

Pols321
Public policy making in New Zealand

Lectures: Tuesdays: 10:00am-10:50am, Wednesdays: 10:00am-11:50am, Thursdays: 10-11:50am.

Course Coordinators: Dr Chris Rudd, Joshua James

There is a vast academic literature on the study of public policy making. We will only look at particular aspects of policy making in this course but in doing so we will engage with a number of key features of the policy making process in New Zealand.

The course is broken into three interconnected sections. In the first section, we look at what is public policy and the various models of policy-making: rational; incremental; and complex. In the second section, we look at critical theories, and how they can be used to evaluate public policy, and the public policy process. The third and final section of the course focuses on evaluating if a public policy is working as it was intended to.

Course Aims

1. *Cognitive:* By the end of the course, you should be able to outline the main theories of policy-making and have an understanding of how policy is created and implemented in New Zealand. You should be able to express these theories simply, in your own words.
2. *Behavioural Skills:* Working in groups will develop your cooperative, collaborative and conflict resolution skills. You will also have the opportunity to hone your skills related to oral and written communication.
3. *Affective:* Finally, the course should shape the attitudes you hold towards studying: you will feel more confident, responsible and motivated in your studies — and maybe even enjoy and have fun at the same time! By the end of the course, you should feel part of a community of scholars.

Chris and Josh want to make a difference in your understanding of public policy, and to teach you skills that can be used everyday, both in -and out- side of the university environment.

Etiquette

Mobile phones: Set your phone to silent during class and do not use them recreationally. There may be times when mobile phones are needed to google things – this is an acceptable use for them. We only have 6 weeks together, and a tight schedule, so you'll need as few distractions as possible.

Laptops: Laptops have a genuine pedagogical reason: for taking notes, and researching when it's needed. Please try to stick to using your laptops for these. Often Chris or Josh will be sitting at the back if they're not teaching, and they don't need to see your social media feeds.

Contact

To contact Joshua James, you can email him at Joshua.James@otago.ac.nz.

To contact Chris Rudd, you can email him at chris.rudd@otago.ac.nz.

We receive a lot of emails each day from students but we will make every effort to respond within 24 hours. In your emails, heed the following advice: include a meaningful subject line; begin your email with "Hello..." or "Hi..."; be specific about the action you'd like me to take; and sign your full name in the first contact email.

Office hours are by appointment.

Lecture and Seminar Topics

Week	Date	Instructor		Topic
1	7/01/20	Josh	Lecture	What is Public Policy? How does an idea turn into public policy in New Zealand?
	8/01/20	Chris	Lecture	Assignment One introduction, Incrementalism
	9/01/20	Chris	Lecture	Rational Choice Theory, Complexity Theory
2	14/01/20	Josh/Chris	Tutorial	Assignment One Preparation
	15/01/20	Josh	Lecture	Neoliberalism
	16/01/20	Josh and Chris	Presentations	Assignment One Presentations
3	21/01/20	Josh	Lecture	Marxism
	22/01/20	Josh	Lecture	Environmentalism, Indigenous Perspectives
	23/01/20	Josh	Lecture	Feminism, Assignment Two preparation
4	28/01/20	Chris	Lecture	Evaluating Public Policy
	29/01/20	Josh	Lecture	Research Ethics
	30/01/20	Josh	Tutorial	Assignment Three introduction
5	4/02/20	Josh	Tutorial	Assignment Three preparation
	5/02/20	Josh	Tutorial	Assignment Three preparation
	6/02/20			Waitangi Day: no tutorial
6	11/02/20	Josh	Tutorial	Assignment Three preparation
	12/02/20	Josh	Tutorial	Assignment Three preparation
	13/02/20	Josh and Chris	Presentations	Assignment Three Presentations

Assessment

Reading Summaries (worth 10%).

For both campus and distance students: due weekly, at 5pm every Friday through the appropriate Blackboard blog.

Select one of the readings for the week, and write a brief reflection on it (roughly 200 words). You will not be able to reflect on the entire reading in 200 words, so just choose one idea that you found interesting/challenging/unbelievable and explain why.

Note that each reading summary is worth 2%, and you have six opportunities to submit a summary. Only the top five will be counted (which means if you submit six, your lowest mark will be discounted).

