TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Government

GOVT 523
POLICY METHODS AND PRACTICE
(15 Points)

Trimester 1 / 2015

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator and Contributor:	**Dr Amanda Wolf** Room RH 804, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus Telephone: (04) 463 5712 Email: amanda.wolf@vuw.ac.nz
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School Office Hours:	8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

Monday 23 February – Friday 12 June 2015

Withdrawal from Course

Formal notice of withdrawal must be in writing on a Course Add/Drop form (available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or from the course administrator). Not paying your fees, ceasing to attend lectures or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a formal notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 6 March 2015**.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 15 May 2015**. 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

This course is delivered in a modular format.

Module One:	Wednesday 25 February 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Two:	Wednesday 15 April 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Three:	Wednesday 27 May 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm

Locations: Classes will be held on, or close to, the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email. The timetable is also available to view on the Victoria University website at www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables .

Attendance is required at all teaching days

Course Delivery

This course is delivered in a modular format over three days of 6 hours contact time each (18 hours total) between 9.00am and 5.00pm on the days indicated above, supplemented by 6 hours (online-mediated) between module meetings, as detailed in the course outline below. **Attendance is required at all teaching days**. **Participation in online work is mandatory.**

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 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 part or all of a day (i.e. more than two hours), or cannot complete the online learning requirements within the prescribed timeframes, you must advise the course coordinator explaining why you are unable to do so. The course coordinator may require you to complete compensatory work to ensure that you have successfully met the course requirements and fulfilled the learning objectives.

Group Work

There is no assessed group work. However, the course requires 6 hours of work between modules, which is to be considered as part of classwork. Rather than being accommodated in a longer module day (i.e., 8:30 to 6:00), the equivalent of small-group discussion and presentations/report-back is set up to be flexibly scheduled as detailed below. You will work with others, but be assessed individually.

Expected Workload

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and to achieve them you 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. Some of that is set contact time. The rest is your study time and we recommend you balance your time between preparing for modules and working on assessment and to work steadily throughout the course. For purposes of planning your other coursework, note that the workload in this course is somewhat front-end loaded (65% of assessed work is due by 4 May, with the balance due 12 June).

Prescription

Qualitative and quantitative techniques for collecting, analysing, interpreting and applying information and evidence to advance policy objectives particularly under conditions of complexity and uncertainty and in light of given task requirements.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Determine the specific evidence requirements for a given policy research or analysis task;
2. Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings;
3. Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed;
4. Interpret, summarise and judge the adequacy of evidence.

Readings

One text is used throughout the course, and is available for free electronically through the VUW library (and, in other formats, for purchase):

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction.* London and New York: Routledge.

Required, 'applications' and further readings indicated in the course contents sections with an asterisk are available from the Victoria University of Wellington library databases or e-book collections. As a VUW student, you have complete and free access to these materials. University copyright licenses allow you to download and print these materials, so long as you use them for educational purposes only. Please ask your course convenor or a VUW librarian if you require help to access material, or if you run into any other problems.

If the library does not have database or e-book access to required readings (those with no asterisk in this course outline), a URL will be provided, the readings will be available on Blackboard, or you will be advised to buy the readings. In some cases, you may need to go to the library to consult books, or to check them out.

You will need to draw on additional materials to complete assessment items.

Course Content

GOVT 523 is one of four courses comprising the MPP core. It complements GOVT 522 (Policy Analysis and Advising), which looks broadly at the policy process and system, and the key parts of policy analysis, taking into account the need to clarify the policy problem or opportunity, the interests and values at stake, possible options, and the support of decision makers. 523 looks in more detail at the methods and practices needed to produce analysis and advice on specific questions. Both 522 and 523 emphasise the development of analytic reasoning and communication of policy arguments in written form. Understanding and competencies initially introduced and developed in these courses will be further developed in GOVT 524 (Policy Workshop), which provides a number of opportunities to apply learning to new challenges and to present orally.

