



POIR902

Policy Research Project

S2 External 2019

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer

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Hearing Hub Building, level 2 south wing

Tuesday 11-1 and by appointment

Francesco Stolfi

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

POL820 and POIR901 and admission to MPPP or MPPPMDevStud or MPPPMPASR or MPPPMIntRel

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This is a self-directed research project under supervision. Students will identify a contemporary or historical policy problem, and plan and undertake in-depth research culminating in an original dissertation.

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:

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Critically apply key concepts, theories and methodologies in the discipline of public policy
- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case

studies

Critically reflect on the importance and relevance of contextual factors in the development of policy arguments

Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy

Effectively communicate concepts, arguments and recommendations

General Assessment Information

Late Submissions

Late Submission Penalty “Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.”

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Research Proposal	20%	Yes	Sunday 18 August, 11:59pm
Literature Review	20%	No	Sunday 8 September, 11:59pm
Dissertation	60%	No	Monday 11 November, 11:59pm

Research Proposal

Due: **Sunday 18 August, 11:59pm**

Weighting: **20%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

The first assessment task requires you to refine your general topic area so that it addresses a specific problem. You should do this in consultation with the unit convenor. This task involves defining some research questions which your project will answer, and developing a tentative argument in relation to the problems/issues you intend to address. Your proposal should also give an indication of the relevant research literature in your chosen area, and identify the methodology which you intend to use in conducting your research.

Your written research proposal should include the following components:

- a working title
- an abstract (maximum 150 words)
- a preliminary annotated bibliography (at least 10 relevant scholarly sources) (approximately 800 words)

- justification of your chosen research questions(s) in light of your preliminary bibliography, and indicating the significance of your project (up to 300 words)
- the proposed methodology (up to 300 words)
- a work plan: this means a week-by-week plan of the tasks required to complete your dissertation by the due date, including reference to potential constraints and mechanisms to deal within constraints in the assigned timeframe. This can be presented as a chart or table.

Total word limit for the research proposal: 1500 words

A marking rubric is provided on the iLearn site. Note that this is a hurdle assignment: I will not mark your final dissertation if you have not submitted a research proposal.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Effectively communicate concepts, arguments and recommendations

Literature Review

Due: **Sunday 8 September, 11:59pm**

Weighting: **20%**

The second assessment task requires you to identify and analyse the relevant scholarly literature for your research project. You will need to do a substantial amount of reading to be able to find the most relevant books and articles. The literature review also requires you to demonstrate your reading, comprehension and analytical skills.

The literature review should do the following:

- provide a theoretical context for the research project
- demonstrate where the research project fits in the existing body of public policy knowledge
- identify flaws or gaps in the existing literature
- justify the research questions of your project, and your chosen approach

The literature review may form part of your final essay, subject to revisions in response to feedback from the unit convenor.

Word limit: 1500 words

The marking criteria and rubric are posted on the iLearn site.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Critically apply key concepts, theories and methodologies in the discipline of public policy

- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies
- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy
- Effectively communicate concepts, arguments and recommendations

Dissertation

Due: **Monday 11 November, 11:59pm**

Weighting: **60%**

The final task is the submission of the dissertation which is the end result of your research project. Your dissertation will be a piece of formal academic writing, which demonstrates mastery of the topic area, shows originality in your analysis, and presents a clear, coherent and well-substantiated argument.

Your dissertation should include:

- title page
- plagiarism (academic honesty) declaration
- abstract
- table of contents indicating section or chapter headings
- page numbers
- bibliography

Submission instructions: Submit the dissertation electronically to Turnitin Assignments on the iLearn website by midnight on the due date. No hard copy is required.

Examination of dissertation: Your dissertation will be marked by two examiners from within the department.

Word limit: The dissertation has a maximum word limit of 6000 words, not including the bibliography.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Critically apply key concepts, theories and methodologies in the discipline of public policy
- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies
- Critically reflect on the importance and relevance of contextual factors in the development of policy arguments
- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy
- Effectively communicate concepts, arguments and recommendations

Delivery and Resources

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>

There is no text book for this unit. There are suggested readings about research practice posted on the iLearn site, and these will be available in the Macquarie University library.

There are many valuable resources within the Macquarie University Library, and the staff in the library are also able to help you to find the materials you need. The Library also runs useful sessions on You should get to know the library well during this unit, and familiarise yourself early in the session with the databases and other resources available through the Library website. Further details are available here: <http://www.mq.edu.au/about/campus-services-and-facilities/library/research>

Supervision:

This is an exercise in independent research, and you are expected to draw on knowledge and skills which you have developed in other units in the Master of Politics and Public Policy, and to further develop your knowledge and skills as you work independently on a topic of your choice. The unit convenor will guide you as you undertake your research project. You should meet or communicate by telephone with your supervisor on a regular basis during the semester. As a guide, you should discuss your research project with the unit convenor on a fortnightly basis.

There are no timetabled classes for this unit.

Unit Schedule

I would like to touch base with students (on email is fine, but if you are near campus we can also meet in person) in weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 12. This will be principally to discuss the assessment tasks and what is required, and to discuss your specific research. In addition, students are welcome to make an appointment with me at any time. Finally, I will read one draft of your dissertation and return feedback in track changes, which will not be graded. This is not compulsory, but if students would like feedback they should get their draft to me no later than week 11.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). 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](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (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 Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

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.

Graduate Capabilities

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

- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies

Assessment tasks

- Literature Review
- Dissertation

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

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Critically apply key concepts, theories and methodologies in the discipline of public policy

- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies
- Critically reflect on the importance and relevance of contextual factors in the development of policy arguments
- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy
- Effectively communicate concepts, arguments and recommendations

Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Literature Review
- Dissertation

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

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Critically apply key concepts, theories and methodologies in the discipline of public policy
- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies
- Critically reflect on the importance and relevance of contextual factors in the development of policy arguments
- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy

Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Literature Review
- Dissertation

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

- Plan, design and execute self-directed research into a current or historical policy problem
- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies
- Critically reflect on the importance and relevance of contextual factors in the development of policy arguments
- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy

Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Literature Review
- Dissertation

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

- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise a range of evidence related to a chosen policy
- Effectively communicate concepts, arguments and recommendations

Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Literature Review
- Dissertation

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

- Analyse, integrate and synthesise complex information related to a real-world case studies

Assessment tasks

- Literature Review
- Dissertation