

**School of Government**

**MAPP 526**

**POLICY METHODS AND PRACTICE**

**(15 Points)**

**Trimester 2 / 2013**

**COURSE OUTLINE (DRAFT)**

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**Names and Contact Details**

**Course Coordinator:**      **Associate Professor Karl Lofgren**  
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**School Office Hours:**      8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

**Trimester Dates**

From 18 July to date of last assignment

## **Withdrawal from Course**

Notice of withdrawal must be in writing / emailed to the Masters Administrator. Ceasing to attend or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 26 July 2013.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 27 September. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an '*Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late*' including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks.

## **Class Times and Room Numbers**

<b>Module One:</b>	Thursday 18 July 2013	8.30am – 6.00pm
<b>Module Two:</b>	Thursday 29 August 2013	8.30am – 6.00pm
<b>Module Three:</b>	Thursday 24 October 2013	8.30am – 6.00pm

**Attendance is required at all three modular teaching days**

**Locations:** Classes will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email.

## **Prescription**

This course introduces the methods analysts use to describe, understand, explain, or predict policy-relevant changes in behaviours, conditions, outcomes, and aspirations. It covers applications of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the policy decision-making environment.

## **Course Content and Readings**

This course considers the role of information, evidence, policy methods and methods in enhancing the skills and capabilities of policy practitioners. Topics covered will include: an introduction to the role of evidence in policy analysis, advising and decision-making, the use and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data, statistics, and models, and selected techniques.

The textbook for this course is George Argyrous (Ed.) (2009) *Evidence for Policy and Decision-making: a Practical Guide*, Sydney, University of New South Wales Press. The book can be purchased at or ordered through VicBooks, the university bookshop ([www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz)). Apart from the textbook, required and recommended readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Blackboard** is Victoria University's online environment that supports teaching and learning by making course information, materials and other learning activities available via the internet through the myVictoria student web portal.

To access the Blackboard site for this course:

1. Open a web browser and go to [www.myvictoria.ac.nz](http://www.myvictoria.ac.nz).
2. Log into myVictoria using your ITS Username (on your Confirmation of Study) and password (if you've never used the Victoria University computer facilities before, your initial password is your student ID number, on your Confirmation of Study, Fees Assessment or student ID card – you may be asked to change it when you log in for the first time).
3. Once you've logged into myVictoria, select Blackboard (from the options along the top of the page) to go to your Blackboard homepage.
4. The "My Courses" section displays the courses you have access to – select the appropriate link to access the course-specific Blackboard site. Please note that only courses that are actually using Blackboard and have been made available to students by their respective course coordinator will be displayed.

**It is recommended that you ensure your computer can access Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria and Blackboard, BEFORE your course starts.** If you have any problems, you should contact the ITS Helpdesk on (04) 463 5050 or [its-service@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:its-service@vuw.ac.nz), or visit the Helpdesk on level 2 of the Railway West Wing, Pipitea Campus. See [www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/) for more information.

## **Module One: Thursday 18 July 2013**

### **I. Introduction to the course (Karl Lofgren)**

- Introduction to the course.
- Types of methods and their roles in policy practice.
- Overview of the challenges of 'evidence-based policy' in context
- Discussion of overall content, assignments etc.

#### *Required reading*

Policy analysts/advisors read a lot, and need to summarise what they read, think about how it might apply to the case at hand. Sometimes they are asked to undertake systematic reviews (or commission them) and sometimes they develop expertise in a particular policy area by building up knowledge about the working of particular policy 'mechanisms' in numerous unique practice situations. Finally, a great deal of policy-relevant material is presented with a persuasive intent, calling on the analyst/advisor to exercise skills in argument analysis and construction. The sessions in this model consider the methods for these practices.

## 2. Using published literature and research: Secondary data, literature reviews and research syntheses (Karl Lofgren)

### *Required reading:*

1. Gomm, R. (2008). Systematic reviews, meta-analysis and syntheses from diverse sources, in *Social research methodology: A critical introduction*. (2nd ed.) (pp. 344–364). Palgrave Macmillan.

The chapter from a textbook is comprehensive and written in a straightforward manner. It covers the synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative information, and thus serves to complete our previous module.

3. Argyrous, G. (2009) Sources and use of secondary data, In Argyrous, G. (ed.) *Evidence for Policy and Decision-making* (pp. 162-174), Sydney: UNSW Press.