The course is challenging. It includes a fairly large number of topics, and requires that students think critically and creatively about the applicability and relevance of the topics for various policy challenges. Most policy challenges are challenging in several key respects – people may disagrees on the nature of the problem or the desired features of a solution; there may be significant uncertainties about the current situation and the amenability of the problem to different solutions; time and other resources are often critically short. Mastery of the methods and practices covered in this course provides a policy analyst or advisor with an intellectual and practical toolkit to contribute to better policy decisions and so to better policy outcomes.

Overview and Work Planner

Description	**Date**
Module 1: Evidence challenges; Getting information from the 'literature', from people and observations; Assessing quality of qualitative information	25 February
Inter-module work A: Interview exercise (in pairs)	By 9 March
Assignment: Essay	23 March
Module 2: Cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness analysis; Getting and working with quantitative information; Assessing quality of research on policy impacts	15 April
Assignment: Methods and evidence hierarchy report	4 May
Inter-module work B: e-conference based on assignment 4 May report	By 18 May
Module 3: Participatory methods; Learning in and from unique events; Policy argument	27 May
Assignment: Research plan	12 June

Content and Readings in Detail

Module 1

- *Readings are shown in alphabetical order*
- *A reading guide will be provided prior to modules*
- *'Applications' are required readings that will be discussed in class. Please bring these readings, or your notes, with you to class*

A: The need to know and evidence challenges
This session examines what is 'evidence' and three requirements for working with evidence: working out what is needed, addressing the inevitable gap between what is needed and what can be gotten, and working out the best way to minimise the gap through inquiry practices.

- Introduction to the course
- Information and evidence
- The decision maker's need to know
- Uncertainty and complexity
- The design of inquiry (policy research, evaluation)

Required readings:

Banks, G. (2009). Evidence-based policy-making: What is it? How do we get it? Australian Government Productivity Commission, delivered as the ANZSOG/ANU Public Lecture Series, Canberra, Feb 4. www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/85836/20090204-evidence-based-policy.pdf

* Eppel, E. (2012). What does it take to make surprises less surprising? The contribution of complexity theory to anticipation in public management. *Public Management Review, 14*(7), 881–902. doi:10.1080/14719037.2011.650055

* Head, B.W. (2008). Three lenses of evidence-based policy. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration, 67*(1), 1–11. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8500.2007.00564.x

Majone, G. (1989). *Evidence, argument and persuasion in the policy process* (pp. 42–68). New Haven and London: Yale University Press. (Blackboard)

Office of the Prime Minister's Science and Advisory Committee. (2013). *The role of evidence in policy formation and implementation.* Auckland: Author. www.pmcsa.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/The-role-of-evidence-in-policy-formation-and-implementation-report.pdf

Pawson, R. (2013). *The science of evaluation: A realist manifesto* (pp. 33–46). London: Sage. (Blackboard)

* Schmidt, M. R. (1993). Grout: Alternative kinds of knowledge and why they are ignored. *Public Administration Review, 53*(6), 525–530

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction.* London and New York: Routledge: Chapters 1 to 5

Applications:

Bowen, S., Zwi, A. B., Sainsbury, P., & Whitehead, M. (2009). Killer facts, politics and other influences: What evidence triggered early childhood intervention policies in Australia? *Evidence and Policy, 5*(1), 5–32. (Blackboard)

* McDonnell, L.M., & Weatherford, M. S. (2013). Evidence use and the common core state standards movement: From problem definition to policy adoption. *American Journal of Education, 120*(1), 1–25.

For further reading:

Morgan, M. G., & Henrion, M. (1990). The nature and sources of uncertainty. In *Uncertainty: A guide to dealing with uncertainty in quantitative risk and policy analysis*, (pp. 47–72). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. (Blackboard)

Peterson, A. C., Janssen, P. H. M., van der Sluijs, J. P., Risbey, J. S., Ravetz, J. R., Wardekker, J. A., & Hughes, H. M. (2013). *Guidance for uncertainty assessment and communication* (2nd ed). The Hague: PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/PBL_2013_Guidance-for-uncertainty-assessment-and-communication_712.pdf

* Room, G. (2011). *Complexity, institutions and public policy: Agile decision-making in a turbulent world*. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar. (e-book record: http://victoria.lconz.ac.nz/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1349611)

Rutter, J. (2012). Evidence and evaluation in policy making. London: Institute for Government. www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/evidence%20and%20evaluation%20in%20template_final_0.pdf van der Sluijs. (2005). Uncertainty as a monster in the science–policy interface: Four coping strategies. *Water Science and Technology*, *52*(6), 87–92. www.usf.uni-kassel.de/ftp/user/mimler/Uncertainty/4_VanderSluijs2005.pdf

B: Finding out what is 'known'

Some potential evidence already exists, in the sense that it is recorded and stored somewhere. This session looks at the skills and practices needed to find, select, summarise and work with (mainly) text information in published form.

