POIR703
Public Policy: Theories and Practice
S1 Evening 2017
Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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Unit convener and teaching staff
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Contact via (02) 9850 8805
W6A432
5-6pm Tuesday and by appointment

Credit points
4

Prerequisites
Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit provides an introduction to the Australian and international policy context, with a critical analysis of the role and influence of key institutions and actors. The unit evaluates current debates and controversies, including issues around reform and changes to the policy environment. The unit explores recent developments in the literature of policy studies, in Australia and internationally, and examines a range of theories of the policy process, including the "policy cycle" of formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates

Learning Outcomes
1. Explain and critically analyse the way in which power and politics impact on public policy and the policy process
2. Identify the range of actors and institutions involved in the policy process, using the Australian example as the basis for comparison with other policy environments
3. Analyse the role of different actors and institutions in influencing policy in networks, subsystems or communities
4. Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in
this subject, including debates around the proper role of government, the shift from
government to governance, the impact of globalisation, and the role of public and
interest group participation in the policy process
5. Recognise, understand and apply the most common theoretical approaches used in
studying politics and policy, and identify differences and similarities between them
6. Analyse the policy-making process using several different models, or theories, and
critically evaluate these by applying them to real-world case studies, and demonstrating
their strengths and weaknesses
7. Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of evidence about the policy process, from a
range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent
argument
8. Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of
techniques (written, spoken, visual)

General Assessment Information

Assignment Submission
All written assignments must be submitted using the “Turnitin Assignments” facility on the iLearn
website. This facility includes software which scans the uploaded assignments for plagiarism.
Follow the instructions on the screen carefully. Your assignment should be uploaded before
midnight on the due date.

In all cases, you should ensure that you keep a copy of the assignment.

Return of marked work
Marked assignments will be returned via the same facility on iLearn. When marks are released,
you will need to go back in to the assignment submission box, and open your uploaded
assignment. When you click on the “GradeMark” button, you will be able to see the marker’s
comments on your work. You can save or print the essay with the comments.

Extensions
Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and will require documentary
evidence such as a medical certificate to support the request for an extension. You should
contact the convenor as early as possible if you think you may need an extension. While we do
understand that most students are engaged in paid employment, extensions cannot be granted
on this basis alone.

Penalties for late submission
Assignments which are submitted after the due date, without having an extension granted by the
convenor, will be penalised, at a rate of 3% of the mark for each week day after the due date.
Any paper submitted more than 3 weeks after the due date will not be marked, and the student
will be failed for the assignment.
Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 2</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment 1

Due: 7 April
Weighting: 20%

Questions based on the material covered in weeks 1-5 of semester will be posted on the website at the end of week 5.

**Word limit:** 1500 words

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the range of actors and institutions involved in the policy process, using the Australian example as the basis for comparison with other policy environments
- Analyse the role of different actors and institutions in influencing policy in networks, subsystems or communities
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject, including debates around the proper role of government, the shift from government to governance, the impact of globalisation, and the role of public and interest group participation in the policy process

Assessment 2

Due: 5 May
Weighting: 30%

For this assessment task you are expected to reflect on the material covered in the lectures and course readings, and use these to develop a critical analysis of the prescribed texts. Your essay should be presented in essay form and answer the question which is posted on iLearn.

**Word limit:** 1500 words

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Explain and critically analyse the way in which power and politics impact on public policy and the policy process
Identify the range of actors and institutions involved in the policy process, using the Australian example as the basis for comparison with other policy environments
• Analyse the role of different actors and institutions in influencing policy in networks, subsystems or communities
• Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject, including debates around the proper role of government, the shift from government to governance, the impact of globalisation, and the role of public and interest group participation in the policy process
• Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of evidence about the policy process, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
• Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)

Assessment 3
Due: 9 June
Weighting: 50%

This assessment task requires you to select a case study and use it to evaluate the theories of the policy process which are covered in this unit. You will be given opportunities to discuss your choice of case study with the lecturer and the class while working on the essay. You are expected to undertake considerable independent research into your case study area. Further details about the essay question, marking criteria and selection of the case study are provided on iLearn.

