
CHRIS PEPIN-NEFF, PHD (they/them)

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Public Policy University of Sydney Department of Government and International Relations	2014
Master of Arts, Public Policy University of Sydney Department of Government and International Relations	2008
Graduate Diploma, Public Policy University of Sydney Department of Government and International Relations	2007
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA. Department of Political Science	1999

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Associate Professor and Author of Three Books:

Authored 'Flaws' (2019), 'LGBTQ Lobbying in the U.S.' (2021), & 'Tolerable Inequality' (2025)

- Published three solo-authored books, 15 high-quality journal articles, and four book chapters.
- Taught 7,000+ students since 2010 promoting critical analysis, research ability, and collegiality.
- Led the international community calling for new discourse regarding human-shark interactions.
- Developed and taught one of the first courses on "The Voice" Referendum in public policy unit.
- Conducted first research on LGBTQ+ activism in United States, United Kingdom, Australia, & South Africa.

Deputy Head of School (Research) and Associate Dean (Student Affairs):

Serve the Head of School and served as Associate Dean for a Faculty of 15,000 students.

- Led policy development and implementation in academic integrity, appeals, and progression, including assistance on University AI policy and simple extensions policy, and Faculty student attendance policy as well as leading Faculty Student Behaviour Group, LGBTIQ+ Roundtable, Digital Sydney Academic Reference Group, and Gender Affirmation Policy.
- Built a research community focused on research ethics and productivity, including communicating research opportunities and pathways for PhD and early-career researchers.

LGBTQ+ Rights Educator and Advocate:

Dedicated to advancing equity from an intersectional perspective

- Co-Chair of the University of Sydney's first LGBTQ+ Roundtable in 2023 and 2024.
- Served as Convener to the Inaugural LGBTQ+ Caucus to the Australian Political Studies Assoc. in 2023.
- Served as the first full-time lobbyist in the United States for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 2002.
- Co-authored and passed federal legislation in 2004 to aid the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."
- Influenced successful passage of bipartisan federal legislation to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in 2010.
- Founded the first LGBTQ+ lobbyist and government affairs association "Q Street" in 2003.
- Drafted a successful federal legislative earmark in 2009 to combat LGBTQ+ bullying in Vermont schools.
- Influenced the successful legislative passage of Vermont's same-sex marriage equality bill in 2009.

CURRENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Public Policy (40/40/20)

Discipline of Government & International Relations, University of Sydney, Jan 2025 – Present

Serve as a unit coordinator and teach 300 students per semester at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including the Master's in Public Policy (MPP) degree, by delivering world-class teaching and a transformative student centered, research-led student experience. This approach models the University of Sydney's culture, mission, policies, procedures, and guidelines. In this role, I teach, advise, and mentor students by evaluating performance and providing feedback to encourage critical analysis and ethical skills building to include emerging technologies. In all, I focus on engaging discussions, comprehensive reviews of the literature, and carefully designed assessments to match learning outcomes and elevate the level of critical analysis students bring to their work. This has included developing and teaching courses, including GOVT 6316 (The Politics of Policymaking), GOVT 6159 (Emotions & Public Policy), GOVT 3987 (Public Sector Management), and GOVT 6311 (Issues in Public Policy).

Deputy Head of Schol (Research)

School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Sydney, Feb 2025 – Present

Lead and facilitate a research environment in the School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS) that welcomes a critical analysis of all ideas, boosts collaboration and team-based research across disciplines, and encourages an elevation of research ethics in the age of GenAI. In this role, I assist in grant development and review, chair the SSPS Research Committee, assist research theme leads, and host the fortnightly Catalyst Research Series.

