means.

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Computer and internet access are essential for this unit. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.
- This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>
- Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient.
- Information about IT used at Macquarie University is available at http://students.mq.edu.au/it_services/

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.

Changes from Previous Offering

Single quiz replaces multiple quizzes.

Unit information based on version 2026.05 of the [Handbook](#)