This chapter provides a good discussion about the pros and cons of using various forms of secondary data. It also provides a list of which questions to ask when using secondary data.

4. Fawcett, P. & Marsh, D. (2012) Policy Transfer and Policy Success: The Case of the Gateway Review Process (2001-2010), *Government and Opposition*, 47(2), 162-185,

This article provides an empirical example of what happens when knowledge about policies, ideas and administrative arrangements is ‘exported’ or transferred from one country to another (in this case from the UK to Australia).

5. Knopf, J. W. (2006). Doing a literature review. *Political Science & Politics*, 39(1), 127–132.

This short article has the advantage of brevity, and the disadvantages of being somewhat academically focused and directed towards politics students, not policy students

### *Example discussed in class:*

6. Smith, K. A., & Cordery, C. (2010). What works? A systematic review of research and evaluation literature on encouragement and support of volunteering. Prepared for the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs.

[www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/url/whatworksvolunteering.pdf/\\$file/whatworksvolunteering.pdf](http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/url/whatworksvolunteering.pdf/$file/whatworksvolunteering.pdf) (summary in readings; full report at URL or on Blackboard).

### *Recommended reading (on Blackboard):*

7. EPPI-Centre (March 2007) *EPPI-Centre methods for conducting systematic reviews*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Systematic reviewing is a highly formalised method, and the EPPI-Centre in the UK carries out many such reviews. This document is a very detailed guide to reviews.

### 3. Methods for qualitative inquiry (Karl Lofgren)

*Required reading:*

1. Hall, R. (2009). Qualitative research methods. In Argyrous, G. (Ed.) *Evidence for policy and decision-making: a practical guide* (pp. 218–239), UNSW Press.

*Recommended reading*

2. Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 37–73. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Although this reading is drawn from a research and evaluation text, its virtue is a focus on what Patton calls ‘strategic themes for qualitative inquiry’. The twelve themes, in categories covering design, data collection and analysis provide a sort of ‘menu’ of considerations for undertaking analysis, and also enable critical scrutiny of published research that may be drawn on by an analyst/advisor or summarised in some form of synthesis.

3. Clarke, S. E. Context-sensitive policy methods. (2007). In F. Fischer, G. J. Miller & M. S. Sidney. (Eds.). *Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics and methods* (pp. 443–461). Boca Raton, New York, and Oxford: Taylor and Francis, CRC Press.

One of the challenges running through this section of the course is making use of information that is specific to a particular context in some new setting (the policy development that we want to inform). Susan Clarke covers a range of methods specifically suited to the challenge of keeping what is relevant about context while also being able to more systematically learn from a collection of cases.

### 4. Policy argument (Karl Lofgren)

*Required reading:*

1. Dunn, W. N. (2008). Developing policy arguments. In *Policy analysis: an introduction* 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., (pp. 377–419). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Concentrate on 377–363 and 389 on; skim the rest.

## Module Two: Thursday 29 August 2013

### Introduction to statistics, cost-benefit analysis and economic models

#### 5 & 6. Introduction to quantitative data and statistics (Jaiki Desai)

*Required reading:*

Information and reading for these two sessions will be provided on the blackboard website.

#### 7. Cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis (Jaiki Desai)

As with statistics, cost-benefit analysis is typically taught over the course of a trimester or more. The purpose in this unit is to assist you to learn the fundamentals and to be able to read CBA reports with good understanding.

*Required reading:*

1. Dobes, L. (2009). A practical guide to cost-benefit analysis. In G. Argyrous (Ed.), *Evidence for policy and decision-making: A practical guide* (pp. 45–71). Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
2. New Zealand Treasury. (2005). Cost benefit analysis primer. Wellington: The Treasury. [www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/guidance/planning/costbenefitanalysis/primer/cba-primer-v12.pdf](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/guidance/planning/costbenefitanalysis/primer/cba-primer-v12.pdf)
3. Department of Finance & Administration (Australia). (2006). *Handbook of cost-benefit analysis* (pp. 94–96; 108–114; 118–119). Canberra.

This extract complements Dobes by addressing some of the common criticisms of CBA and presenting a short overview of the modified form of cost-benefit analysis called ‘cost-effectiveness analysis’.

#### 8. Economic modelling (Jaiki Desai)

*Required Reading:*

1. Abelson, P. (2009) Economic Modelling and forecasting, In Argyrous, G. (Ed.) *Evidence for policy and decision-making: a practical guide* (pp. 94-115), UNSW Press.