- Literature review
- Systematic reviews

Required readings:

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

Hammerstrøm K., Wade, A., Hanz, K., Jørgensen, A. M. K. (2009). *Searching for studies: Information retrieval methods group policy brief.* Oslo, Norway: The Campbell Collaboration. doi: 10.4073/pb.2009.1 www.campbellcollaboration.org/artman2/uploads/1/C2_Information_retrieval_policy_brief_new_draft.pdf

Applications:

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.communitymatters.govt.nz/vwluResources/publications-lottery-WhatWorksVolunteering/$file/publications-lottery-WhatWorksVolunteering.pdf

United Kingdom, IDeA Knowledge. (2005). Innovation in public services: Literature Review. www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/1118552

C: Assessing the quality of qualitative studies

The published record includes research studies and evaluations that (primarily) report findings qualitatively. This information can provide important evidence for policy. This session examines the criteria for assessing the quality of these studies for specific policy purposes, and introduces evidence classification tools, which can help to prioritise or weight existing information.

Required readings:

* Daly, J., Willis, K., Small, R., Green, J., Welch, N., Kealy, M., & Hughes, E. (2007). A hierarchy of evidence for assessing qualitative health research. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, *60*, 43–49.

* Kmet, L. M., Lee, R. C. & Cook, L. S. (2004). *Standard quality assessment criteria for evaluating primary research papers from a variety of fields*. Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. www.ihe.ca/documents/HTA-FR13.pdf

Further reading:

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Dillon, L. (2003). *Quality in qualitative evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence.* United Kingdom Cabinet Office. www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/a_quality_framework_tcm6-38740.pdf

D. Getting information from people

Needed information often does not already exist in accessible published form. This session looks at the skills and practices used in primary research, when the desired information needs to be brought out by asking people or observing people and situations. Interviews, focus groups and observations can be used for a wide range of selected purposes, covering experiences, behaviours, wishes, teasing *out similarities and differences, etc. A particular need is to ascertain expert views about both* what is *and* what might be*, and techniques for this are examined.*

- Interviews and focus groups
- Observation
- Information from 'experts': Delphi techniques and scenarios

Required readings:

Chatham House. (2008). Thinking about the future of food. Briefing paper 05/08. London: Chatham House. www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Global%20Trends/bp0508food.pdf

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

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction.* London and New York: Routledge: Chapters 6, 9 and 11.

Application:

* Fa'alili-Fidow, J., McCool, J., & Percival, T. (2014). Trade and health in Samoa: Views from the insiders. *BMC Public Health, 14*: 309.

Further reading:

Linstone, H.A., & Turoff. (2002). *The Delphi method: Techniques and applications*. http://is.njit.edu/pubs/delphibook/

Wodak, J. (2014). *Scientific diversity, scientific uncertainty and risk mitigation policy and planning: Scenario exercise literature review.* Penrith: University of Western Sydney. www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/749915/RMPP_Scenario_Exercises_Research_Report_UWS.pdf

Module 2

This module looks at skills and quantitative analytic reasoning in a selection of frequently used methods in policy practice

A: Economic analysis and multi-criteria analysis

Some analysis of costs compared with benefits is almost always a part of a policy analysis. Some analyses look at economic efficiency or cost-effectiveness alone, or in order to contribute to a decision; multi-criteria analysis techniques structure the analysis of comparisons and trade-offs among criteria when gauging the desirability of alternative policies.

