

School of Government

PADM 504
DECISION-MAKING UNDER UNCERTAINTY
(24 Points)

Trimester Two / 2012

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington

Senior Administrator:

Kerry Pert
Email: kerry.pert@vuw.ac.nz
Telephone: +64 4 463 5453
Fax: +64 4 463 5454

Postal Address:

PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Street Address:

Room RH 821a, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus,
23 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

School Office Hours:

8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Australia New Zealand School of Government

Programs Coordinator:

Rosetta Colosimo
Email: r.colosimo@anzsog.edu.au
Telephone: +61 3 8344 1909

Postal Address:

PO Box 230, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia

Street Address:

Level 4, 204 Lygon Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

Trimester Dates

Thursday 20 September to Monday 26 November 2012

Withdrawal from Course

Notice of withdrawal must be in writing / emailed to the Administrator, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington. Ceasing to attend or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a notice of withdrawal.

Class Times and Room Numbers, Course Content, Course Learning Objectives, Course Delivery, Expected Workload, Group Work, Readings, Materials and Equipment, Assessment Requirements, Class Attendance, Penalties, Mandatory Course Requirements, Communication of Additional Information and Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Refer to the subject outline supplied by ANZSOG.

For the following important information, follow the links provided

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx

General University Policies and Statutes

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx

The University's statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy , except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx

AVC (Academic) Website: information including: Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

Faculty of Commerce Offices

www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/

Te Putahi Atawhai Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme

www.victoria.ac.nz/tpa/

SUBJECT OUTLINE

SUBJECT LEADER

Dr George Argyrous is the subject leader for Decision Making Under Uncertainty in 2012. He received his PhD in Economics from the New School for Social Research in New York. George is a Senior Lecturer at ANZSOG on secondment from the School of Social Sciences at The University of New South Wales (UNSW), where he has taught political economy, research methods and statistics since 1992, publishing many articles on the use and abuse of research. He is also the author of the popular international text, *Statistics for Research*, which is now in its third edition and has been translated into Chinese, and the editor of *Evidence for Policy and Decision-making: A Practical Guide*, published this year by UNSW Press. He is also the editor of ANZSOG new e-journal, *Evidence Base*.

Dr Argyrous has also acted as a consultant to many private and public sector organisations, including the Australian Broadcasting Authority, Optus, the City of Sydney, and the New South Wales Department of Education, on a range of research projects, as well as providing training in research methods to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). In January 2011, Dr Argyrous joined the ANZSOG academic faculty as ANZSOG Senior Lecturer in Evidence-Based Decision-Making.

SUBJECT ABSTRACT

The demands on public sector managers to use evidence more effectively in decision-making requires these managers to become more critical 'consumers' of evidence gathering, analysis, presentation, and interpretation.

This subject examines the use of evidence to support policy and decision-making in the public sector. The course assists students to become more critical users of information and evidence and to develop skills in commissioning research and analysis to inform decision-making.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW

The focus of the course is the critical appraisal of evidence as it is used to inform both policy and management decision-making in the public sector. Participants are not expected to become experts in the production of evidence, but rather learn to dissect evidence to assess its quality and usefulness. We begin by discussing the nature and meaning of 'evidence based policy-making', and then move on to an overview of several broad frameworks for understanding how evidence is used in public sector decision-making. We look at the strengths and weaknesses of these frameworks, and how they can be managed appropriately.

