UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING
SCHOOL OF ARTS & HUMANITIES
(HISTORY & POLITICS)

AUTUMN 2016

POLU9UK: Policy and Policymaking in the UK

Module Co-ordinator: Professor Paul Cairney

Office Hours: Fridays 12-1 and 3-4 (on teaching weeks) or by appointment in Pathfoot A95

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Seminars: You attend one group
Group 1 Fridays 10-12 (Pathfoot C1)
Group 2 Fridays 4-6 (Pathfoot C1)

First Meeting: Friday 16th September

1st coursework deadline: Monday 31st October 2016 at noon
2nd coursework deadline Thursday 8th December 2016 at noon

I. Outline, Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

In this module we combine knowledge of policy and policymaking with the detailed study of British politics. We explore concepts such as the ‘Westminster model’ to compare two images of British policymaking: a Westminster-centric image in which we focus on key actors such as the Prime Minister, and a ‘multi-level governance’ image in which we focus on the spread of power across many policymaking venues.

We compare a range of concepts to make sense of British policymaking – including the ‘Westminster model’, majoritarianism, and multi-level governance – with concepts that we can use to explore policymaking in any system, including complexity theory, multiple streams analysis, punctuated equilibrium, and the advocacy coalition framework.

We develop the key skills associated with policy analysis: to produce concise and logical analysis of policy problems and solutions that would work in the real world. We apply those insights to the study of British policymaking.

In short, what I want to do is (1) find out what you already know about British politics from your studies so far, then (2) show you how the ‘lens’ of policy analysis will help you take your intellectual and practical knowledge of British politics to a new level. To that end, I encourage you to read in considerable depth the study of public policy: the more background reading, the better.

We combine private study, seminars/ group work, and 1-to-1 sessions. Private study: you read my blog posts, listen to my podcasts, read the relevant chapters in my book, and read the original literature to which I refer in the module guide. That way, you come to the seminars prepared to talk about them and share your understanding with me and your peers. Later, you study to
produce your own theoretically-informed case study, in which you combine a policy options paper with your reflections on your recommendations, and a blog post in which you try to convince a wide audience about the need to solve the problem you raise. Finally, you produce an essay to consolidate your knowledge of policymaking.

Seminar and group work. We meet for two hours once per week. In group and plenary sessions we discuss key concepts and theories, how they relate to each other, and how you can apply their insights to British politics. You then give us your policy ideas in a very short presentation. One-to-one: I hold weekly (voluntary – you ask and I provide) feedback sessions in which you can seek clarity or advice. This includes oral feedback on your coursework throughout the course.

You can find the list of background blog posts and podcasts here - [https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/1000-words/] and I will put new blog posts and other material here: [https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/policymaking-in-the-uk/] These concepts will help you think of the right questions to ask, and explanations to seek, but it is up to you to:

1. Bring your own empirical case study analysis to help you make sense of policy and policymaking.
2. Explain this stuff quickly and concisely to me and your peers. Imagine a policymaking world in which people are too busy to pay attention to you unless you make them pay attention, with: an eye-grabbing blog post title, one simple message, and a presentation that you can deliver in fewer than 5 minutes and 1000 words.
3. Show that you understand how to apply these insights specifically to the study of British politics. In other words, if you took POLU9PP ([https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/polu9pp/]) or will take it in the Spring, you will find interesting overlaps, but they are separate courses with their own specific requirements.

If you can grasp the value of these concepts, they can help you understand, describe, and explain British politics in a new way. We can focus on the high profile events such as elections and ‘Brexit’ but also the more routine part of politics and policymaking that takes place out of the public spotlight.

**Subject specific skills**

- Specific knowledge and understanding of current developments in the subject.
- an informed and critical understanding of theories of politics and policymaking
- an informed and critical understanding of current issues and debates in British politics
- an informed and critical understanding of the significance of policymaking.

