

PIA5601: POLICY PROCESSES AND ANALYSIS

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Policy Processes and Analysis

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

5601

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

POL5601 Policy Processes and Analysis

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

- examine major theories of policy process, models of policy making, and forms of policy analysis;

- provide students with skills to engage with the complexity and dynamics of public and social policy participate in, and contribute to the process shaping them;
- discover how new ideas shape public policies;
- thorough understanding of policy process and in- analysis of policy cases in Hong Kong by applying theories and models learned in class; and
- evaluate policy alternatives, both prospectively and retrospectively.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Examine the meaning of public policy and its relevance.		x	
2	Discover why some ideas/issues succeed in reaching the policy agenda while others fail	x		
3	Analyse the different models (normative and empirical) of decision-making		x	x
4	Apply the theories and models of policy-making to analyse the agenda-setting and policy process in Hong Kong, identify key stakeholders and dynamics that shape policy decisions, evaluate the policy outcomes, and give recommendations pertain to Hong Kong' s socio-political landscape in the post-handover years		x	x
5	Appraise and apply the different steps of policy analysis: problem identification, forecast and planning, and assess the effectiveness of different techniques used by policy analysts, such as comparative studies, scenario writing and cost-benefit analysis.	x	x	x
6	Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches of policy implementation; and analyse the various forms of policy evaluation, reflect on the values and pre-dispositions of the evaluators, and assess the intended and unintended consequences.	x	x	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	Readings	Students are expected to read the essential reading before the lectures.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
2	Lectures	Students will acquire knowledge of key concepts and theoretical ideas that can help them to understand and analyse real-world cases.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	
3	Class discussion	Students will be invited to participate in class discussion. The class activities will consolidate their learning, and develop their critical thinking and skills to analyse policy cases in Hong Kong and communication skill by engaging in discussion and debate among themselves.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
4	Online discussion	Students will explore and share real-world policy issues in Hong Kong on the online forum and discuss how it is related to the concepts and theories covered in the assigned reading. The online participation will develop their skills in summarising policy cases and communicating it to their classmates. It will consolidate their understanding of the concepts and theories by relating them to real-world policy cases.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
5	Essay-writing	Each student has to submit an individual paper on a theoretical topic in the study of public policy. Students will learn to examine and apply key concepts and theories to analyse its policy process.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	

6	Group presentation	Students will form groups and work as team to identify and analyse a policy problem and propose viable policy recommendations to the policy issue in the presentation. Students will have a chance to learn from each other during their preparation and at the end of the presentation. The presentation and its preparation provide students an opportunity to reflect on key concepts and theories in the study of public policy.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
7	Group paper	After the presentation, students will work with the same group and turn their analyses and policy proposal of the policy issues into a group paper. It offers an opportunity to accommodate the comments and suggestions received during the presentation.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	10	Participation in class through discussion and debate helps students to clarify the key concepts theories and ideas delivered in lectures. The success hinges on students' active engagement in class and assigned readings and their willingness to share their points of view and reflections.	No

2	Online discussion	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	10	Participation on the online forum enables students to develop an awareness to real-world policy issues in Hong Kong in their exploration and map it to the key concepts and theories. The success hinges on students' proactivity to share policy issues on the online forum and whether they can relate key concepts and theories to the cases effectively.	No
3	Essay-writing	2, 3, 4, 5	30	The individual essay enables students to develop new theoretical and empirical ideas about specific policy issues and to provide an opportunity to develop analytical and communication skills. The success hinges on whether students can define and convey the policy issues, relate key concepts and theories effectively and propose critical examination on the policy issues of their choice. The Individual essay should contain approximately 2,000-3000 words.	No
4	Group presentation	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	20	The group presentation helps students to develop new ideas about a policy issue and to apply them to Hong Kong cases.	No

5	Group paper	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	30	The group paper enables students to communicate their policy proposal in a written format. It also gives students an opportunity to revise their policy ideas with the comments they received during their presentation, and also to reflect on the development process of the group project.	No
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

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

Criterion

Students actively participate into class discussions and engage with debates in class.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis and a well-developed ability to relate these critically to both local and international contexts. A strong capacity to identify and analyse specific policy issues in Hong Kong and to understand the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. A strong critical ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions and a clear understanding of the dynamics of successful policy argument. Very strong research, writing and communication skills. An excellent level of participation.