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **New South Wales Government: LGBTIQ+ Advisory Council** (Oct 2024 – Mar 2025) Sydney, NSW.
- **KPMG: Subject Matter Expert** (Jul – Dec 2024) Sydney, NSW.
- **Palm Center: Deputy Executive Director** (Jul 2006 – Dec 2018) San Francisco, CA. Managed congressional education initiatives for openly LGBTQ+ military service.
- **Pew Environmental Group: Contract Researcher** (July – Oct 2011) Washington, D.C.
- **Nat Geo: Associate Producer / Researcher** (Mar – Jun 2011) ▪ Ultra Marine Films, Sydney Australia documentary "Shark Harbor."
- **Outright Vermont: Executive Director** (Dec 2007 – Jan 2010) Burlington, VT. Supervised 4 staff, oversaw budget of \$300,000, and strategic program development for 1,200 LGBTQ+ youth.
- **DDB Issues & Advocacy: Senior Program Manager**, (Jun 2005- Jul 2006) Washington, DC. Responsible for public relations, and client management for healthcare orgs & environmental groups.
- **Servicemembers Legal Defense Network: Senior Policy Advocate** (Nov 2002 – Jun 2005) Co-drafted and introduced the first legislation to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Helped pass federal legislation to support LGBTQ+ service members.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

1. Pepin-Neff, C. (2025). *Tolerable Inequality: Understanding Public Policy & LGBTQ+ Politics*. Routledge: NY, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003488866>

2. Pepin-Neff, C. (2021). *LGBTQ Lobbying in the United States*. Routledge: UK
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003170334>
3. Pepin-Neff, C. (2019). *FLAWS: Shark Bites & Emotional Public Policymaking*. Palgrave: UK
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10976-9>

JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. Pepin-Neff, C., McManus, W., & Ormerod, B. (2023) The Offices of the U.S. President as Policy Tools, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9:1, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2225335>
2. Pepin-Neff, C. (2022). Shark Bite Reporting and The New York Times. *Biology*, 11(10), 1438.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/biology11101438>
3. Pepin-Neff, C. & Cohen, A. (2021) President Trump's transgender moral panic, *Policy Studies*.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2021.1952971>
4. Pepin-Neff, C., & Wynter, T. (2020). The Costs of Pride: Survey Results from LGBTQI Activists in the U. S., United Kingdom, South Africa, & Australia. *Politics & Gender*, 16(2), 498-524.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X19000205>
5. Pepin-Neff, C. & Wynter, T. (2019). Save the Sharks: Re-evaluating and (Re)-valuing Feared Predators. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 24(1), 87-94.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2018.1539887>
6. Pepin-Neff, C. (2019). A response to Clua and Linnell. *Conservation Letters*, 12(2),
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12626>
7. Pepin-Neff, C. & Wynter, T. (2018). Reducing fear to influence policy preferences: An experiment with sharks and beach safety policy options. *Marine Policy*, 88, 222-229.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.11.023>
8. Pepin-Neff, C., & Caporale, K. (2018). Funny Evidence: Female Comics are the New Policy Entrepreneurs. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 77(4), 554-567.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12280>
9. Pepin-Neff, C., & Wynter, T. (2018). Shark bites and Shark Conservation: An Analysis of Human attitudes Following Shark Bite Incidents in Two Locations in Australia. *Conservation Letters*, 11(2), 1–8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12407>
10. Neff, C. (2015). The Jaws Effect: How movie narratives are used to influence policy responses to shark bites in Western Australia. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 50(1), 114-127.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2014.989385>
11. Neff, C. (2013). Comparing the removal of the combat exclusion to the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' *Critical Studies on Security*, 1(2), 243-245. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2013.814842>
12. Neff, C., & Hueter, R. (2013). Science, Policy and the Public Discourse of Shark "Attack": A Proposal for Reclassifying Human-Shark Interactions. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Science*, 3(1): 65-73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13412-013-0107-2>
13. Neff, C., & Edgell, L. (2013). The Rise of Repeal: Policy Entrepreneurship and Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

14. Neff, C., & Yang, J. (2012). Shark bites and public attitudes: Policy implications from the first before and after shark bite survey. *Marine Policy*, 38, 545-547.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2012.06.017>
15. Neff, C. (2012). Australian Beach Safety and the Politics of Shark Attacks. *Coastal Management*, 40, 88-106. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08920753.2011.639867>