**Transferable/general skills**

- produce very short and concise reports that people will want to read
- give quick and meaningful presentations that people will pay attention to and remember rather than sit through stoically because they have to be there
- identify, assess and utilise appropriate information sources, especially via the internet.
- understand and deploy complex sets of data, information and concepts.
- assimilate and disseminate, to defend and critically assess such data, information and concepts.
• make formal presentations on specific topics to an informed audience.
• work effectively (under guidance) in a peer relationship, exercising autonomy and initiative.
• develop interpretative and analytical skills.
• deploy critical awareness and creative thinking
• make informed judgements on the basis of relevant information.
• indicate an understanding of the relevant theoretical debates in the subject area.
• understand and employ the relevant range research methodologies
• an ability to retain three jokes, with the punchlines ‘I’ll give you some cream for that’, ‘labracadabrardor’, and ‘trackybottomy’.

Expectations:

The Division of History & Politics encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. We expect you to attend the seminars, do the required reading, hand in work on time, and to follow up on the feedback. In addition to work for seminar presentations and essays, we expect you to spend on average 6 hours per week on seminar preparation. For your weekly seminar, you should do the reading and listening, make notes, and prepare to make a meaningful weekly contribution to discussion.

Teaching and Learning

There will be one two-hour seminar per week. There will be no lectures. Instead, I will provide blog posts and podcasts (on policy concepts) for you to read/listen and take notes in advance and use as the basis for your weekly contribution. The background policy posts come under a package called ‘1000 Words’. Then, for each week (before we begin to hear your presentations), I provide an additional post to show how these concepts relate to our understandings of British politics.

Topics, seminar dates, and initial reading:

For most weeks, I give you one or two things to read. Many tend to be written by me (!!) and you can find almost all of my written work on my blog page marked CV. I do this to give you a ‘gateway’ to further reading: try to get a full grasp of the initial argument then follow up as many of the relevant references as possible.

In each session, we will begin by forming small groups, in which you discuss the key points of the initial reading, tell each other about what else you read, and prepare to tell us all about these insights. Please do not ‘free ride’. We can then have a large group discussion. I won’t lecture, but I can give you some substantive notes, and you will benefit most from my notes if you can ‘hang’ them on insights you already identified from your reading.

1. Introduction to British politics. Please come prepared to talk about your existing knowledge of British politics. How does it work? What is going on with ‘Brexit’?! What will it change? Will it prompt a break up of Britain? Then I’ll set out my understanding of the relationship between British politics and policymaking. We can use this discussion to guide the rest of the course. I have my ideas, set out below, but we can follow your interests too. Please don’t try to get away with saying that you have learned nothing about British politics: no-one will buy it. 16th September
2. **Introducing two stories of British politics: the Westminster model versus Complex Government.** We’ll compare two ways of thinking about British politics: the high profile excitement of elections and central governments, and the wider policymaking context. One story is about central control in the hands of a small number of ministers. Another helps us identify the diffusion of power and important limits to ministerial action. I’ll ask you to describe both of those stories, think of examples of decision-making which seem to reinforce one or the other, and ask which you find most convincing (as a description of what actually happens and what should happen). **23rd September**

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**Initial reading:** [https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/cairney-conclusion-policy-making-uk-13-5-16.pdf](https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/cairney-conclusion-policy-making-uk-13-5-16.pdf) The chapter tries to sum up two stories of British politics: one stresses the reputation for central control; the other, a diffusion of power. Have a look at the King Canute box too – it is far more relevant than it looks! We can also discuss my feeling that political parties and elected ministers have to pretend to believe in the central control story even if they don’t really buy it.

**Initial reading:** there are also several relevant ‘1000 Words’ posts, including on the Westminster Model.

**Initial reading:** Bara, J. (2005) ‘A Question of Trust: Implementing Party Manifestos’, Parliamentary Affairs, 58, 3, 585-99. This article provides us with a simple way to gauge levels of central control: if policymakers are sincere about their election pledges, how do they fare when trying to carry them out? In particular, what does Bara say about following these pledges long enough to see if they were implemented?

