THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF ARTS

POLS30035
Policy Design: from theory to practice

Subject Guide

Semester One, 2017

The website for this subject is available through the Learning Management System (LMS) at**: https://lms.unimelb.edu.au/**

The LMS is an important source of information for this subject. Useful resources such as lecture / seminar notes, lecture recordings and subject announcements will be available through the website. **It is your responsibility to regularly check in with the LMS for subject announcements and updates.**

You will require a university email account (username and password) to access the Learning Management System. You can activate your university email account at: **https://accounts.unimelb.edu.au/manage**

Teaching Staff

Subject Coordinator: Professor Jenny Lewis

Brief Profile: Jenny M Lewis is Professor of Public Policy in the School of Social and Political Sciences, and Director of the Policy Lab. Jenny is particularly interested in: expertise and the policy process; policy design; public sector innovation; and performance measurement. She has published widely in international journals, is the author of six books, and has been awarded American, European and Australian prizes for her research. Jenny has also worked as a consultant for governments.

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Co-lecturer: Professor Mark Considine

Brief Profile: Mark Considine is the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. His research areas include governance studies, comparative social policy, employment services, public sector reform, local development, and organisational sociology. Mark has published award-winning journal articles and numerous books, and has also been associated with governments and the community sector in the implementation of a number of recent projects and organisational reviews.

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Data analysis demonstrator: Dr Phuc Nguyen
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Subject Overview

This subject is designed to develop students' knowledge of the theory and practice of making public policy. It provides a survey of the principal theories of the policy process, some of which emphasise a formal rational process and others of which emphasise the role of institutional process and discourse. By focusing on a range of international comparative experiences, the subject examines different governance systems and institutional changes. It includes a study of both conventional and emerging forms of public and community consultation and communication, including opinion polling, social media and crowd-sourcing.

Student evaluation of this subject:

This is a new subject being delivered for the first time in 2017.

Learning Objectives

On completion of this subject students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a sophisticated and critical and comparative understanding of key theories about the policy design process; and

- Demonstrate conceptual sophistication in the analysis of the practical politics of the policy process; and

- Develop an advanced knowledge of different practices of public consultation and communication strategies; and

- Demonstrate advanced critical skills in the presentation of policy options, evidence and communication; and

- Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate different sources of evidence in the development of arguments; and

- Work productively and collaboratively in groups with other students.

Subject Structure

Students are expected to attend 1 x 2 hour seminar per week during the semester. **Most of these seminars will be focused around discussion of the required readings for the week and it is expected that you will have read these in advance of each class.**

In addition, students are expected to work on out of class exercises related to the second (group-based) assignment for an average of 1 hour per week during semester, concentrated in weeks 5 to 10.

The subject is comprised of three parts, which are related to the three pieces of assessment for the subject:

1. Theoretical foundations: Policy theory and design (assignment 1: critical essay)
2. Policy Lab: Data analysis and policy design (assignment 2: group project)
3. Integration and new trends: from theory to practice (assignment 3: research essay).

All seminars will be held in Arts West North Wing room 453 (Collaborative Learning Room).

Attendance / Participation Requirements

Attendance at all Seminars is expected. The subject will be taught in an interactive format and will rely on student attendance and students having done the required reading in advance of the seminar. Participation in seminar debates is therefore expected from all students.

There will be a number of classroom activities included within the seminars. Non-attendance will adversely affect a student's ability to contribute to all of the assignments, but particularly the second and third assignments, as activities related to these will be conducted during the seminars.

Students should be aware of what is expected of them in seminars - this will be discussed in the first class. As a minimum, students are expected to attend, undertake weekly readings and contribute to discussion.

Seminar Attendance Hurdle Requirement
Apologies for absence are expected. Undergraduate students are required to attend a minimum of **75%** of all seminars (9 seminars) for the subject in order to qualify to have their written work assessed. If a student does not meet the seminar attendance hurdle requirement s/he will fail that subject with an NH grade.

Application for Seminar Attendance Waiver
Students can apply for attendance waivers of up to a maximum of 2 classes only (beyond the number of classes students are able to miss without penalty).

Applications should be submitted to the Subject Coordinator by e-mail (and copied to the tutor/seminar assistant) no later than 3 working days after the class that was missed. Supporting documentation (i.e. Doctor's certificate) may be supplied to support a student's request. Students should be notified of the outcome of the application via email within three business days of its submission. If the application is approved, students will be required to submit a 200 word precis of the class(es) missed, normally 5 working days after outcome notification.

Applications will not be considered if submitted more than 3 working days after the class that was missed.