BOOK CHAPTERS

1. Pepin-Neff, C., & Cohen, A. (2021). President Trump's transgender moral panic. In T. James (Ed.), *The Trump Administration: The President's Legacy Within and Beyond*. Routledge.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003259923>
2. Neff, C. (2016). The Performance of Roll Call Votes as Political Cover in the US Senate: Using C-SPAN to Analyze the Vote to Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." In Browning, R. (Eds), *Exploring the C-SPAN Archives: Advancing the Research Agenda*. Purdue University Press.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv15wxr41.13>
3. Neff, C. L., & Edgell, L. R. (2016). The Rise of Repeal: Policy Entrepreneurship and Don't Ask, Don't Tell. In *Evolution of Government Policy Towards Homosexuality in the US Military*.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315540641>
4. Neff, C. (2014) Human Perceptions and Attitudes of Sharks. In E. Techera & N. Klein. (Eds.), *Sharks: Conservation, Governance and Management*. Routledge. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203750292>

NON-TRADITIONAL RESEACH OUTPUTS:

Pepin-Neff, C. (2023). Waverley Council Shark Survey Report. Sydney Environment Institute, April 2023: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/sydney-environment-institute/project-related-files/executivesummary.docx>

Pepin-Neff, C., Welty, L., & Ormerod, G. (2023). The Impacts of COVID-19 on Gay Bars and Events in New South Wales, Australia. Sydney Policy Lab Policy Paper, March 2023: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2023/02/08/gay-bars-sydney-survive-covid-19-pandemic-lgbtq-expert.html>

Co-authored federal legislative language "Military Readiness Enhancement Act" introduced by 58 bipartisan members of Congress (Mar 2005). http://thomas.loc.gov/home/gpoxmlc109/h1059_ih.xml

Co-authored federal amendment (Section 586) to the U.S. Dept. of Defense Authorization Act of 2005 to provide data on military discharges for analysis of military readiness, signed into law by President Bush (Oct 2004). http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_bills&docid=f:h4200enr.txt.pdf

PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INTERESTS

• **Agenda-Setting:** Examining the dynamics that structurally place highly emotional issues on or off the policy agenda through an analysis of systems of attention, expectations, and identity in the public policy process. Utilizing mixed methods approaches that rely on qualitative and quantitative analyses, including surveys.

• **Inequality:** Critically examining inequality in the policy process by centering the role of political penalties, the distribution of ‘tolerable inequality’ and ‘loser issues,’ as well as ‘emotional taxation’ toward actors in the policy process. This includes the allocation of resources that enable communities to build social capital, the absence of consequences for inequality and the way policy entrepreneurs influence moral panics.

• **LGBTQ+ Politics:** Analyzing political campaigning, social movements, interest groups, intersectional lobbying and advocacy in the policy process. This research focuses on issues on queer, trans, and gender-diverse social and political issues.

SERVICE & AWARDS

SERVICE

1. Deputy Head of School (Research), School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS): 2025 – present.
2. Associate Dean (Student Affairs), Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences: Jun, 2023 – Jun, 2025. Served on the Faculty Leadership Group and oversee academic portfolios, including: Integrity, Progression, and Appeals.
3. Member, University of Sydney Academic Board: 2024 – present. Election and appointment to also serve on the Academic Board Policy & Standards Sub-Committee (2023) & Academic Quality Committee (2025).
4. Inaugural Convener, LGBTQ+ Caucus for the Australian Political Studies Association: 2022 – 2023.
5. Inequality Research Theme Lead, School of Social and Political Science Research Committee: 2023 – 2025.
6. Diversity & Social Inclusion Coordinator, School of Social & Political Sciences: 2021 – 2022.
7. Degree Director, Master of Public Policy (MPP) Degree in the Discipline of Government and International Relations: Semester 1, 2022. Oversee the administration of the 170 MPP students.
8. Co-Disability Liaison Officer (FDLO), Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences: 2018-2019.

AWARDS

1. **2019 Sam Richardson Award:** “Funny Evidence: Female Comics are the New Policy Entrepreneurs.” *Australian Journal of Public Administration* (with Kristin Caporale). “The Sam Richardson Award recognizes the most influential paper published in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration*.”
2. **2013 High Commendation:** Paper Presentation: “Locating Affect within a Policy Response Framework.” Australian Public Policy Network Annual Conference.
3. **1999 Filibuster-a-thon:** Public speaking competition at James Madison University.