**No session on the 30th September.** Please use the time to read up on British politics and policymaking. The more you read, the better your coursework will be.

3. **Policymaking in the UK: rationality, cycles and policymaker psychology.** In this session, we expand on that idea of two stories. We look at one requirement for the Westminster model: the idea that ministers at the heart of government can know all about the things they want, and make it happen. This contrasts somewhat with a focus on their cognitive limits, with many consequences. In the seminar, I’ll ask you reflect on those limits and what they tell us about the ‘Westminster model’. Try to think of some relevant examples of what happens when, for example, ministers seem to make quick and emotional (rather than ‘evidence based’) decisions: what happens next? I’ll bring my own example (of ‘troubled families’ policy) too. **7th October**

**Initial Reading:** [https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/chapter-2-20-8-13-cairney-policy-policy-making-uk.pdf](https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/chapter-2-20-8-13-cairney-policy-policy-making-uk.pdf)

Also familiarise yourself with the concept of bounded rationality – and others in the 1000 Words series – and its implications for policymaking.

**Initial Reading:** If you could all read the [Chilcot Inquiry report](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chilcot-inquiry-report) from cover to cover we can talk about one of the ultimate examples of bounded rationality in modern British politics.
4. Multi-level governance and policymaking. What happens in British politics if there are lots of actors in lots of places, interaction in lots of institutions or venues with their own rules? Who makes and delivers key decisions? In the first hour, we can discuss this topic in general. In the second, we can discuss how it affects your initial coursework. **14th October**

**Initial Reading** (hour 2): Bache, I. and Flinders, M. (2004a) ‘Multi-Level Governance and the Study of the British State’, Public Policy and Administration, 19, 1: 31–51. We can use the article for its conceptual discussion. Then, since it was published in 2004, I’ll ask if you think it is still as relevant today.

**Initial Reading**: For the nostalgia, you could also read Morphet, J. (2013) *How Europe Shapes British Public Policy* (Bristol: Policy Press)

**Initial Reading** (hour 2): I will provide you with a written ‘how to’ guide on writing policy options papers, reflections, and blog posts. In the meantime, think about the implications of policy studies: in particular, if you want a policy change, who should be your audience? A UK government minister? If so, and if you know about ‘bounded rationality’, how can you capture their attention and encourage them to act? For example, do you focus on the evidence or tell a simple story?

*No seminars on the 21st or 28th October: focus on private study to complete the initial coursework.* You will need this time to get it right. Don’t be fooled by the small word count. It makes a submission harder to write than a normal length essay.

5. Presentation Day One. **In this week, we meet twice** so that you all get the chance to make a presentation based on your policy options paper or blog post. We’ll do about 9 presentations in each workshop, which gives you a sense of your time constraint. How can you make a convincing argument so quickly? You can attend from 1-3 (group 1) or 3-5pm (group 2) on **Thursday 3rd November in C.2B129**.

6. Presentation Day Two. Attend your normal group on **Friday 4th November** for more presentations.

7. Policy networks and communities. If the policymaking world is so full of so many potentially influential actors, how do governments make their task manageable? How do they keep many of them happy while staying electable? In some cases, there is high competition and disagreement, which the government struggles to manage. In others, there is low competition and high agreement, and policy often takes place out of the public spotlight. Why? What do these processes tell us about where power lies in British politics and the extent to which it is built on material resources (and what are these material resources?) versus belief and persuasion (and what makes a persuasive argument in British politics)? **11th November**

**Initial Reading**: Grant Jordan and Paul Cairney (2013) ‘What is the ‘Dominant Model’ of British Policy Making? Comparing Majoritarian and Policy Community Ideas’, British Politics, 8, 3, 233-59. The article describes a debate between two accounts; a Westminster model discussion based on Lijphart’s majoritarianism, and a policy community image based on more power diffusion and (a) consensus or (b) successful ‘framing’ to set the agenda and limit participation. In this session, I will ask you to describe the conditions under which one outcome might occur, and the ‘mechanisms’ involved in going from a huge unwieldy political system to
often stable arrangements. Does the government manage politics with ‘top down’ control or seek other arrangements?