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Cost-effectiveness analysis
- Benefit-cost ratios and other variants
- Multi-criteria analysis

Required readings:

Australia Department of Finance and Administration. (2006). *Handbook of cost-benefit analysis* (pp. 94–96; 108–114; 118–119). Canberra. www.finance.gov.au/publications/finance-circulars/2006/docs/Handbook_of_CB_analysis.pdf

New Zealand Treasury. (2005). *Cost benefit analysis primer*. Wellington: The Treasury. www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/guidance/planning/costbenefitanalysis/primer/cba-primer-v12.pdf

Proctor, W. (2008). Multi-criteria analysis. In G. Argyrous (Ed.) *Evidence for policy and decision-making* (pp. 72–93). Sydney: UNSW Press. (Blackboard)

Application:

* Albuquerque, E. (2013). The NZ Transport Agency's appraisal framework [a response to Pickford]. *Policy Quarterly*, *9*(4), 66–70.

* Pickford, M. (2013). State highway investment in New Zealand: The decline and fall of economic efficiency. *Policy Quarterly*, *9*(3), 28–35.

* Pickford, M. (2013). A brief reply to Ernest Albuquerque. *Policy Quarterly, 9*(4), 71.

* Wright, J. C., Bates, M. N., Cutress, T., & Lee, M. (2001). The cost-effectiveness of fluoridating water supplies in New Zealand. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 25*(2), 170–178.

Further reading:

Grimes, A., Denne, T., Howden-Chapman, P., Arnold, R., Telfar-Barnard, L., Preval, N., & Young, C. (2012). *Cost benefit analysis of the Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart programme*. Prepared for Ministry of Economic Development, Wellington. www.motu.org.nz/files/docs/NZIF_CBA_report_Final_Revised_0612.pdf

Gupta, D. K. (2011). Analyzing public policy: Concepts, tools, and techniques (2nd ed.) (pp. 345–371). Washington DC: CQ Press. (Blackboard)

UK Department for Communities and Local Government. (2009). *Multi-criteria analysis: A manual*. www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1132618.pdf

B. Working with quantitative information

This session introduces statistical concepts and reasoning. The aim is to assist students to know enough about statistical methods to read statistical reports with greater confidence and to engage productively with statistics experts.

- Survey
- Randomised controlled trials
- Descriptive and inferential statistics
- Statistical relationship

Required readings:

Dunn, W. N. (2008). *Public policy analysis: An introduction* (4th ed.), (pp. 128–141; 161 – 179). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall. (Blackboard)

Haynes, L., Service, O., Goldacre, B., & Torgerson, D. (2012). *Test, learn, adapt: Developing public policy with randomised controlled trials*. Cabinet Office (UK) Behavioural Insights Team. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62529/TLA-1906126.pdf

Mukherjee, C., & Wuyts, M. (2007). Thinking with quantitative data. In A. Thomas & G. Mohan (Eds.). *Research skills for policy and development: How to find out fast* (pp. 231–253). London: Sage. (Blackboard)

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction.* London and New York: Routledge: Chapter 7.

Further reading:

Arnold, R., & Forbes, S. (nd). *Introductory statistics: Notes prepared for Victoria University of Wellington, School of Government MAPP 526: Policy Methods and Practice*. Wellington. (Blackboard)

C: Assessing the quality of quantitative studies

This session complements session C in Module 1 by providing techniques to help prioritise and weight information derived through quantitative research.

Required readings:

Argyrous, G. (2014). A quality assessment tool for non-specialist users of regression analysis. *Evidence and Policy*, online first: http://dx.doi.org/10.1332/174426414X14042146202920 . (Blackboard)

Leigh, A. (2009). What evidence should social policymakers use? *Economic Roundup*, *1*, 27–43. http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=745238039000337;res=IELAPA

Module 3

A: Participatory Methods (Dr Valentina Dinica)

This session introduces participatory methods and frameworks, with an emphasis on which methods suit which situations.