Word limit: 3500-4000 words

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
• Explain and critically analyse the way in which power and politics impact on public policy and the policy process
• Identify the range of actors and institutions involved in the policy process, using the Australian example as the basis for comparison with other policy environments
• Analyse the role of different actors and institutions in influencing policy in networks, subsystems or communities
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• Recognise, understand and apply the most common theoretical approaches used in
studying politics and policy, and identify differences and similarities between them

• Analyse the policy-making process using several different models, or theories, and critically evaluate these by applying them to real-world case studies, and demonstrating their strengths and weaknesses

• Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of evidence about the policy process, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument

• Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)

**Delivery and Resources**

**Delivery:**

For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: [http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au](http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au). This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

**Internal students** are expected to attend the following classes each week:

Lecture: Tuesday 6-7pm
Seminar: Tuesday 7-9pm

**External students:** The lecture is digitally recorded and can be downloaded from the ILearn website shortly after it is delivered. You will also find lecture slides on the website.

External students are also required to attend two compulsory on-campus sessions of four hours each over the semester. The dates for these sessions are:

Sunday 29 April: 2pm - 6pm
Saturday 3 June: 2pm - 6pm

External students are encouraged to attend weekly lectures and seminar classes whenever they can.

**Resources:**

This unit has a unit webpage which is accessible only to currently enrolled students. Online units can be accessed at: [http://ilearn.mq.edu.au](http://ilearn.mq.edu.au)

There is no text book for this unit. All required readings will be accessible electronically via the Macquarie University Library iShare system. Links will be posted on the iLearn site.

**Unit Schedule**

| Week 1 | Introduction: Policy and politics |

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/79948/unit_guide/print
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The proper role of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fundamentals of the Australian political system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Actors in public policy – state actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Actors in public policy – non-state actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No Classes - Reading Week and Assessment 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Challenges: governance and globalisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Approaches to policy analysis</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>The policy cycle and its critics</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Theories of policy change</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Problem definition and agenda setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Decision-making and policy instruments</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Implementation and evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/) of Policy Central.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of
Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Results**

Results shown in *iLearn*, 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](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**Learning Skills**

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- **Workshops**
- **StudyWise**
- **Academic Integrity Module for Students**
- **Ask a Learning Adviser**

**Student Enquiry Service**

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

**Equity Support**

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](http://students.mq.edu.au/services/disability/) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

**IT Help**

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/](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](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

**Graduate Capabilities**

**PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills**

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:
Learning outcomes

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- Recognise, understand and apply the most common theoretical approaches used in studying politics and policy, and identify differences and similarities between them

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Assessment 3

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Explain and critically analyse the way in which power and politics impact on public policy and the policy process
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of evidence about the policy process, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 2
PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Explain and critically analyse the way in which power and politics impact on public policy and the policy process
- Identify the range of actors and institutions involved in the policy process, using the Australian example as the basis for comparison with other policy environments
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Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Assessment 3

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:
Learning outcomes

• Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject, including debates around the proper role of government, the shift from government to governance, the impact of globalisation, and the role of public and interest group participation in the policy process

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Assessment tasks

• Assessment 1
• Assessment 2
• Assessment 3

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

• Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved in this subject, including debates around the proper role of government, the shift from government to governance, the impact of globalisation, and the role of public and interest group participation in the policy process

Assessment tasks

• Assessment 1
• Assessment 2
• Assessment 3
PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**

- Recognise, understand and apply the most common theoretical approaches used in studying politics and policy, and identify differences and similarities between them

**Assessment task**

- Assessment 3

**Changes since First Published**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13/02/2017</td>
<td>Dates for external student weekend classes were incorrect</td>
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</table>