8. Socioeconomic factors and events in British politics. In this seminar we compare the Westminster model’s idea of centralised control with our sense, from studying conditions and events, that many policy outcomes are out of policymakers’ control. So, we can discuss how they act in this context: how do they deal with demographic change or economic crisis? What kinds of factors are most likely to get their attention (and why?) and how are they likely to deal with them? What does ‘Brexit’ tell us about central control? What other conditions and major events can we identify in British politics, and what was their impact? **18th November**

**Initial Reading:** there is a 1000 Words post on the broad issue of policy conditions and events.

**Initial Reading:** Hindmoor, A. and McConnell, A. (2013) ‘Why Didn’t They See it Coming? Warning Signs, Acceptable Risks and the Global Financial Crisis’, *Political Studies*, 61, 543-60. This article sums up the complexity of policymaking from the perspective of governments operating in real time, using very limited information to act quickly (or not) despite very high uncertainty. It provides a useful corrective to the idea of a strong central government with high ‘rationality’. If you are interested in the idea of policymaking during crisis, see also Richards, D. and Smith, M. (2014) *Institutional Crisis in 21st Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).

9. The big developments in British politics: what is their impact on policymaking and accountability? We discuss the big post-war changes, including the development then ‘rolling back’ of the welfare state, major changes in economic policy, the rise of ‘new public management’ to reform British government, and major constitutional change. What has been their effect? Have they helped reinforce or further diminish the central control we associate with the Westminster model? We then focus on the impact of these developments on Westminster-style democratic accountability: can we really hold ministers to account for the things they do (are they truly responsible?) and what happens to policy when we try? How do ministers manage the need to be pragmatic about their limited powers *and* their need to win elections by looking powerful and successful? **25th November**


This is a good, modern, account of the dilemmas that all governments face when trying to ‘let go’ for good and bad reasons (pragmatism, shuffling off responsibility) *and* maintain some sense of central control. You should chase up the references, at least to compare Conservative strategy with the alleged ‘control freakery’ of the Labour government.

**Hall P (1993) Policy paradigms, social learning, and the state: The case of economic policymaking in Britain. Comparative Politics 25(3): 275–296.** This is a classic text for many reasons, but focus on the description of a major shift in economic policy. Has there been a shift again since its publication?

You can also refresh your memory about the main developments in my draft chapter 16 [https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/cairney-conclusion-policy-policymaking-uk-13-5-16.pdf](https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/cairney-conclusion-policy-policymaking-uk-13-5-16.pdf)
10. Writing an essay on British politics, policymaking, and policy change. By now, you should be well on the way to drafting your essay. In this session, we can compare how to answer the big questions about what policy is, why it changes, and what happens next. I’ll get you to describe these processes (from your essay work so far) and we can discuss as a group how to make a convincing account. 2nd December

**Initial Reading:** I will give you a written ‘how to’ guide on writing essays on defining policy, measuring change, and explaining these developments. You should bring a brief summary of your work so far, and we can compare how you all try to address the same task.

