**MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**  
**UNIT OUTLINE**

**Year and Semester:** 2012, Semester 2  
**Unit name:** Economics of Public Issues  
**Unit convenor:** Dr. Alison Vicary and Professor David Throsby  
**Credit points:** 3

Students in this unit should read this unit outline carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about the unit. If anything in it is unclear, please consult one of the teaching staff in the unit.

**ABOUT THIS UNIT**  
The aim of this unit is to study the role of economic theory and analysis in informing decision-making on matters of public policy. Appropriate theory and analytical methods will be outlined and discussed, and their use in considering particular issues will be explored. The unit is structured partly around particular theories or methods of importance to the analysis of public policy, and partly around specific policy issues themselves.

**TEACHING STAFF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Staff</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof David Throsby</td>
<td>E4A438</td>
<td><a href="mailto:david.throsby@mq.edu.au">david.throsby@mq.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Alison Vicary</td>
<td>E4A437</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alison.vicary@mq.edu.au">alison.vicary@mq.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**CONSULTATION TIMES**  
If you wish to seek help from a staff member teaching on this unit you may do so at the conclusion of any of the classes or during their regular consultation hours.

**iLEARN**  
ilearn is an online program available at [http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/](http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/) through which students will be able to access resources to assist them throughout the semester. You should regularly visit the website and use it as a resource centre to assist with your learning.

**CLASSES**

Thursdays 6.00pm–9.00pm in room C4A 318

It is very much in your own interests to attend all lecture sessions in this unit. The nature of the unit is such that the material covered cannot be adequately comprehended simply by reading the references set. Attending to the lecturers’
syntheses of the material and participating in class discussion are important components of the learning process.

Sessions will begin promptly at 6.05pm. Generally each session will comprise a mixture of lecture time, progress reviews and class discussion. There will be ample scope for student questions, participation and interaction.

**REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS**

There is no set text for this unit. Readings for each topic are given in the detailed topic outlines below.

**ASSESSMENT**

There will be a simple diagnostic test in the first session of the unit to ensure that students have adequate command of English to be able to comprehend the lectures. This test will not count towards a student’s final assessment or grade.

Final grades will be calculated as percentages corresponding to the Macquarie University grading system of HD, D, Cr, P, F.

The assessment tasks for ECON853 and their percentage contribution to your final mark is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Time and Word Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Within-Semester Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,000-1,500 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Within-Semester Exam = 40%**

This examination will be held in normal class time in C4A312 on **Thursday 13th September**. The exam will cover topics 1-6.

**Assignment = 20%**

The assignment questions and instructions will be posted on iLearn. The due date for submission is 6 pm on **Thursday 4th October**.

**Final Exam = 40%**

The final exam will be of two (2) hours duration, to be held on **Thursday, 8th November**, between 6-8pm. The exam will cover topics 8-12.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This unit provides discipline-specific knowledge and skills and by developing critical, integrative and analytical thinking. The discipline-specific knowledge and skills include an ability to apply economic theories to practical situations or problems and a capacity to examine real world issues from an economic perspective. The essential learning objective of this unit is to extend the student’s understanding of public policy issues. This requires that students have an in-depth grasp of particular issues in
public policy, including education, drugs, cultural industries and heritage, war and peace, altruism and non-profit organizations. Students are also expected to finish the course with an enhanced understanding of the role and limits of government in developing public policy. Furthermore, students are expected not only to understand the particular public policy issues addressed in the course, but also to be capable of using this understanding to analyse other public policy issues not covered in the unit.

The learning outcomes of this unit are summarised as follows:

1. to identify, recognise and apply micro-economic theory to public policy issues
2. to understand the incentives that govern the decisions of individuals in an array of organisational structures and their relationship to public policy.

They are related to assessment tasks as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment ECON853</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADUATE CAPABILITIES

In addition to the discipline-based learning objectives, all academic programs at Macquarie University seek to prepare students to address the challenges, and to be effective, engaged participants in their workplace and broader community.

Through these Learning Outcomes, this unit contributes to the development of the following Graduate Capabilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>MQ Graduate Capabilities and ECON853</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Problem Solving and Research Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Engaged, Ethical Local and Global Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Creative and Innovative Members of the Professional Workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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ACADEMIC HONESTY

The nature of scholarly endeavour, dependent as it is on the work of others, binds all members of the University community to abide by the principles of academic honesty.
Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information.

Examples of dishonest academic behaviour include the following:

**Plagiarism:** Using the work or ideas of another person and presenting this as your own without clear acknowledgement of the source of the work or ideas. This includes, but is not limited to, any of the following acts:

a) copying out part(s) of any document or audio-visual material or computer code or website content without indicating their origins
b) using or extracting another person's concepts, results, or conclusions
c) summarising another person's work
d) submitting substantially the same final version of any material as another student in an assignment where there was collaborative preparatory work
e) use of others (paid or otherwise) to conceive, research or write material submitted for assessment
f) submitting the same or substantially the same piece of work for two different tasks (self-plagiarism).

**Deception:** includes, but is not limited to, false indication of group contribution, false indication of assignment submission, collusion, submission of a work previously submitted, creating a new article out of an existing article by rewriting/reusing it, using the same data to form the same arguments and conclusion, presenting collaborative work as one’s own without acknowledging others’ contributions, cheating in an examination or using others to write material for examination.

**Sabotage:** includes, but is not limited to, theft of work, destruction of library materials.

More information about the policy can be found at the following:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATION**

The University is committed to equity and fairness in all aspects of its learning and teaching. In stating this commitment, the University recognises that there may be circumstances where a student is prevented by unavoidable disruption from performing in accordance with their ability. A special consideration policy exists to support students who experience serious and unavoidable disruption such that they do not reach their usual demonstrated performance level. The policy is available at:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/procedure.html

**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at http://www.student.mq.edu.au.
IT CONDITIONS OF USE

Access to all student computing facilities within the Faculty of Business and Economics is restricted to authorised coursework for approved units. Student ID cards must be displayed in the locations provided at all times.

Students are expected to act responsibly when utilising University IT facilities. The following regulations apply to the use of computing facilities and online services:

● Accessing inappropriate web sites or downloading inappropriate material is not permitted. Material that is not related to coursework for approved unit is deemed inappropriate.

● Downloading copyright material without permission from the copyright owner is illegal, and strictly prohibited. Students detected undertaking such activities will face disciplinary action, which may result in criminal proceedings.

Non-compliance with these conditions may result in disciplinary action without further notice.

Students must use their Macquarie University email addresses to communicate with staff as it is University policy that the University issued email account is used for official University communication.