Module Descriptor

Title	Comparative Public Policy Process And Issues (Cpppi)		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	
Code	MPAL11012	**SCQF Level**	11
Credit Points	30	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	15
School	**School of Education and Social Science**		
Module Co-ordinator	A. Petrou		

Summary of Module

The module provides you with an advanced introduction to the messy world of policy making. Drawing on insights from public policy process research and critical policy analysis, you will learn about how policy issues and problems are defined, and put on the political agenda, how policies are designed, decided, implemented, and evaluated comparatively across different countries, policy sectors and administrative traditions, as well as by multiple actors. The module uses examples and cases from within the UK and across countries in both the global North and South to demonstrate policy complexity. Students will evaluate different perspectives against the backdrop of addressing crucial issues constituting today's policy environment, including focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

The aim of this module is to help you acquire a critical understanding of theory and practice approaches needed to engage with public policy analysis and the design of innovative interventions to tackle complex issues in society. Furthermore, the module will help you think critically about equality and access to political power, availability of decent work, sustainability and strong institutions and engagement with multiple actors for partnerships to address problems in complex public policy environments. The module offers a rich set of teaching and learning (T&L) activities and readings aiming to elevate students' critical public policy analysis and design skills necessary to address diverse needs in society. Furthermore, the comparative method and synthesis of data from a variety of sources is stressed for its importance in research-informed pedagogy in the preparation of assignments.

Module Delivery Method	On-Campus[1] ☒	Hybrid[2] ☐	Online[3] ☐	Work -Based Learning[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☒ London ☐ Paisley	☐ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)	

Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☒	Term 2	☒	Term 3	☒
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Critically understand policy process and analysis theories and practices needed to engage with public policy analysis and the design of innovative interventions to tackle complex issues in society.
L2	Apply the insights of comparative policy process research and critical policy analysis to develop original and creative responses to policy problems and governance issues for clients.
L3	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis, using case study-based learning, among other pedagogical lenses, to forefront policy issues, or issues that are informed by forefront developments in the policy sciences.
L4	Communicate, using appropriate methods and ICT tools, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge expertise.
L5	Work collaboratively in a peer relationship.

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	A critical understanding of principal public policy theories, concepts and principles. A critical understanding of a range of specialised public policy theories, concepts and principles.

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

	A critical awareness of current policy issues and challenges in the field of government policy in the UK and around the world. Critical appreciation of strategies and tactics needed to deploy values in public policy, including equality and inclusivity.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	Apply the insights of policy process research and critical policy analysis to develop original and creative responses to policy problems and governance issues for clients. Using a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are at the forefront of or informed by forefront developments in policy science. Applying a range of standard and specialised policy research and analysis and/or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.
Generic Cognitive skills	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to forefront policy issues, or issues that are informed by forefront developments in the policy sciences. Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues. Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues. Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	Communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise. Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues, and specialists. Use a wide range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and adjust features to suit purpose.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others Take significant responsibility for a range of resources. Manage complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.

Prerequisites	**Module Code** N/A	**Module Title** N/A
	Other N/A	
Co-requisites	**Module Code** N/A	**Module Title** N/A

Learning and Teaching
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 30-credit module includes 300 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 54 contact hours and a maximum of 72 contact hours.

Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture / Core Content	36
Tutorial/Synchronous Support Activity	18
Asynchronous Class Activity	10
Independent Study	236
TOTAL	300

Indicative Resources

The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

Cairney, P. (2019) Understanding public policy: theories and issues. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Connolly, J. and van der Zwet, A. (2020) Public Value Management, Governance and Reform. Palgrave MacMillan.

Engeli, I. and Alison, C. R. (Eds.) (2014) Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges. Research Methods Series, ECPR.

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M. and Perl, A. (2009) Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy subsystems, 3rd edition. Oxford University Press, Canada.

Knill, C. and Tosun, J. (2020) Public Policy: A New Introduction. 2nd edition. Bloomsbury Academic.

Suggested Journals (mainly covering Policy Analysis, Public Policy, and Practice – although many journals in the social sciences will be useful). The journals below are all available as e-journals from the UWS library.

- American Journal of Public Administration
- European Journal of Public Policy
- Governance
- International Journal of Public Sector Management
- Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis
- Journal of Public Policy
- Policy and Politics
- Public Administration
- Public Administration Review
- Public Management Review
- Public Policy and Administration
- Research and Policy

(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:

This module requires attendance and active student engagement. In-class activities are formative assignments geared towards accomplishing the learning outcomes. As per UKVI regulations students must attend all classes – (see UWS Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure - 2026). If a student will not be able to attend a class, the student must contact the module lecturer and coordinator beforehand.

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code.

https://www.uws.ac.uk/media/6317/equality-diversity-and-human-rights-code-approved-feb-2023.pdf

The module abides with the MPA programme EDI policy meaning that it has included inclusivity in four areas: a) Designing course material b) Inclusive Teaching in class c) Assessment and d) Providing extra support to the students.

Particular attention is given to one aspect of inclusive teaching and that is provision of accessible learning materials in the module. This module provides materials online in the University approved virtual learning environment. Assistance is provided to students in downloading such materials and use is made of core readings in class to get students used to using the reading material and interacting with the ideas in it. Case studies embedded in readings are used in seminars for analysis and discussion of concepts that are also discussed in lectures, so there is reinforcement. In-class lecture sessions frequently include short videos, delivery of lectures is provided in small chunks, and a short tutorial activity is given after each small lecture so that students can practice and acquire what they need in terms of knowledge in a more comfortable pace. Provided readings includes topics, contexts, political issues, and authors from non-western backgrounds to decolonise the curriculum. The above are just examples of teaching and learning activities used to make learning materials more, accessible, accommodate different learning styles and to provide in-class mentoring and coaching for more inclusive learning experiences.

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	**Social Science**
Overall Assessment Results	**☐ Pass / Fail ☒ Graded**
Module Eligible for Compensation	**☐ Yes ☒ No**

	If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.
School Assessment Board	PG Social Sciences
Moderator	P. Munoz-Ramirez
External Examiner	C MacRae
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**
Changes / Version Number	1

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
Assessment 1
Policy Portfolio (group, 2000 words, 40% of module grade)
Assessment 2
Written assignment (individual, 3000 words, 60% of module grade)
Assessment 3
N/A
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Policy Portfolio	☒	☐	☐	☒	☒	40	

Component 2							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Written Assignment	☐	☒	☒	☐	☐	60	

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Combined total for all components						100%	hours

Change Control

What	When	Who
Transferred to new MD template, change to assessment 1	28 Mar 25	A Petrou
Amended for ILQR	29 June 2026	A Gouglas