**Coursework and assessment**

This module is assessed with 100% coursework. For the initial coursework, the idea is that you specialise in a particular policy area or issue (such as health policy or, say, smoking regulation) and use the concepts/theories from the course to inform your policy analysis, reflection, blog post, and presentation. You prepare a policy analysis paper (20%), blog post (20%), and oral presentation (formative assessment) to help develop a clear understanding of how to present policy analysis to multiple audiences. You learn about the constraints of political communication by being obliged to explain your ideas in an unusually small number of words and short period of time. I invite you to consider how you can influence the policy processes you study by developing and applying key skills. The main skill is to communicate ideas to multiple audiences, including policymakers with little time in which to make decisions, and a wider public with limited knowledge or concern for certain policy issues. You learn key concepts to help explain the policy process so that you can learn how to identify policy problems and solutions, to policymakers and the public, in an effective way. This is a life skill that can be applied to a wide range of situations. During this part of the coursework you also produce a reflective piece of coursework (10%): you consider how your knowledge of British politics and policymaking underpins your policy analysis. The final piece of coursework is an essay on British policymaking (50%). You demonstrate a clear knowledge of key concepts and theories of British politics and policymaking by asking a deceptively simple question: what is policy, how much has it changed, and why? In this case, ‘policy’ is the issue you chose to study as part of your policy analysis.

You focus on the same policy issue each time, since the overall aim is to demonstrate that you can present an effective argument in different ways:

1. A spoken presentation to your peers in the seminar.
2. A short and punchy blog post which recognises the need to make an argument succinctly and grab attention with the title and first sentence/paragraph (on the assumption that your audience will be reading it on their phone and will move on to something else quickly).
3. A policy analysis paper which has to make a substantive argument or recommendation in approximately two pages (on the assumption that busy policymakers won’t read much else before deciding whether or not to pay attention to the problem and your solutions).
4. A one-page reflection on the technical and political feasibility of your policy recommendations, to reflect your theoretical understanding of the policy process.
5. An essay which expands on your theoretical understanding by using it to explain key developments in your chosen issue.

**Important note on ‘theory’ and ‘theoretical’**: in this case, it refers to empirical work (not the political theory discussed in other courses in which you discuss normative concepts such as
liberty and democracy). We use theory to guide explanation, identifying a collection of the same basic causal elements in many cases, such as the institutional rules, and socioeconomic pressures, and beliefs of actors, which influence how policymakers act.

**Summary of Assessment Components and Deadlines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Employability Skill Sets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>All of the initial coursework is due on <strong>Monday 31st October 2016 at noon.</strong> You then give your presentations on Thursday 3rd or Friday 4th November, receiving oral feedback on the day, and I will return your written feedback by Monday 7th November. Note: use your blog post as the basis for your presentation. You only have 5 minutes.</td>
<td>Written communication Analysing and investigation Evaluating sources Construction of a reasoned case Planning and organising Discipline knowledge Concise argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Note: you need to submit the post and make the presentation to receive a mark.</td>
<td>Verbal communication Concise argument Planning and organising Construction of a reasoned case Discipline knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog post and presentation – max. 500 words including links Max. 5 minutes (plus 5 minute Q&amp;A)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Note: you need to submit the post and make the presentation to receive a mark.</td>
<td>Verbal communication Concise argument Planning and organising Construction of a reasoned case Discipline knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Note:** you may not use the same topic that you addressed in POLU9SP or POLU9PP.

Note on referencing: (1) I recommend the Harvard style for the reflection and policy paper (but don’t always use it in the course guide!); but (2) The blog post should have embedded weblinks rather than a bibliography.

**Note on submission:** for convenience, you should include all three assignments in the same Word (or equivalent) document (on separate pages).

**POLICY PAPER**

You receive 20% of your final grade by writing a policy brief. This should be a maximum of 1000 words (plus bibliography) and is generally subject to the same formal and stylistic requirements as the essay, but with a different format to reflect its aim.