SELECT GRANTS

1. Sydney Policy Lab, (\$5,000), 2022-2023
2. Sydney Environment Institute, (\$7,500), 2022-2023

SELECT CONFERENCES & TESTIMONY

1. Zoo and Aquarium Association Conference (Sydney) presented “What Aquariums Can Teach us about Shark Conservation” in NSW, Australia. August 2024.
2. Australia Political Studies Association Conference (Sydney) presented “Analysing the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Social Capital in NSW, Australia.” November 2023.
3. Midwest Political Science Association Conference (Chicago/Zoom) presented “The Offices of the U.S. President as Policy Tools.” April 2023.
4. International Public Policy Association (Budapest/ Zoom) presented The Construction of Policy Entrepreneurs and the Gay Sex Industry.” June 2022.
5. Midwest Political Science Association Conference (Chicago/Zoom) presented Marriage Equality and Multiple Streams Framework in Australia” April 2022.

6. European Association of American Studies LGBTQ+ Studies Network (Paris/Zoom), presented: “LGBTQ+ Lobbying in the United States” September 2021.
7. Australasian Public Policy Network Conference (Melbourne/Zoom), reported on a paper entitled: “Multiple Streams Framework on the Margins: Australian Marriage Equality.” February 2021.
8. Invited by Queer Politics Webinar of Princeton University (Zoom) to give a talk entitled: “The Construction of Social Capital in LGBTQ+ Communities: What we can learn about LGBTQ+ social capital by reviewing the opening and closing of LGBTQ+ organizations.” September 2020.

COMMITTEE APPEARANCES

1. Provided official in-person (phone) submissions to the Australian Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications in 2017 regarding shark bite mitigation policies in Australia.
2. Provided official in-person commentary to the Pentagon’s Working Group on “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” in 2010 for the *Report of the Comprehensive Review of Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”*
3. Testified before Vermont House of Representatives Education Committee (May, 2009).
4. Testified before New York City Council on a resolution to support gays in the military (Mar, 2005).
5. Testified before the Joint Services Commission on Military Justice, U.S. Department of Defense (Oct, 2003 and Oct 2004) on sodomy in the military and considerations of the Cox Commission report.

SELECT MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

Pepin-Neff, C. (2025). The Applause for Jaws despite Flaws. *Scientific American*. May 26, 2025.
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-applause-for-jaws-despite-flaws/>

Pepin-Neff, C. (2025). The moral panic presidency: Donald Trump’s ignoble legacy of disharmony and demonization. *Australian Broadcast Corporation*. May 30, 2025.
<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/chris-pepin-neff-moral-panic-presidency-of-donald-trump/105346134>

Pepin-Neff, C. (2024). Disabled students are badly served by furore over ‘unfair’ accommodations. *Times Higher Education*, October 30, 2024.
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/disabled-students-are-badly-served-furore-over-unfair-accommodations>

Pepin-Neff, C. (2023). Anti-Trans Moral Panics Endanger All Young People. *Scientific American*, May 2023:
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/anti-trans-moral-panics-endanger-all-young-people/>

Pepin-Neff, C. (2022). Presidents have long fanned fears about sharks to display toughness. *The Washington Post*. July, 2022: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/made-by-history/2022/07/31/presidents-have-long-fanned-fears-about-sharks-display-toughness/>

McCubbing, G. (February 24, 2023). Sydney Leads the World in post-COVID recovery, study finds. *Australian Financial Review*: <https://www.afr.com/companies/retail/sydney-leads-the-queer-world-in-post-covid-recovery-study-finds-20230224-p5cnch>

Dwayne, D. (2022). Episode 8: If I were a Bull Shark, I Would Never Leave This Place. *Shark Attacks in Paradise*. Sony Music Entertainment. August 2022: <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/shark-attacks-in-paradise/id1631411924>

Yuhas, A. (July 20, 2021). Don’t Call Them ‘Shark Attacks,’ Scientists Say. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/20/science/shark-attacks.html?fbclid=IwAR3NJFs7jPNKM0cn4zHq9u8xDtkcaSwOF8GmNgkLo6fOEkbGJ7ZMWV0CWUs>