

# PIA5401: VALUES AND CHOICE IN PUBLIC POLICY

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Values and Choice in Public Policy

### Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

### Course Number

5401

### Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

### College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

POL5401 Values and Choice in Public Policy

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course aims to:

- examine the rationale and the context of the study of public policy with a view to articulating applying, and advancing a public service perspective;
- analyse the relationship between the state, society and public policy;
- assess policy ethics and capacity in Hong Kong;
- discuss the impacts of globalization and its consequences on public policy;
- develop ideas about the relationship between values and the normative basis of public policy;
- examine, compare and evaluate different moral principles and ethical theories shaping public policy;
- enable students to develop their ideas about the moral basis of public policy making in Hong Kong.

#### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1 detect the scope, the rationale and the functions of public policy and policy analysis, and define the concept of rationality as used in public policy-making		x	x	
2 examine the major theories of the state: liberalism, socialism, communitarianism, perfectionism, pluralism, corporatism, elitism, Marxism, institutionalism (historical and rational choice), and public choice; and analyse the relationship between the state, society and its implications for public policy		x		
3 assess the implications of globalization for public policy in the areas of immigration, citizenship, and multiculturalism			x	x
4 analyse the normative basis of public policy			x	
5 examine and compare the major moral principles and ethical theories shaping public policy			x	x
6 apply these moral principles and ethical theories to analyse and assess public policy in Hong Kong				x

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

#### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Introduce and explain key concepts and theories about normative values and public policy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
2	Group discussions & presentations	Examine and compare the major moral principles and political theories shaping public policy and analyse and assess public policy in Hong Kong	4, 5, 6	
3	Individual/small group essays	Analyse the normative basis and evaluate the ethics of particular public policy and develop one's own view	5, 6	

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?	
1	Quiz/Quizzes	1, 2, 3	50	-	No
2	Group presentation	4, 5, 6	20	-	Yes
3	Individual/small group essay	5, 6	30	-	No

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Quiz/quizzes (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 &amp; thereafter)

**Criterion**

Performance in Quiz

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A strong ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Strong demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. High standards of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate those issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

**Good**

(B+, B, B-) A generally good standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A sound ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. A clear demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. A good standard of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate critical issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and

to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Generally competent research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

### **Fair**

(C+, C, C-) Rudimentary knowledge and limited understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A weak ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. A weak demonstration of critical abilities to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. A basic standard of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate critical issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Research, writing, team-work and communication skills present but at minimum standards.

### **Marginal**

(D) Poor knowledge and very limited understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. Very little ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Only basic abilities to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. Little demonstration of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate critical issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Underdeveloped research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

### **Failure**

(F) Almost no knowledge or understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. Unable to relate knowledge critically to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Almost no abilities to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. A minimum standard of understanding and unable to discuss and debate critical issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Inadequate research, writing, team-work and/or communication skills.

## **Assessment Task**

Group presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

### **Criterion**

Students' involvement in Group presentation

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A strong ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Strong demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. High standards of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate those issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

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(B+, B, B-) A generally good standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A sound ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. A clear demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. A good standard of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate critical issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and

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## **Assessment Task**

Individual/small group essay (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

### **Criterion**

Performance in individual essay

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A strong ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Strong demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. High standards of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate those issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

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## **Assessment Task**

Quiz/quizzes (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

Performance in Quiz

### **Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A strong ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Strong demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. High standards of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate those issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

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**Assessment Task**

Group presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

**Criterion**

Students' involvement in Group presentation

**Excellent**

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the contexts, processes, rationales and ethical basis of public policy formulation in contemporary society. A strong ability to relate this understanding to normative questions and issues in the relationship between the state and the public and its manifestations in the sphere of public policy-making. Strong demonstration of critical ability to appraise and apply key theoretical public policy models and processes to ethical issues in Hong Kong and China. High standards of understanding and of abilities to discuss and debate those issues as they relate both to general ethical principles and practices underlying public policy-making and to particular developments occurring in Hong Kong and China. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

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### **Assessment Task**

Individual/small group essay (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

### **Criterion**

Performance in individual essay

### **Excellent**

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## Part III Other Information

### Keyword Syllabus

Public policy; liberty, equality, democracy; welfare state; liberalism; libertarianism; pluralism; corporatism; elitism, Marxism; public choice; immigration; citizenship; multiculturalism; civic virtue; civic education; perfectionism; globalization; utilitarianism; human rights; state neutrality social justice; feminism and gender equality; communitarianism; common good; Confucianism; virtue ethics; harmony; nationalism.

### Reading List

#### Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999)
2	Joh Rawls, Political Liberalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)
3	Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia (New York: Basic Books, 1974)
4	Michael Wazler, Spheres of Justice (New York: Basic Books, 1993)
5	Amy Gutmann and Denise Thompson, Democracy and Disagreement (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996)
6	Harry Frankfurt, On Inequality (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)
7	Elizabeth Anderson, "What is the Point of Equality?" Ethics 109:2 (1999), pp. 287-337
8	Joseph Carens, The Ethics of Immigration (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
9	David Miller, Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016)
10	Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
11	Daniel A. Bell, Beyond Liberal Democracy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006)
12	Ruiping Fan, Reconstructionist Confucianism: Rethinking Morality after the West (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010)
13	Online Resources: <a href="http://www.gov.hk">http://www.gov.hk</a>

#### Additional Readings

	Title
1	Nil