*Policy papers design and advocate a feasible measure (e.g., policy, strategy, plan, etc.) for a specific audience (e.g., individual, group, organisation, government) confronted with a significant problem or issue.*
The style and content of policy analyses varies markedly, so you should search the web for some examples. In their various forms, policy papers are frequently used for advocacy within government and by NGOs. Policy papers appear to be:

- **Focused** (designed to achieve the goal of persuading the target audience)
- **Evidence-based** (based on a rational argument supported by evidence about the causes a particular problem and the consequences of potential solutions)
- **Succinct** (the targeted audience does not have the time to read an in-depth analysis)
- **Understandable** (using clear and simple language rather than too much jargon)
- **Accessible** (well-structured and subdivided by using clear descriptive titles)
- **Practical and feasible** (proposes one or more recommendations that seem realistic to the target audience)

The policy paper should be written with a policy-relevant actor/stakeholder in mind, such as a minister in a national or devolved or local government, the President of the European Commission, or a particular non-governmental organisation that is active in this issue-area. Parts of your analysis will be unaffected by this choice, but the policy options section will be written explicitly for this particular target audience.

The problem definition itself will also be shaped by the target audience. For instance, if you write about tobacco control, your policy problem could be about …

(a) how to extend tobacco control to new forms of social activity;
(b) how to criticise tobacco control and recommend effective forms of opposition;
(c) how to evaluate tobacco control and recommend how to learn lessons.

Before you start writing, declare your **policy question and target audience** on a **cover page** (which, like the bibliography, does not count towards the word limit):

- **Question**: …………………………………

Examples:

- Who should take responsibility for tackling *a problem of your choice*?
- How should *an actor of your choice* respond to *a problem of your choice*?
- What role can *an actor of your choice* play in enhancing the status of *an organisation or governance mechanism of your choice*?

**NB:** Steer away from *why* questions, as these are better suited for a fully-fledged research essay.

- **Target audience**: ……………………………
If you are uncertain about your chosen topic or policy question, please get in touch with me well before the submission deadline.

The policy paper could be organised into five sections:

(1) **Executive Summary** (~ 150 words)

- A very succinct summary of the main points, including …
  - A very brief description of the problem
  - A statement on why the current approach needs to be changed
  - Your recommendation

(2) **Situation Brief**

- Provides the background information and explains the significance of the problem
- Identifies the key actors, their interests and strategies (without this, your analysis and recommendations are likely to remain vague)
- Uses narrative analysis and description, but can also include tables with key data or diagrams
- Clear, precise and succinct

(3) **Policy Options**

- Outlines and evaluates policy alternatives, backed up by empirical evidence
- Concentrates on one particular actor whose (assumed or, ideally, ascertained) existing position/policy on the issue is briefly clarified
- Discussion of alternatives and recommendations must be either normatively or pragmatically acceptable to this actor
- Policy options must be credible and should include consideration of the existing policy trend and of alternatives

(4) **Recommendations**

- The preferred policy or course of action is explained and justified in an effort to persuade the reader of its validity
- This may not be the ‘best’ policy, but instead the most viable one. It must also be compatible with the preferences of your target audience
- Sometimes features a closing paragraph that re-emphasises the importance of action

(5) **Key Sources**
- An annotated bibliography lists 4-6 key readings (which should include academic articles/books) where vital and reliable information on the issue can be found

- Each reference is complemented by 1-3 sentences (e.g. in bullet points) which summarise the key points/arguments of this source

The assessment of the policy paper

I use the following questions to guide the marking on the policy paper:

- Tailored properly to a clearly defined audience?

- Punchy and concise summary?

- Clearly defined problem?

- Good evidence or argument behind the solution?

- Clear recommendations backed by a sense that the solution is feasible? (these two questions are similar, but they highlight different aspects of the value of solutions)

- Evidence of substantial reading, accompanied by well explained further reading?

Successful students:

1. Gave a very clear and detailed account of the nature and size of the policy problem. The best reports used graphics and/ or statistics to describe the problem in several ways. Some identified a multi-faceted problem – such as in health outcomes, and health inequalities – without presenting confusing analysis (it is difficult to describe a problem in several ways, then come up with a specific solution). Some were able to present an image of urgency, to separate this problem from the many others that might grab policymaker attention.