Students seeking a class attendance waiver for more than two classes (beyond the number of classes students are able to miss without penalty) should submit an application for **Special Consideration.**

Readings

All required readings for this subject are listed in this subject guide. Online links to all required readings and most recommended readings are available from the 'Readings' section of the subject LMS site. Required readings represent the minimum expected for you to participate effectively in class – make sure you read these before each class.

Further recommended readings are listed in this guide and on the LMS. You are encouraged to augment your understanding of the topics discussed by drawing on this list. In addition, it is expected that you will develop your own learning and knowledge through wider reading and research, particularly with regard to completion of assessment items.

The seminar dates and topics are as follows:

Date	Seminar topic	Assessment
	THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
27 February	1. Introduction to the subject: Actors and institutions in public policy	
6 March	2. Rational choice, incrementalism and garbage cans	
13 March	3. Discursive and critical approaches to policy	
20 March	4. Design theory and policy	1. Critical evaluative paper (due 22 March)
	THE POLICY LAB	
27 March	5. Introduction to data analysis and assignment 2	
3 April	6. From data analysis to policy design - identifying data sources and defining the problem	
10 April	7. From data analysis to policy design – constructing solutions, testing, evaluating	
17 April	NON TEACHING WEEK	
24 April	8. From data analysis to policy design – policy and budget resources	
1 May	9. Policy design assignment 2 world café	
	INTEGRATION AND NEW TRENDS	
8 May	10. Big data and policy design	2. Group project on policy design (due 8 May)
15 May	11. Innovation and policy labs	
22 May	12. Panel: Policy design in practice	
		3. Research essay (due 14 June)

Semester 1, 2017 Seminar Program and Readings

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week One (27 February):
Topic: **Introduction to the subject: Actors and institutions in public policy**
This week we will investigate the meaning of public policy and map out the context of the policy process. What institutional structures and processes are important to the making of public policy? How do they shape public policy? What actors are involved? What roles do politicians, bureaucrats, interest groups, and others play? How do actors and institutions combine in setting the context for policy debates and decisions?

Required Reading:
1. Mark Considine (2005) *Making Public Policy.* Cambridge: Polity. Chapters 2 (Actors) and 7 (Institutions: courts, bureaucracies and budgets).
2. Damon Alexander, Jenny M Lewis and Mark Considine (2015) 'How Governments Think: Skills, Expertise, and Experience in Public Policy Making', in: (D Alexander and JM Lewis, editors) *Making Public Policy Decisions: Expertise, skills and experience.* London: Routledge, 33-54.

Recommended Reading:
Michael Howlett and M Ramesh (2003) *Studying public policy. Policy cycles and policy subsystems.* Toronto: OUP. Chapter 1 (Policy science and policy cycles).

Week Two (6 March):
Topic: **Rational choice, incrementalism and garbage cans**
This week is centred on understanding how the policy process works. We will examine and compare different theories of the policy process, from rational choice, to incrementalism, and garbage can theory. What kinds of framework can we use to understand how and why policy changes, and why it might not?

Required Reading:
1. Graham T. Allison (1969) 'Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis'. *The American Political Science Review* 63(3): 689-718.
2. Charles Lindblom, (1959) 'The science of muddling through"'. *Public Administration Review* 19(2): 79-88.
3. Michael D. Cohen, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen (1972) 'A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice.' *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17(1): 1-25.

Recommended Reading:
Michael Howlett and M Ramesh (2003) *Studying public policy. Policy cycles and policy subsystems.* Toronto: OUP. Chapter 7 (Public policy decision making).

Week Three (13 March):
Topic: **Discursive and critical approaches to policy**
In this topic we will examine the framing of policy problems by participants in the process. What makes a problem a problem? Who is it a problem for? How do policy actors represent particular problems? What terms do they use and how do they structure the debate? We will focus on discursive approaches to examining public policy in this topic.

Required Reading:
1. Frank Fischer (2003) *Reframing public policy*. Oxford: OUP. Chapter 2 (Constructing policy theory: Ideas, language, and discourse).
2. Carol Bacchi (1999) *Women, policy and politics*. London: Sage. Chapter 2 (Rethinking policy studies)

Recommended Reading:
John Dryzek (2008) 'Policy analysis as critique' in: *The Oxford handbook of public policy* (M Moran, M Rein and RE Goodin, eds). Oxford: OUP.

Week Four (20 March*):*
Topic: **Design theory and policy**
This week we will focus on the recent 'design turn' in public policy. Design thinking focuses on the expertise of individuals to use imagination in making public policy decisions, in contrast to the more frequent emphasis on structures and other external factors that constrain policy-making.