In the last two weeks there are no readings: You are expected to pick a reading from the critical theory section for those two weeks (21st-23rd of January)

Assignment One: Summaries of theories of policy-making (worth 25%).

For campus students, the class will be split into nine groups, and will evaluate different aspects of the different theories. The nine groups and topics are:

- Incrementalism 1: History and basic elements of incrementalism.
- Incrementalism 2: Application and evidence of incrementalism in public policy
- Incrementalism 3: A critical evaluation of Incrementalism.
- Rational choice theory 1: History and basic elements of rational choice theory.
- Rational choice theory 2: Application and evidence of rational choice theory in public policy.
- Rational choice theory 3: A critical evaluation of incrementalism.
- Complexity theory 1: History and basic elements of complexity theory.
- Complexity theory 2: Application and evidence of complexity theory in public policy.
- Complexity theory 3: A critical evaluation of complexity theory.

Each group will submit a 1500 word essay, and present their results in a 5 minute presentation on: Thursday 16th, in class.

Distance Students

Distance students will also be broken into groups and will be allocated one of the theories to evaluate and submit, collectively, a 1500 word essay as well as a 5 minute video presentation. For both campus and distance students the essay is due: Friday 17th January, noon, via turnitin.

Assignment Two: Critical Theory and its application (worth 25%)

Due: Friday 31st January, noon via turnitin.

Individually, write an essay of no more than 2500 words, on an essay topic of your choosing. Either, use one of the four theoretical concepts below to evaluate the policy making process in New Zealand:

1. Marxism
2. Indigenous Perspectives
3. Environmentalism
4. Feminism

It is important that you rely on the literature covered to form your opinions, and provide a sound theoretical perspective for you to evaluate the policy.

Or:

Critically evaluate the influence that neoliberalism has on the current public policy process in New Zealand.

It is important that you provide an overview of what neoliberalism is, and the influence it has on the public policy process in New Zealand, using examples to demonstrate your point.

Note: you might answer this question in many ways, you could say that neoliberalism has a detrimental effect on the policy process, that neoliberalism has no effect on the policy process, or that neoliberalism has a positive impact on the policy process. There is no correct answer, and as long as you use an evidence-based approach, you won't be marked down for taking any particular approach.

Assignment Three: Public policy evaluation (worth 40%)

For Campus Students

You will be broken up into groups and in each group, evaluate the effectiveness of *one* public policy that has been implemented in New Zealand. Each member of the group must interview at least one person who has been affected by the policy.

In your group essay, you should:

- Give background on the legislation (including international context);
- Establish a criterion on how to evaluate the effectiveness of policy;
- Apply said criteria using evidence from both primary and secondary sources to evaluate it;
- Apply one of the earlier critical theories to the policy.

In your presentation, you should:

Present your preliminary findings to the class on 13th February.

The report should be no longer than 4000 words, and the presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes.

For distance students, you can work individually or as part of a group (we recommend the latter). In either case, you must evaluate the effectiveness of one public policy as outlined above. If working individually, you must interview at least one person affected by the policy. Distance students are required to submit a video of no longer than 10 minutes.

Reports for both campus and distance students are due: 14th February, noon, via turnitin.

Assignment Regulations

Any assignment handed in after the due date will not be marked, and will receive zero.

Extensions will be granted in cases of illness or bereavement, with supporting documentation required.

All written work must be submitted through Turnitin. There is no physical hand in for this course.

All written work should follow the below formatting rules:

- Justified margins,
- Appropriate size and font,
- Page numbers,

- The author(s) names on the file,
- 1.5/2 line spacing.
- Use Harvard or Chicago reference style.

Participation

It is a requirement for you to participate in this paper, either in class or via the participation blog on the sidebar. If you are doing this paper by distance, you must post in the participation blog. If you are doing this paper on campus, you may post in the participation blog if you think you have not contributed enough in class.

Chris and Josh will post questions in the blog frequently, and you are also welcome to post questions in it.

If you think you are not participating enough, please email Chris or Josh.

Participation is considered a course requirement, therefore if this is not completed, you will receive a zero on your final assessment, which is worth 40% of your grade.

Workload Expectation

It is expected that you will spend 180 hours on the course, as it is a 18 point paper. That is the equivalent to 30 hours a week. Please bear in this mind when making work or leisure arrangements.