## Module Three: Thursday 24 October 2013

### Methods, Data Analysis and Evidence

#### 9. Selected Methods: Multi-criteria analysis and Scenario analysis (TBC)

*Required Reading:*

1. Procter, W. (2009) Multi-criteria Analysis, In Argyrous, G. (Ed.) *Evidence for policy and decision-making: a practical guide* (pp. 72-93), UNSW Press.
2. Saliba, G. and Withers, G. (2009) Scenario analysis for strategic thinking, In Argyrous, G. (Ed.) *Evidence for policy and decision-making: a practical guide* (pp. 116-136), UNSW Press.

#### 10 & 11. The display and interpretation of data analysis for policy (Sharleen Forbes)

Tufte, E. R. (1974). Introduction to data analysis. In *Data analysis for politics and policy* (pp. 1–30). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Tufte is a brilliant and unusual statistician (and sculptor!), most well-known for his work with the visual display of information (see his website: [www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/](http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/)). This clearly written chapter introduces some key statistical concepts in a realistic policy example. If you are not familiar with statistics, try to let your intuitions assist you to follow the discussion.

Strogatz, S. (2010). Chances are. Blogpost. *New York Times*, April 25.

Policy is future focused and hence is it full of chance. Policy analysts therefore think about probabilities, and sometimes try to work with actual estimates. It is tricky stuff, however, especially when dealing with ‘conditional probability’, which Strogatz addresses in this blog.

Further information on readings for Sessions 10 & 11 will be placed on Blackboard

#### 12. Different ways of thinking about ‘evidence’ (Karl Lofgren)

The readings in this section have been selected to offer a range of perspectives on what ‘evidence’ is and, importantly, how we might think about and use evidence of different sorts.

*Required reading:*

1. Banks, G. (2009). Evidence-based policy-making: What is it? How do we get it? ANZSOG/ANU Public Lecture Series, 2009, Canberra, Feb 4.

2. Dahler-Larsen, P. (2000) Surviving the Routinization of Evaluation, The Administrative Use of Evaluations in Danish Municipalities, *Administration & Society*, 32(1), pp. 70-92
3. Schwandt, T. (2005). The centrality of practice to evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 26, 95–105.

*Recommended reading (on Blackboard):*

1. Kay, A. (2011). Evidence-based policy-making: The elusive search for rational public administration. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 70(3), 236–245.
2. Schmidt, M. R. (1993). Grout: Alternative kinds of knowledge and why they are ignored. *Public Administration Review*, 53(6), 525–530

## **Course Delivery**

This course is delivered in a modular format, which includes approximately 24 hours contact time. The time is broken up into three separate days ('modules'). There are approximately seven weeks between each module. **Attendance is required at all three modular teaching days (8.30am – 6.00pm).**

## **Expected Workload**

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and, to achieve them, candidates must make a significant commitment in time and effort to reading, studying, thinking, and completion of assessment items outside of contact time. Courses vary in design but all require preparation and learning before the first day of the course and regular learning is also necessary (students who leave everything to the last moment rarely achieve at a high level).

Expressed in input terms, on average, the time commitment required usually translates to approximately 150 hours for a 15-point course.

## **Assignments**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Details</b>		
1. Essay on the use of secondary sources and qualitative methods	Due Monday 12 August 2013	2,000 words	40%
2. Assignment 2: relating to topics covered in Module 2	Due Monday 16 September 2013	Further details will be provided in class and on Blackboard	35%
3. Assignment 3: related to topics covered in Module 3	Due Monday 4 November 2013	Further details will be supplied in class and on Blackboard	25%

At the margin, consideration will be given to your contribution to class discussion and activities. Assignments for the course will be posted on Blackboard and discussed at the first module. Assignment 1 will be based on the topics and readings for Module 1. Assignment 2 and 3 will be based on the topics covered in Modules 2 & 3 respectively.

*There is no final exam for this course.*

### **General Notes for Assignments**

Note that ALL assignments are to be submitted to [sog-assignments@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sog-assignments@vuw.ac.nz) by email attachment. For essay 1, **the word count must be noted on the cover sheet**. Word limits may not be exceeded, and do not include references. Extension may only be granted to those who meet the University's aegrotat rules, viz. medical certificate or personal bereavement, or critical personal circumstances involving the health of a close relative, or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control.