2. Presented one or more solutions which seemed technically and/ or politically feasible. By technically feasible, I mean that there is a good chance that the policy will work as intended if implemented. For example, they provided evidence of its success in a comparable country (or in the past) or outlined models designed to predict the effects of specific policy instruments. By politically feasible, I mean that you consider how open your audience would be to the solution, and how likely the suggestion is to be acceptable to key policymakers. Some students added to a good discussion of feasibility by comparing the pros/ cons of different scenarios. In contrast, some relatively weak reports proposed solutions which were vague, untested, and/ or not likely to be acted upon.

I give credit to reports which sum up the problem and solution well in a short first paragraph (important for the busy policymaker), while some reports receive a few extra marks for an excellent summary of their 4-6 key documents.

REFLECTION
You receive 10% of your final grade by writing a reflection on your policy brief. This should be a maximum of 500 words (plus bibliography) and the format of your discussion is up to you. Be creative! Your aim is to show that you have done enough reading on policy concepts and theories before producing the policy paper. You do so by describing, in this short reflection, the factors that influence the nature of the problem you describe and the feasibility of your solutions. Kingdon talks about feasibility directly, but most concepts will be relevant. For example, you might reflect on your knowledge of agenda setting and framing to explain why you presented the problem in a particular way. It is up to you: the aim of this task is for you to be creative as you reflect on your reading. My only strong advice is to avoid trying to cram in a lot of buzzwords and referencing to give the impression that you know the material. It won’t work. Instead, think about what you have learned about how British politics works: if you know how it works, you know how to engage in it to try to get an outcome.

**BLOG POST and PRESENTATION**

You receive 20% of your final grade by writing and presenting a policy-relevant blog post. The post should be 500 words maximum, including weblinks. There should not be a standard bibliography, but some of the links should be to academic sources (in Word, you can insert a weblink by selecting one or more words and right-clicking, selecting ‘hyperlink’ and adding the link in the main box; it should produce blue, underlined text).

The post should follow a similar structure to the policy analysis paper, but in this case your audience is different. You are trying to make an argument that will capture the attention of a more general audience (interested in politics and policy, but not a specialist) that might access your post from Twitter/Facebook or via a search engine. This produces a new requirement, to: present a title which sums up the whole argument in under 100 characters, to leave room in the tweet for the web link (so, a statement is often better than a vague question); to summarise the whole argument in under 100 words in the first paragraph (what is the problem and solution?); and, to provide more information up to a maximum of 500 words. The reader can then be invited to read the whole policy analysis at the bottom of the post.

The style of blog posts varies markedly, so you should consult many examples before attempting your own (including Democratic Audit, the LSE, Nottingham’s Ballots and Bullets, The Conversation and newspaper columns). When you read other posts, take note of their strengths and weaknesses. For example, many posts associated with newspapers introduce a personal or case study element to ground the discussion in an emotional appeal. Sometimes this works, but sometimes it causes the reader to scroll down quickly to find the main argument. Consider if it is as, or more, effective to make sure that your argument is direct and easy to find as soon as someone clicks the link on their phone. Many academic posts are too long (often beyond your 500 limit) and take too long to get to the point, so you should not merely emulate them. You should also not just chop down your policy paper – this is about a new kind of communication.

**Presentation (without powerpoint)**

To receive the grade, each student is required to give a – **maximum 5 minutes** - presentation based on their post.
You are being assessed on a number of criteria. These are: (1) preparation, content and academic quality; (2) logical structure of presentation; (3) style and delivery (including the ability to not just narrate your notes verbatim); (4) performance in Q&A (including your participation as a presenter and part of the audience). There will be up to 5 minutes for you to answer questions from the seminar group and from the tutor.

- The presentation can be as creative as you wish, but it should not rely on powerpoint in the room. Imagine that none of the screens work or that you are making your pitch to a policymaker as you walk along the street: can you make this presentation engaging without any reference to someone else’s technology? Can you do it without just reading out your notes? Can you do it well in under 5 minutes?
- Just like an essay, a verbal presentation should also have a clear structure, including a beginning, a main part, and a conclusion.
- If you fail to deliver your presentation to me in the workshops you are unable to receive a grade for your written work.