The subject then moves on to more detailed discussion of sources of evidence: past research, official data sources, and both quantitative and qualitative research. The emphasis is not on the technical aspects of these sources of evidence, but rather making participants better informed consumers of such evidence.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS

This subject builds on the knowledge gained in previous courses in the EMPA, particularly Government in the Market Economy. However, rather than approach topics from the perspective of the underlying theory, it looks critically at issues with the evidence that might be used to promote particular policies or decisions. This subject also provides many of the skills that participants will need to complete the Work-Based Project.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Those completing this subject will:

- Be able to accurately use, interpret and draw inferences from information gathered as evidence to support decision-making;
- Be aware of the strengths, weaknesses and suitability of selected quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering evidence;
- Know how to commission information gathering and analysis to support management and policy decision-making;
- Understand how the policy system and organizational context affects the use of evidence and analysis in public decision-making.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

This subject is taught intensively in sequence of 2-2-1 day blocks across September to November. Participants will usually attend the city delivery for their respective jurisdiction. It uses a variety of educational formats, including case studies, syndicate discussions, exercises and speaker panels. The program involves continuous student participation. This means it is important for everyone to read and

prepare in advance for set cases and exercises. You will receive a copy of the text for this course, and all other readings and other resources for this subject are available on the ANZSOG e-Learning site.

OVERVIEW OF SUBJECT TOPICS

The subject will cover the following main topics. Note that based on local expertise some topics may be covered in more or less depth in different jurisdictions, but all jurisdictions will receive the same essential information.

1. The nature of evidence-based policy and decision-making
2. The practice of evidence-based policy and decision-making (guest speakers)
3. Frameworks for using evidence – Evaluation
4. Frameworks for using evidence – Cost-benefit analysis
5. Frameworks for using evidence – Selected topics based on local expertise
6. Sources of evidence - primary data and research methods
7. Qualitative data analysis and reporting
8. Sources of evidence - secondary data and official statistics
9. Quantitative data analysis and reporting results
10. Selected topics based on local expertise

For more details of each topic and additional resources and readings see the ANZSOG e-learning site for this course.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

You are required to complete all of the following assessment tasks for this subject. For more details refer to ANZSOG e-learning site for this subject.

Task	Length	Marks	Due Date
Assignment 1: A review of evidence in your workplace	1000-1500 words	20%	15 October 2012
Assignment 2: Applying decision-making frameworks	1500-2000 words	30 %	5 November 2012
Assignment 3: Project presentation and report	45 minutes	10%	Day 5
	3000 words	40%	26 November 2012

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE AND ASSESSMENT TASKS

Attendance requirements

You are expected to attend all scheduled sessions as this is important to achieve your learning outcomes and assist you with your assessment tasks. Where absence is unavoidable, notification to the subject leader and the ANZSOG EMPA Coordinator is required in writing as soon as possible. You will be asked to give reason for your non-attendance. Work commitments will not be an acceptable reason. In the event of an absence of up to 20% of sessions, you will be requested to submit additional assessment in lieu of missed work. If the absence is more than 20% of sessions, you will be required to repeat the subject, including all assessable work. Should this occur, the results may be recorded as a fail at your university and you will then be liable for payment of the repeated subject.

Assessments

Assignments, unless directed otherwise in the subject outline, should be submitted by email directly to ANZSOG by COB on the date due. Submit your assignments to **assignment@anzsog.edu.au**. You will receive confirmation of receipt via email within a day of submission.

Under ANZSOG policy, grades will be moderated across jurisdictions to a common mean in order to establish consistency across cohorts and jurisdictions. Component assessments will be marked to the nearest whole number and then aggregated for reporting to partner universities (after moderation across jurisdictions).

Assignments should be typed or neatly presented and submitted directly to ANZSOG by close of business in your specific jurisdiction on the date due. Submit your assignments at **assignment@anzsog.edu.au**. You will receive confirmation of receipt within a day of submission.

Non-completion / late submission of assessment

All assessable work is compulsory and completion of all components of assessment is required to pass the subject. If, because of illness, a participant is unable to complete work or complete the exam at the scheduled time, a medical certificate must be produced. Other exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement, highly abnormal work obligations) affecting capacity to complete assessment should be discussed with the lecturer and separate or make-up assessment may need to be substituted to achieve the same learning outcomes. Supporting attestation, for example a work supervisor's written explanation, may be required. Penalties will apply where no adequate exception is established. Refer below for procedure.