Required Reading:
1. Mark Considine (2012) 'Thinking Outside the Box? Applying Design Theory to Public Policy', *Politics and Policy*, 40 (4): 704-724.
2. Michael Mintrom and Joannah Leutjens (2016) 'Design Thinking in Policymaking Processes: Opportunities and Challenges'. *AJPA* 75(3): 391-402.
3. Mark Considine, Damon Alexander, Jenny M Lewis (2014) 'Policy design as craft: teasing out policy design expertise using a semi-experimental approach', *Policy Sciences*, 47(3): 209-225.

Recommended Reading:
Welcome to the Virtual Crash Course in Design Thinking - d.School .
http://dschool.stanford.edu/dgift/

THE POLICY LAB

Week Five (27 March):
Topic: **Introduction to data analysis and assignment 2**
This week will include an introduction to data analysis for policy design, and the software that we will use for data analysis.

The second (group) assignment and topics will be described, and we will work through a number of examples in the seminar.

Required Reading:
There is no reading in advance for this seminar, but materials related to data analysis and the second assignment will be available on the LMS and discussed in class.

Week Six (3 April):
Topic: **From data analysis to policy design - identifying data sources and defining the problem**

Discussion topic: We will examine the behavioural approach to the design of policy.

Finalisation of groups for the second assignment, and work will begin on the projects.

Required Reading:
Elinor Ostrom (1998) 'A behavioural approach to the rational choice theory of collective action'. *APSR* 92(10): 1-22.

Recommended Reading:
Richard Thaler, Cass Sunstein, and John Balz (2013) 'Choice architecture' in: *The behavioural foundations of public policy* (E Shafir ed). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 428-439.

Week Seven (10 April):
Topic: **From data analysis to policy design – constructing solutions, testing, evaluating**

Discussion topic: We will examine the growing interest on experimentation and experiments in public policy.

Further group work on assignment 2.

Required Reading:

1. Sabel, C.F. and Zeitlin, J. (2014) 'Experimentalism in the EU: Common ground and persistent differences', *Regulation and Governance* 6: 410-426.
2. Stoker, G. and John, P. (2008) 'Design Experiments: Engaging Policy Makers in the Search for Evidence about What Works', *Political Studies* 57(2): 356-373.

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EASTER NON TEACHING PERIOD (UA Common Week)

Friday 14 April - Sunday 23 April 2017

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Week Eight (24 April):
Topic: **From data analysis to policy design – policy and budget resources**

Discussion topic: Case - 'Mayor Evan Sweeney's budget cutbacks'

Further group work on assignment 2.

Required Reading:
Harvard Kennedy School of Government case program 'Mayor Evan Sweeney's budget cutbacks'

Week Nine (1 May):
Topic: **Policy design assignment 2 world café**
This week will be run as a world café where groups do short explanations of their policy design assignment to other groups and answer questions. The session is aimed at helping groups to finalise this assignment.

Required Reading:
There is no reading in advance for this seminar

INTEGRATION AND NEW TRENDS

Week Ten (8 May):
Topic: **Big data and policy design**

Required Reading:
1. Helen Margetts and David Sutcliffe (2013) 'Addressing the Policy Challenges and Opportunities of "Big Data"' *Policy & Internet* 5(2): 139-146.

2. Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts (2015) 'Design Principles for Essentially Digital Governance', Paper to the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Week Eleven (15 May):
Topic: **Innovation and policy labs**

Required Reading:
1. Jenny M Lewis, Lykke M Ricard, Erik-Hans Klijn, and Tamyko Ysa (2017) *Innovation in city governments: structures, networks, and leadership.* New York: Routledge. Chapter 1 (The public sector innovation puzzle).
2. Ben Williamson (2015) 'Testing governance: the laboratory lives and methods of policy innovation labs. Stirling: University of Stirling.

Recommended Reading:
Jean Hartley (2013) 'Public and private features of innovation' in *Handbook of innovation in public services* (S Osborne and L Brown, eds). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 44-59.

Week Twelve (22 May):
Topic: **Panel: Policy design in practice**
We will discuss the reality of policy-making in practice with a panel of experienced people who have worked in policy-making from a range of different perspectives.