- Normative and functional arguments for participatory policy-making; limitations and drawbacks
- Participatory objectives
- Key features of participatory processes
- Frameworks to guide the selection and design of participatory methods
- A toolkit approach: selecting and adapting participatory methods to policy challenge types and participatory objectives

Required readings:

Bierle, T. C., & Kayford, J. (2002). *Democracy in practice: Public participation in environmental decisions* (pp. 63–73). Washington, DC: Resources for the Future. (Blackboard)

* Bingham, L. B. (2011). Collaborative governance. In M. Bevir (Ed.). *SAGE handbook of governance*, pp. 386–401. Berkeley, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. E-book reference link: http://victoria.lconz.ac.nz/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1509109

* Bond, S., & Thompson-Fawcett, M. (2007). Public participation and new urbanism: A conflicting agenda? *Planning Theory & Practice, 8*(4), 449–472.

Dietz, T., & Stern, P. C. (2008). *Public participation in environmental assessment and decision making* (pp. 187–221. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. (Blackboard)

* Lennox, J., Proctor, W., & Russell, S. (2011). Structuring stakeholder participation in New Zealand's water resource governance. *Ecological Economics, 70*, 1381–1394.

* McLaverty, P. (2011). Participation. In M. Bevir (Ed.). *SAGE handbook of governance*, pp. 402–418. Berkeley, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. E-book reference link: http://victoria.lconz.ac.nz/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1509109

O'Leary, R., & Bingham, L. B. (2007). *A manager's guide to resolving conflicts in collaborative networks*. Washington: IBM Center for the Business of Government. www.uquebec.ca/observgo/fichiers/42245_Guideconflits.pdf

* Väntänen, A. and M. Marttunen. (2005). Public involvement in multi-objective water level regulation development projects: Evaluating the applicability of public involvement methods. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review, 25*, 282–304.

B: Policy Argument, Claims, Reporting
Policy analysts and advisors need to work with claims – their own and others' – about what may be if one or another course of action is chosen. This session considers how to produce and critique written policy arguments and how to present policy analysis and research cogently.

Required readings:

Dunn, W. N. (2008). *Policy analysis: An introduction* (4th Ed.), (pp. 377–385; 414– 417). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. (Blackboard)

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: Chapter 12.

C: Evidence and the unique event
One of the most inherently attractive sources of evidence for policy decision making is another example of a very similar challenge and its solution. This session looks at drawing lessons for here and now *from what happened* then and there. *We take our orientation from two adages:* History never repeats itself *and* Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it (Santayana).

- Learning from other events
- Case study
- Learning as you go
- Course summary and conclusion

Required readings:

* Barzelay, M. (2007). Learning from second-hand experience: Methodology for extrapolation-oriented case research. *Governance, 20*(3), 521–543.

Rose, R. (2002) *Ten steps in learning lessons from abroad*, EUI Working Papers 2002/5. http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/1763/RSCAS_2002_05b.pdf?sequence=1

* Sanderson, I. (2009). Intelligent policy making for a complex world: Pragmatism, evidence and learning. *Political Studies, 57*, 699–719. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00791.x.

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction*. London and New York: Routledge: Chapter 8

Further reading:

* Bardach, E. (2004). Presidential address. The extrapolation problem: How can we learn from the experience of others? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 23*, 205–220.

Eppel, E., Turner, D., & Wolf A. (2011). Complex policy implementation: The role of experimentation and learning. In B. Ryan & D. Gill (Eds.), *Future state: Directions for public management in New Zealand* (pp. 182–212). Wellington: Victoria University Press. (Blackboard)

Assessment

For general information on assessment at VUW, please see the Assessment Handbook, which applies to all VUW courses: see www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf .

Submit all items through the assignments section of Blackboard. DO NOT SUBMIT PDFs.

You should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Overview of Assessed Work

Assessment Items Overview		Due Date	Length	%	CLOs
1	Inter-module work A	9 March	300 words; 2 hours required	10 *	3
2	Essay	23 March	1,500 words	25	1, 2, 3
3	Review paper and power-point poster	4 May	2,000 words; 300–500 word conference style poster	40	2, 3, 4
4	Inter-module work B	18 May	No set limit on words; 4 hours required	10 *	2, 3, 4
5	Research plan	12 June	1,500 words	25	1, 2, 3, 4