Timely completion of assessable work is also expected. A penalty of 5% of the total mark for an item of assessment will be applied for each day late unless waiver for good reason is arranged with the subject leader beforehand. The ANZSOG Student Guide, given to all students, states:

“Extensions are normally granted only for medical or other serious reasons. Work related reasons are not normally accepted, as all students are required to balance hectic work schedules and are advised at the commencement of each subject of assessment requirements.”

Applications for exception or extensions must be made before the due date. Students should complete the *EMPA application for assessment extension* form that can be found on the ANZSOG website and email it to the Senior Programs Coordinator, EMPA (t.wigg@anzsog.edu.au). The Senior Programs Coordinator will consult the Subject Leader and you will be contacted about any decision reached.

Word limits

Note that text in excess of any stipulated word length may be ignored by the instructor. Word count does not include footnotes, references or appendices, but excessive use of supplementary material in turn may be penalised.

Referencing

In all assessable work, full acknowledgement of sources used is required – both for general referencing and for quotation. This includes acknowledgement of any internal documents or web sources relied upon. Where extracts are used directly these must be quoted and cited, where ideas are relied upon more broadly referencing is still needed. Please include a full reference list at the end of the assignment, listing in alphabetical order all references cited in the assignment, and in a standard format. The Harvard citation style is preferred and can be found at <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref1.html>.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism remains unacceptable in any format for the purposes of this subject. Students should be aware that software (e.g. “Turn-it-in”) may be used at the discretion of ANZSOG to review material submitted. Serious penalties may be applied in cases of plagiarism.

Return of marks and assignments

ANZSOG aims at assessment turn-around of three weeks for the team project and the individual assignment.

APPENDIX 1 – Teaching Venue Details

City	City Leader	Dates	Room Allocation	Venue
Brisbane	Chris Walker	17 September	Room 1B	State Library of Queensland Cultural Centre, Stanley Place South Bank 4101 Telephone: +61 7 3840 7569 PO Box 3488, South Brisbane, 4101
	George Argyrous	18 September		
		15-16 October		
	Chris Walker	13 November		
Canberra	Zina O'Leary	20-21 September	Griffin Room	Australian National University The Crawford School Lennox Crossing, Acton 2601 Telephone: +61 2 6125 5211
		18 October		
	George Argyrous	19 October		
	Zina O'Leary	12 November	The Weston Theatre	
Melbourne	Danny Samson	20-21 September	Please ask at reception on arrival	Melbourne Business School 200 Leicester Street, Melbourne 3053 Telephone: +61 3 9349 8400
		15-16 October		
	Danny Samson George Argyrous	12 November		
Perth	Jo Baulderstone	20 September	Avon Room	Medina Grand Perth 33 Mounts Bay Road Perth, 6000 Telephone: +61 8 9267 0000
	Paul Flatau	21 September	Canning Room	
	Jo Baulderstone	18 October		
	Paul Flatau	19 October		
	Jo Baulderstone	12 November		
Sydney	Chris Walker	20 September	Conference Room 2	UNSW Venues & Events University of New South Wales CBD Campus 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney 2000 Telephone: +61 2 9931 9450
	George Argyrous	21 September	Conference Room 1	
	Zina O'Leary	17 October		
	George Argyrous	18 October	Theatre 1	
	Chris Walker	12 November	Conference Room 1	
Wellington	Claudia Scott	20-21 September	Space 1	Rydges Wellington 75 Featherston Street Wellington 6011 Telephone: +64 4 498 3773
		15-16 October	Space 2	
		16 November	Space 1	

APPENDIX 2 – Session Times

Session	Times
Session 1	9:00am to 10:30am
Morning tea	10:30am to 11:00am
Session 2	11:00am to 12:30pm
Lunch	12:30pm to 1:15pm
Session 3	1:15pm to 2:45pm
Afternoon tea	2:45pm to 3:00pm
Session 4	3:00pm to 4:30pm