Required Reading:
NONE

SWOT VAC: 29 May –2 June 2017

EXAMINATION PERIOD: 5 June – 23 June 2017

Assessment

Overview

Assessment for this subject comprises:

Assessment type	Weighting	Due Date
1000 word critical evaluative paper	25%	5pm Wednesday 22 March 2017
1000 word group project on policy design	25%	5pm Monday 8 May 2017
2000 word research essay	50%	5pm Wednesday 14 June 2017

Assessment one: 1000 word paper (25%) due 5pm Wednesday 22 March 2017

Answer the following question:
There are many theories of the policy process and policy design. In your evaluation, which of those that you have read is the best policy design theory? Why?

The purpose of this assignment is to develop critical analytical skills in regard to policy design theory.

You will be marked on the following criteria:

- How clearly you explain the set of criteria you have used to evaluate different theories
- How effectively you demonstrate your understanding of different theories
- How well you present your critical evaluation of these theories
- How successfully you make an argument for which theory is best
- How well the paper is structured and written.

Assessment two: 1000 word project report (25%) due 5pm Monday 8 May 2017

This assessment will be conducted in project groups and each group will submit a report on their findings. You are writing the report as a group working in the policy office of a State Minister. We will use some of the seminar time to work on the data analysis and the presentation of data, as well as on the policy design arising from your analysis.

The purpose of this assignment is to develop skills in using data analysis to define a policy problem and to design policy on the basis of this analysis. You will be able to choose from a range of broad topics to begin and then will define a more specific issue/problem that you will investigate.

You will be marked on the following criteria:

- How comprehensive the data is (How much has been found and how robust/convincing is it?)
- How appropriate the data analysis is (Have the correct methods of reporting and statistical tests been used?
- How well the data are presented
- How clearly the link between the issue/problem and the data has been made
- How appropriate the policy design that follows from this analysis is
- How clear and concise the report is.

Assessment three: 2000 word research essay (50%) due 5pm Wednesday 14 June 2017 (examination period)

You will be required to answer two (equally weighted) questions which draw upon the policy design theory discussed in the seminars, the group project undertaken on policy design in practice, and new trends in policy design.

Answer the following question:
Why is policy design so hard in practice?

The purpose of this assessment is to develop reflection skills in relation to policy design theories and the link to the practice of policy design.

You will be marked on the following criteria:

- How much and how effectively you have used the literature on policy design theory (from the subject and elsewhere)
- How effectively you demonstrate your understanding of the link between policy design theory and practice
- How well you use your experience from the group project report to support your answer

- How logical your overall argument is
- How clear and concise your paper is and how well it is presented.

Grading system

A standard grading system applies across all Faculties of the University, as follows:

N 0%-49% **Fail** - *not satisfactory*
- Work that fails to meet the basic assessment criteria;
- Work that contravenes the policies and regulations set out for the assessment exercise;
- Where a student fails a subject, all failed components of assessment are double marked.

P 50%-64% **Pass -** *satisfactory*
- Completion of key tasks at an adequate level of performance in argumentation, documentation and expression;
- Work that meets a limited number of the key assessment criteria;
- Work that shows substantial room for improvement in many areas.

H3 65%-69% **Third-class honours** - *competent*
- Completion of key tasks at a satisfactory level, with demonstrated understanding of key ideas and some analytical skills, and satisfactory presentation, research and documentation;
- Work that meets most of the key assessment criteria;
- Work that shows room for improvement in several areas.

H2B 70%-74% **Second-class honours level B** - *good*
- Good work that is solidly researched, shows a good understanding of key ideas, demonstrates some use of critical analysis along with good presentation and documentation;
- Work that meets most of the key assessment criteria and performs well in some;
- Work that shows some room for improvement.

H2A 75%-79% **Second-class honours level A** - *very good*
- Very good work that is very well researched, shows critical analytical skills, is well argued, with scholarly presentation and documentation;
- Work that meets all the key assessment criteria and exceeds in some;
- Work that shows limited room for improvement.

H1 80%-100% **First-class honours** - *excellent*
- Excellent analysis, comprehensive research, sophisticated theoretical or methodological understanding, impeccable presentation;

- Work that meets all the key assessment criteria and excels in most;
- Work that meets these criteria and is also in some way original, exciting or challenging could be awarded marks in the high 80s or above.
- Marks of 90% and above may be awarded to the best student work in the H1 range.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a copyright offence, which the University regards as cheating and it is punished accordingly. Students are warned to be careful to guard against it occurring consciously or unconsciously in essay writing. It is therefore important that students spend time ascertaining how their own work differs in its assumptions and methodology from that of the critics they have read or engaged with (including lecturers and tutors!). Students should not repeat material used for another piece of work in the same subject or in any other subject that they have studied, as this also constitutes plagiarism in the terms of the University's guidelines. Students should refer to the Schools' Essay Writing Guide which provides clear guidelines for referencing.