** Inter-module work is worth 10%. Both parts A and B must be passed to receive credit.*

Assessment Detail

- *Marking rubrics will be provided in advance of assignment due dates*
- *Word number breakdowns within assignments are provided as guidance only*
- *References are not included in word count. To count your words for recording on the cover sheet, first save your work. Then save a renamed file. In the renamed file, delete all non-counted material (cover page, references). Note and record the resulting word count.*
- *IT IS ESSENTIAL TO READ AND FOLLOW DETAILED GUIDANCE AND TO SEEK ADVICE AS NEEDED FROM THE COURSE COORDINATOR*

1. **Inter-module work A:** Due 5.00pm, Monday 9 March 2015; approximately 300 words; 2 hours; Graded P/F (together with inter-module work B)

   The assignment, which involves planning and simulating a short interview in interviewer-interviewee pairs, will be handed out in class on 25 February. It will require each person in the pair to prepare notes prior to the simulation, to complete the simulation (face-to-face or via skype) and then to complete a short reflective note (approximately 300 words, drawing on the preparatory notes as needed) after the simulation, which will be posted to a Blackboard discussion forum.

   Why this work? This exercise assesses one course learning objective:

   - *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed* (CLO 3). The method (interview) is assigned. The scenario in the assignment provides you with background to help you gauge what is required; in the simulation you will practice the interview method (as interviewer or interviewee) and your reflection will show your critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed.

A focus on **Wellbeing**

In order to enhance your ability to learn from each other, for the remaining assignments, you are asked to work with an objective to increase individual, family/whanau, or community wellbeing. (See Appendix to this course outline for some initial ideas.)

Keep in mind that the focus is on ***measurement, findings, and their implications for policy practice*** – what is measured, how and why – and how resulting information is used, or could be used, as evidence for policy purposes. Wellbeing information is developed in a range of disciplines, such as economics, psychology, sociology and philosophy, clearly illustrating the interdisciplinary nature of policy practice.

2. **Essay: Addressing evidence challenges to improving wellbeing:** Due 5.00pm, Monday 23 March 2015; 1,500 words; Complete parts A, B, and C

   There is a lot of attention in New Zealand and around the world to *defining and measuring wellbeing* in order to better inform policy, and hence lead to improved outcomes for individuals, families/whanau and communities.

   A. **Set the scene** for your essay by choosing and describing a *reasonably narrow* policy objective expressed in terms of some aspect of wellbeing. (100–150 words)

      For example, imagine a 'decision maker' who is in charge of community safety for Wellington. There has recently been a series of late-night attacks in and around Victoria University. Your decision maker's objective is to *increase students' sense of security.*

   B. Identify some of the **evidence challenges** in your selected situation, and explain the nature of the challenges. (350–500 words)

      In the example case, you could look at some evidence challenges with defining and measuring *students' sense of security*, the challenges posed by aspects of the political or social context, and the challenges of linking changes in sense of security to specific policy initiatives.

   C. Select **TWO methods** from Module 1 (literature review, systematic review, interview, focus group, observation, Delphi technique, scenarios) that could be used to provide evidence for the decision maker, in light of the policy objective set out in (A) and the challenges in (B). Justify the appropriateness of the two methods, with attention to and needed **adaptations** to account for their **strengths and limitations for your selected application**. (850–1,000 words)

   Why this work? This essay assesses three course learning outcomes:

   - *Determine the specific evidence requirements for a given policy research or analysis task*; (CLO 1) You will discuss the evidence needed for a particular 'need to know', with attention to challenges in gaining good evidence.
   - *Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings*; (CLO 2) You will show that you can 'match' methods to challenges in a specific situation.

- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed*; (CLO 3) You will show your awareness of the strengths and limitations of two methods.