Good

(B+, B, B-) A generally good standard of knowledge and understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis and a sound ability to relate these critically to both local and international contexts. A sound capacity to identify and analyse and identify specific policy issues in Hong Kong and some understanding of the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. A good critical ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions and some understanding of the dynamics of successful policy argument. Generally competent research, writing and communication skills. A generally good level of participation.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) A rudimentary knowledge and understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis and a weak ability to relate these critically to local and international contexts. A weak capacity to identify and analyse specific policy issues in Hong Kong and to understand the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. A weak ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions or to understand the dynamics of successful policy argument. Research, writing and communication skills present but at minimum standards. A fair level of participation.

Marginal

(D) Poor knowledge and understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis. Very little ability to relate these critically to local and international contexts. A limited capacity to analyse or identify specific policy issues

in Hong Kong and little understanding of the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. Little demonstration of a critical ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions and poor understanding of the dynamics of successful policy argument. Underdeveloped research, writing and communication skills. A poor level of participation.

Failure

(F) Almost no knowledge or understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis and no ability to relate these critically to local and international contexts. Unable to analyse specific policy issues in Hong Kong or to understand the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. Almost no ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions or to understand the dynamics of successful policy argument. Inadequate research, writing and/or communication skills. A poor level of participation.

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Students actively participate and engage in online discussions

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis and a well-developed ability to relate these critically to both local and international contexts. A strong capacity to identify and analyse specific policy issues in Hong Kong and to understand the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. A strong critical ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions and a clear understanding of the dynamics of successful policy argument. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

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Almost no ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions or to understand the dynamics of successful policy argument. Inadequate research, writing, team-work and/or communication skills

Assessment Task

Essay-writing (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students can write formal policy process and analysis with appropriate theoretical and empirical insights.

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Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Students can apply the theories and skills they learned in policy process and rigorously analyse the policy cases in the presentations.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) An excellent standard of knowledge and understanding of the key public policy models and techniques of policy analysis and a well-developed ability to relate these critically to both local and international contexts. A strong capacity to identify and analyse specific policy issues in Hong Kong and to understand the importance of agenda-setting and of the policy process in determining their successful resolution. A strong critical ability to argue for the adoption of particular policy positions and a clear understanding of the dynamics of successful policy argument. Very strong research, writing, team-work and communication skills.

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Assessment Task

Group paper (for students admitted in Semester A 2025/26 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students can integrate and apply the theories and concepts in policy process and can propose a sound solution to a policy problem.

Excellent

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Assessment Task

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

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Students can integrate and apply the theories and concepts in policy process and can propose a sound solution to a policy problem.

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Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Public policy; agendas-setting; policy advice; policy argument; advocacy; policy process; policy models; rationality; incrementalism, Kingdon's three streams of politics, process and policy, mixed-scanning, policy analysis; problem identification; forecasting; cost/benefit analysis; policy implementation; policy evaluation; Hong Kong

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Text(s):
2	Cairney, P. (2019). <i>Understanding Public Policy: Theories and Issues</i> (2nd ed), London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
3	Hill, M. (2016). <i>The Public Policy Process</i> , London: Routledge.
4	Knill, C. and J. Tosun (2020). <i>Public Policy: A New Introduction</i> (2nd ed). London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
5	Scott, I. (2010). <i>The Public Sector in Hong Kong</i> . Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 195-226.
6	Weimer, D.L. and Vining, A.R. (2017). <i>Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice</i> , 6th edition, New York, NY : Routledge, 2017.
7	Online Resources: http://www.gov.hk

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Text(s):
2	Fischer, F. and G. J. Miller (2006). <i>Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods</i> , London : Routledge
3	Fong, B.C.H. and T.L. Lui (2018). <i>Hong Kong 20 Years after the Handover : Emerging Social and Institutional Fractures After 1997</i> , Basingstoke :Palgrave Macmillan.
4	John, P. (2012). <i>Analyzing Public Policy</i> , 2nd edition, New York : Routledge.
5	Jones, B.D. and F. R. Baumgartner (2005). <i>The Politics of Attention</i> , Chicago : University of Chicago Press.
6	Kingdon, J.W. (1995). <i>Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies</i> , New York: Harper Collins, 1995.
7	Lodge, M., M.C. Page and S.J. Balla (2015). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration</i> , Oxford : Oxford University Press.
8	Moran, M., M. Rein and R.E. Godin (2006). <i>The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy and Administration</i> , Oxford : Oxford University Press.
9	Page, E. (2012). <i>Policy Without Politicians : Bureaucratic Influence in Comparative Perspective</i> , Oxford : Oxford University Press.
10	Stone, D. (1989). 'Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas' , <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> , 104, 2, 281-300.
11	Weible, C.M. and P.A. Sabatier (2017). <i>Theories of the Policy Process</i> , 4th edition, New York, NY : Westview Press.