### **Quality Assurance Note**

Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of FCA programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

**Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.**

### **Class Attendance**

**Attendance is required at all three modular teaching days**

If, before enrolment for a course, you are aware that you will not be able to attend for part of a day, you must notify the Director of Master's Programmes when you enrol explaining why you will not be able to attend. The Director of Master's Programmes will consult with the relevant course coordinator. In such circumstances, you may be declined entry into a course.

If you become aware after a course starts that you will be unable to attend a significant part of a day (i.e. more than two hours), you must advise the course coordinator explaining why you will be unable to attend. The course coordinator may excuse you from attendance and may also require you to complete compensatory work relating to the course content covered during your absence.

### **Penalties**

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts course planning and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in assignments by the due date. Marks will be deducted at the rate of five per cent for every day by which the assignment is late and no assignments will be accepted after five working days beyond the date they are due. For example, if you get 65% for an assignment, but you handed it in on Monday when it was due the previous Friday, you will get a mark of 50%.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the deadline for submitting a piece of written work or from attending class to make a presentation, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. You should let your course coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline (if circumstances permit) if you are seeking an extension. Where an extension is sought, evidence, by way of a medical certificate or similar, may be required by the course coordinator.

## **Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Use of Turnitin**

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for all material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website ([www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx)). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University.

Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx).

If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

**Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.**

## **School of Government Service Standards**

Good learning and teaching outcomes for students in School of Government courses depend on many factors, including open, transparent and accountable relationships between teaching and support staff, and students in their various activities. The following service standards indicate some of the key expectations that teaching staff and students can have of each other. In all cases, they represent what the School believes should be ‘normal’ practice; exceptional circumstances can and will be negotiated as required.

Please note that there are University-wide policies relating to assessment – including rights of review and appeal. Details may be found in the Assessment Handbook (which is reviewed and updated from time to time –

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications/assessment-handbook.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications/assessment-handbook.pdf) ).

In general terms, any concerns that a student or students may have should be raised with the course coordinator in the first instance. If that course of action is not appropriate, the School’s programme support staff will direct you to the relevant Programme Director/Coordinator.

*Standards relating to staff timeliness of responses to email and phone queries:*

- Email or phone queries from students will be responded to in 48 hours

*Standards relating to availability of course materials:*

- Students on modular or intensive courses will usually have course materials at least 4 weeks before the course starts
- Students on weekly courses will usually have course materials available on the first day of the course

*Standards relating to attendance:*

- It is expected that students will attend all contact teaching sessions for a course. If a student is aware that they will be unable to attend part of a course prior to it commencing, they are required to advise the course coordinator. In such a situation, the student may be declined entry into the course.
- Where a course coordinator approves some non-attendance before the class commences, the course coordinator may set additional item(s) of assessment of learning and teaching objectives for the course for students unable to attend. Advice relating to the submission and assessment of any such additional assessment will be provided by the course coordinator.

*Variations to the assessment details provided in the course outline:*

- Any variation to the assessment details in the course outline will be formally agreed between the course coordinator and students at the earliest possible time, preferably at the beginning of the course.

*Standards relating to assignments – turnaround and feedback:*

- Unless otherwise agreed between students and the course coordinator, items of assessment will be marked within 15 working days of submission.
- Comments on pieces of assessment will allow students to understand the reasons for the mark awarded, relative to the teaching and learning objectives specified in the course outline, and will usually include advice on how the student can improve their grades in future assignments.

## **Mandatory Course Requirements**

You must submit or participate in all pieces of assessment required for this course.

## **Communication of Additional Information**

Additional information will be conveyed to students via email and Blackboard. The Course Coordinator is available to students by email, telephone and to meet by appointment.

**NOTE:** Information emailed to you via Blackboard can only be sent to your @myvuw.ac.nz email address (the free email address created for you when you enrol and accessed via the myVictoria student web portal). If you want to receive these emails at your preferred email address (e.g. your home or work email address), it is **essential** that you activate your @myvuw.ac.nz email address before the start of the course and you modify the settings so all emails sent to it are automatically forwarded to your preferred email address. Please go to [www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email\\_Forward](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email_Forward) for more information.

**It is recommended that you ensure that your computer access to Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria, Blackboard and email, is working BEFORE your course starts.** If you have any problems, you should contact the ITS Helpdesk on (04) 463 5050 or [its-service@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:its-service@vuw.ac.nz), or visit the Helpdesk on level 2 of the Railway West Wing, Pipitea Campus. See [www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/) for more information.

## **Student feedback**

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php)

## **Link to general information**

For general information about course-related matters, go to

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>