Plagiarism is academic misconduct, and is taken very seriously by the School, Faculty and University. Any acts of suspected academic misconduct detected by assessors will be followed up, and any students involved will be required to respond via the School and/or University procedures for handling academic integrity. For more information and advice about how to avoid plagiarism, see the University's Academic Integrity page: **http://academicintegrity.unimelb.edu.au/**

Student Academic Integrity Policy (MPF1310):
https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1310

Students should be aware of how to appropriately acknowledge sources in their assignments and what referencing style is expected in a particular subject. Students should ask their tutor or subject coordinator if unsure. The Academic Skills Unit (ASU) has a number of free online resources on referencing at: **http://services.unimelb.edu.au/academicskills/all_resources#research-referencing**

For further information, please refer to the School's **2017 SSPS Academic Programs Policy and Procedure Guidelines** document, provided in subject readers and LMS sites, and the **Melbourne Policy Library** website: **http://policy.unimelb.edu.au/**

Assessment Submission

Students must submit all assessment electronically through the Turnitin function, via the online submission portal on the LMS site of the subject. This will act as an electronic receipt of the time and date of assessment submission. All assessment should be typed in double-spacing in 12 point font.

It is the student's responsibility to check the submission requirements for each subject, and ensure that they have received confirmation of the electronic submission of all assessment.

Assessment will not be accepted via fax or email to staff.
Students are expected to retain a copy of all work submitted for assessment.

Extension Policy and Late Submission of Work

Extensions for assessment other than the final piece will be handled by the tutor, Scott Brown, in accordance with the current policy outlined below:

Extensions are not granted after due dates have passed. Students are able to negotiate a short-term extension of up to 5 working days with tutors for in-semester assessment. Longer terms of up to 10 working days can only be approved by the subject coordinator. An extension of time after a deadline has passed will be given usually only for a reason that falls within the guidelines for Special Consideration. A specific date will then be agreed upon and enforced unless evidence for additional Special Consideration is produced.

To apply for an extension, students must complete an Assignment Extension Request form available from relevant subject LMS sites and **email** it to the tutor, along with any supporting documentation where possible, prior to the submission date. Students will then be notified of the outcome of the application by the Tutor via the student's university e-mail account. Extensions for the final piece of assessment due during the examination period may be granted by the subject coordinator on the provision of some documentation for a maximum of TEN working days (two weeks) and on the condition that the work will be marked in time for a final grade to be returned by the results submission deadline set by the School. **Special Consideration** applications should be submitted for issues which impact on the whole of semester work and for issues affecting assessment where more than a two week extension is requested.

Penalty for Submission of Late Assessment

Essay-based assessment (or equivalent) submitted late without an approved extension will be **penalised at 10% per working day**. All pieces of written work must be submitted to pass any subject.

Special Consideration

Students can apply for **Special Consideration** via myunimelb. Special Consideration applications should be submitted no later than 5pm on the third working day after the submission/sitting date for the relevant assessment component. Students are only eligible for Special Consideration if circumstances beyond their control have severely hindered completion of assessed work. Appropriate response to Special Consideration depends upon the degree of disadvantage experienced by the student. This may vary from an extension in the case of slight disadvantage to additional assessment in the cases of moderate or severe disadvantage. Final decisions in line with University policy will be made by the Committee. Students should be advised not to apply for special consideration unless the relevant circumstances have delayed their study by at least 2 weeks. Applications for special consideration detailing delays to study for a shorter period will be refused and the student will be referred to their subject coordinator for an extension. If students are experiencing difficulties and are not sure whether to apply for special consideration, it is important that they discuss the matter with the lecturer / subject coordinator or a Student Advisor at **Stop 1**.
For further information on Special Consideration, please refer to the following link:
http://students.unimelb.edu.au/admin/special

https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1326#section-4.31

Ongoing or Long-Term Circumstances:

Students may be eligible for an Academic Adjustment Plan (AAP) if your studies are significantly impacted by ongoing or episodic circumstances. For students with recognised long-term circumstances, study adjustments will usually be applied for a longer duration. This means that you will not have to reapply for Special Consideration every study period.
http://students.unimelb.edu.au/admin/special

http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability

https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1326#section-4.31

Elite Athletes and Performers, Army Reservists, Emergency Volunteers

Equitable adjustments such as for elite athletes, elite performers, defence reservists, emergency volunteers can be found at:
http://students.unimelb.edu.au/admin/special

https://policy.unimelb.edu.au/MPF1326#section-4.31