**ESSAY (50%)**

**Deadline: Thursday 8th December 2016 at noon**

You receive 50% of your final grade by writing a theoretically/conceptually informed essay. The essay limit is 2000 words plus bibliography. Please use Harvard referencing. The essay should be consistent with the Divisional style sheet on essay writing (double-spaced, font pt 12, page numbers, and consistent and accurate referencing).

*Please note that no hardcopy of the essay is required – I mark from the online submitted version.*

**Turn-It-In:** You must submit an electronic version of your essay by the due deadline using the Turnitin link via the course website on Succeed.

**Essay Question:** What is policy, how has it changed, and why?

You should choose this format:

1. Choose a policy area (such as health) or issue (such as alcohol policy).
2. Describe the nature of policy, and the extent of policy change, in a particular time period (such as in the post-war era, since devolution, or since a change in government).
3. Select one or more policy concept or theory to help structure your discussion and help explain how and why policy has changed.

For example: *What is tobacco policy in the UK, how much has it changed since the 1980s, and why?*

You may be surprised about how difficult it is to answer a simple question like ‘what is policy?’ and I will give you considerable credit for considering how to define and measure it, by identifying, for example, the use of legislation/regulation, funding, staff, and ‘nodality’ (you should find out who uses that word and what they mean by it) and/or by considering the difference between, say, policy as a statement of intent or a long term outcome. In turn, a
good description and explanation of policy change is difficult. If you are feeling ambitious, you can go further, to compare, say, two issues (such as tobacco and alcohol) or places (such UK Government policy and the policy of another country) – but sometimes a simple and narrow discussion can be as, or more, effective. Similarly, you can use many theories or concepts to aid explanation, but often one theory will do.

For example, I might ask: What is tobacco policy in the UK, how much has it changed since the 1980s, and why? I might then combine a focus on concepts such as bounded rationality, institutions, networks, socioeconomic context, and ideas to highlight the role of the policy environment in which actors make key choices (you should know the meaning of these concepts by the end of the course!). Or, I might draw on ‘multiple streams analysis’ or ‘punctuated equilibrium’ theory to help explain one or more aspects of the policy process. Or, I might make it simpler and try to explain a key policy change such as the ban on smoking in public places. The point is that (a) your description of your research question, and your essay structure, is more important than (b) your decision on what topic to focus or concepts to use.

For each week, start with:

1. The blog posts and podcasts for each week.
2. The relevant chapter in my draft book or in Understanding Public Policy (e.g. on MLG and Westminster).
3. The key reading in this guide.
4. Then finish by chasing up the topics/ readings suggested in those texts.

Some good databases for finding academic articles, books, book chapters, reports, and working papers are:

- StirGate (searches the library catalogue and several other online databases): http://www.stir.ac.uk/is/
- Google Scholar (easy to use, especially for tracking who else has cited a specific article/chapter): http://scholar.google.co.uk/
Selected Further Reading: here is some further reading on the theme of British politics, centralisation (or ‘hollowing’), and the implications for accountability

Cairney, P. (2012b) “Public administration in an age of austerity”: positive lessons from policy studies”, Public Policy and Administration, 27, 3, 230-247


For background reading on the policy process, see my reading list for POLU9PP: https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/polu9pp-handout-spring-16.pdf. Relevant British texts from that list include:

Smith, K. (2013) Beyond Evidence Based Policy in Public Health: The Interplay of Ideas (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)


REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES - HISTORY AND POLITICS

You can find all of the relevant regulations in one place:

https://succeed.stir.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_809981_1&course_id=_12477_1

Key points include: turn up each week to seminars, don’t plagiarise, don’t pay a shady company to write your essays, and don’t ProPlus it to produce all your coursework on the night before the deadline (although the 4th one is more of a strong suggestion than a regulation).