3. **Reviewing evidence with evidence hierarchies:** This assignment has two linked outputs: a review paper and a poster, both of which are required: Due 5.00pm, Monday 4 May 2015

   For the **Review Paper** (2,000 words):

   A. **Set the scene** by selecting and describing a policy objective concerned with an aspect of wellbeing (you can choose either the same or a different objective than that in Assignment 2). (100–150 words)
   B. Select (from examples in class or elsewhere) or construct *and justify* an **evidence hierarchy** to assist you to assess the quality of studies that might provide evidence bearing on the objective in (A). (350–500 words)
   C. **Find FIVE studies** (research articles and other documents, including grey literature) that provide information or claims that could inform a decision maker with respect to the policy objective in (A).
      1. *Document your search* strategy and any limitations;
      2. Ensure that the methods used in your selected set of studies vary, and include *at least one quantitative study and one qualitative study* in your set;
      3. At least one of your studies should be drawn from a *non-academic source*.
      4. Include *a table* with brief summary information on the five studies in your report; (not part of your word limit).
      5. Ensure your *selected studies are available*: If material is available online, include access information; otherwise, submit as attachments to your review.
   D. **Rate or rank the studies** according to the criteria in your evidence hierarchy. Explain your rating and explain the likely implications of the studies' findings or claims for a decision maker, based on the policy objective and the 'weight' of the evidence. (1,250 words)
   E. **Reflect** on the value of using your evidence hierarchy, with attention to both positive and negative aspects. (250 words)

Note: For the abstract and poster, bear in mind that the 'audience' for the e-conference (see Assignment 4) is comprised of your course colleagues, who are 'experts' in methods and practices for policy. Stay focused on the methods and their practice, and don't get distracted by the substance of the policy objective and research findings.

For the **Poster** (1 power-point slide saved as pdf, approximately 300–500 words)

F. **Present your review** in a single **power-point slide**

Posters are an increasingly common feature of academic meetings. They allow attendees to pick and choose where to direct their attention (compared with sitting through a set schedule) and where time is short, they allow for more participation. For this assignment, your posters will only be viewed online (in Assignment 4.)

There is a lot of advice on the web about how to prepare a poster in power-point and how to prepare a poster with impact. Here are a few pages:

http://guides.nyu.edu/posters
http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/posterdesign
www.studentposters.co.uk/templates.html

Why this work? This assignment assesses three course learning outcomes:

- *Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings*; (CLO 2) You will demonstrate your skills in working with literature; you will select or construct and justify an evidence hierarchy; you will also assess different policy methods (according to your evidence hierarchy) in a specific application.
- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed*; (CLO 3) You will use your evidence hierarchy to rate a range of studies and reflect on the value of using evidence hierarchies.
- *Interpret, summarise and judge the adequacy of evidence* (CLO 4). You will discuss the adequacy of the evidence for a specific policy purpose as revealed by your rating of studies; you will summarise and visually present your review.

4. **Inter-module work B: E-conference for methods and practice experts:** Due Monday 18 May 2015; participation in an 'e-conference' based on the posters from Assignment 3; approximately 4 hours: Graded P/F (together with inter-module work A).

   All posters from Assignment 3, Part F, will be posted on Blackboard, which will signal the opening of the e-conference, *GOVT 523 2015 Methods and Practice Experts Meeting*. To attend the e-conference, you should browse the various posters and ask the 'presenters' questions. As a presenter yourself, you will need to respond to others' questions, comments, or suggestions. You are expected to spend about 4 hours looking at posters, and asking and answering questions. It is up to everybody to spread the attention around – if one presenter has a lot of questions already, you need to move on; don't duplicate someone else's question or comment. Your participation mark is based on evidence that you have actively taken part in the e-conference.

   Why this work? This assignment takes the place of in-class presentations and discussion of Assignment 3, and so contributes to the same course learning outcomes (but with an added emphasis on critical awareness through comparing your own and others' work).

5. **Research plan:** Due 5.00pm, Friday 12 June 2015; 1,500 words

   Based on the issue you investigated for Assignment 3, or on an issue you learned about in the e-conference (Assignment 4), or a substitute in the general wellbeing area, **write a plan for a new study or learning activity** that would be specifically designed to learn from a case OR through public participation:

   A. What **question** would your study address?
   B. **What method/s or practice**/s would you use (selected or adapted from those presented in Module three, choosing either learning from a case OR public participation) for addressing the question?
   C. **Why** is/are your selected method/s or practice/s appropriate for this question?

Why this work? This assignment assesses all four course learning outcomes:

- *Determine the specific evidence requirements for a given policy research or analysis task*; (CLO 1) In setting a research question, you show that you can determine an evidence need
- *Select or adapt and justify policy methods and practices for various tasks involving a range of challenges with particular issues, situations and contextual settings*; (CLO 2) You select or adapt and justify methods to answer your question
- *Effectively apply policy methods and practices as required for a given policy research or analysis task, and demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and limitations entailed*; (CLO 3) You show that you can apply the selected methods by the quality of your justification for using the methods
- *Interpret, summarise and judge the adequacy of evidence* (CLO 4). You link the likely results of the application of the selected methods to providing useful evidence for a decision maker's need to know.

Note on Quality Assurance

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 academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

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.

Computation of Grades

The translation from numerical marks to letter grades is set by the following grade ranges.

Pass/Fail	*Grade*	*Normal range*	*Indicative characterisation*
Pass	A+	90% - 100%	Outstanding performance
	A	85% - 89%	Excellent performance
	A-	80% - 84%	Excellent performance in most respects
	B+	75% - 79%	Very good performance
	B	70% - 74%	Good performance
	B-	65% - 69%	Good performance overall, but some weaknesses
	C+	60% - 64%	Satisfactory to good performance
	C	55% - 59%	Satisfactory performance
	C-	50% - 54%	Adequate evidence of learning
Fail	D	40% - 49%	Poor performance overall; some evidence of learning
	E	0 - 39%	Well below the standard required
	K	Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though the student's numerical course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50%. A student whose course mark is below 50 should be given a D (40-49) or E (0-39), regardless of whether they met the mandatory course requirements	
Pass	P	Overall Pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)	
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)	

Access to 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. Ensure that you can access Blackboard before the course begins.

To access the Blackboard site for this course:

1. Open a web browser and go to 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.

If you have any problems gaining access to Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria and Blackboard, you should contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-service@vuw.ac.nz . See www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/ for more information.

Power-point slides and other lecture materials that are posted on Blackboard may differ from the presentations used in class, as the copyright rules for archived presentations differ somewhat from those for live presentation.

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). 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 . 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 . 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/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications).

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 <u>all</u> 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

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50 or better, students must submit or participate in all pieces of assessment required for this course.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat .

Communication of Additional Information

Information will be communicated via Blackboard. It is essential, therefore, that you activate your @myvuw.ac.nz email account (the free email account created for you when you enrol and accessed via the myVictoria student web portal) before the start of the course. Once you have activated your @myvuw.ac.nz email account, if you want to receive these emails at your preferred email address (e.g. your home or work email address), you must modify the settings so all emails sent to it are automatically forwarded to your preferred email address. For more information, please go to www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email_Forward .

Student Feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php .

Link to General Information

For general information about course-related matters, go to www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information .

Appendix: Wellbeing topics

You are encouraged to choose a topic that draws from your own background and experience, personally or professionally (for example, your field of study, your work area, your particular policy passion, your cultural knowledge, your research and study skills).

Read all the assignments and mentally check that you can do what is required with your chosen example.

Below are some starter ideas, in no particular order. The suggestions identify areas for investigation, but your actual investigation will need to be sharper than the suggestion. You are not limited to these suggestions. The suggestions are questions that may be linked to a policy objective that you choose for your assignment.

1. How does environmental quality influence people's wellbeing?
2. How does an open-plan office environment affect workers' wellbeing?
3. Do 'pocket-sized' community playgrounds contribute to better child wellbeing?
4. What is most important to preserve residents' wellbeing in declining rural towns?
5. How can a local community best prepare for an effective response to a weather emergency?
6. What is the best indicator for a selected aspect of wellbeing?
7. How well does 'social marketing' work to reduce a selected unhealthy activity?
8. Is 'national identity' a measureable aspect of wellbeing?
9. How does location influence the relationship between 'happiness' and living conditions?
10. Do targeted policy interventions, such as merit scholarships, or disability supports, increase wellbeing of the target's family?
11. Should wellbeing measures include 'social emotions' that arise in relationships, and which are more evident in 'collectivist cultures'?
12. What are the merits and challenges of combining information on 'present' wellbeing with more reflective and future-focused information?
13. What is most important to older people's wellbeing? New migrants? International students?

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