

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2022

PO1020 A2: Introduction to Political Institutions, Processes and Problems – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR: T. Ruth Lambert **PHONE:** Please contact me to set up a virtual meeting
OFFICE: Virtual **E-MAIL:** tlambert@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to the institutions, processes and problems of government emphasizing Canadian and other democratic governments. The course includes discussions of law, constitutions, civil liberties, public opinion, voting behaviors, electoral systems, political parties, interest groups, federalism and nationalism. This course offers an introduction to different fields of political study. Problems to be examined may include: political integration, the right to national self-determination, humanitarian intervention, globalization, global warming, terrorism and other issues.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Eric Mintz, David Close, and Osvaldo Croci. *Power, Politics, and the Common Good: An Introduction to Political Science*, 6th edition: Toronto. Pearson Canada, 2021. This is a digital text and is available through the NWP book store.

Additional readings as assigned by the instructor will be made available to students.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Remote Delivery – Synchronous. We will all meet online at the same time on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are no on campus requirements for this course. Students must have a computer with reliable internet connection and a webcam/microphone. Technical support is available through helpdesk@nwpolytech.ca.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce students to the study of politics and political ideas highlighting key concepts, definitions, and key debates in political science.
- Provide students with knowledge of structures of political institutions, systems and factors that influence politics.
- Highlight the value in diverse perspectives shaping political communities.
- Introduce students to political science methodologies and approaches to better understand the breadth of political science scholarship.
- Develop students' ability to interpret written sources of information.
- Develop students' ability to research, analyze, and write about political science.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Understand the different ideological foundations of politics and democracy and be able to assess how ideology influences different views
- Define and identify political institutions across democratic political systems
- Explain the similarities and differences in political institutional arrangements and be able to articulate how these influence political processes
- Be able to engage in dialogue about political issues using readings and data as evidence
- Engage in critical analysis of text and ideas to develop arguments
- Communicate ideas and analysis through writing

TRANSFERABILITY:

This course is considered a University Transferable Course; however, the student has the final responsibility for ensuring the transferability of this course to Alberta Colleges and Universities.

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

** A Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment/Activity	Weight	Due date
Reading responses	15%	September 28, October 5, October 19
Midterm exam	15%	October 25, 2022
Essay planning	10%	November 9, 2022
Final essay	30%	December 3, 2022
Final exam	30%	TBA

Reading Responses

Students will complete three (3) reading response assignments worth 5% each. These are due early in the term to help prepare you to write your research essay. These will also help you prepare for your midterm. Further instructions will be posted to the course site. The reading responses are due by 10pm the Wednesday before the Thursday lecture on the weeks assigned. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Midterm exam:

The midterm exam will be written during class time on October 25th. It will be open book.

Essay planning:

Students will identify a research topic, create a research question and identify sources to use in the final research essay. Throughout the course, we will be taking time to discuss how to approach your final essay. Formatting instructions will be provided on the course site. Your assignment is due November 9th at noon. The late penalty is 3% a day.

Final essay: Students will write an 8-10 page research essay on a topic approved by the instructor. Further instructions will be posted to the course site. Your essay is due December 3rd by noon. The late penalty is 3% a day.

Final exam:

The final exam is cumulative and will be written during the exam period. Please do not make any plans that would prevent you from accessing your final exam until the final exam schedule has been posted. The final exam will be open book.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Additional readings will be added to the list below and made available on the course site. We will discuss how to access these readings and why they will be added during the first class.

Week 1: September 1

Course introduction (no assigned reading)

Week 2: September 6 and September 8

What is political science?

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 1

Week 3: September 20 and September 22

Political ideologies

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 3

Week 4: September 27 and 29

Political ideologies

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 4

Due September 28th by 10pm : Reading response #1

Week 5: October 4 and October 6

Democracies and non-democracies

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 10 and Chapter 11

Due October 5th by 10pm: Reading response #2

*****Fall Break: October 11 – October 14 –No classes*****

Week 6: October 18 and October 20

Political participation and contentious politics

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 5 and Chapter 9

Due October 19th by 10pm: Reading response #3

Week 7: October 25 and October 27

Constitutions

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 12

The midterm exam will be during class on October 25th

Week 8: November 1 and November 3

Parliamentary and presidential systems

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15

Week 9: November 8 (no class November 11)

Political parties

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 6

November 9th at noon: Essay planning assignment due

Week 10: November 15 and November 17

Electoral systems and elections

Week 11: November 22 and November 24

Unitary and federal Systems

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 13

Week 12: November 29 and December 1

Global politics

Mintz, Close, and Croci, Chapter 18

December 3rd by noon: final essay due

Week 13: December 6 and December 8

Current issues in international relations: topics to be selected by the class

The final exam will be scheduled during the exam period. Please do not make any plans that would prevent you from accessing your final exam until the final exam schedule has been posted

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Respectful participation: One of the key components of learning in political science is to engage with ideas that may differ from your own. Respectful dialogue with classmates is required. Students will treat one another with respect. Expectations around participation will be covered during the first class and re-visited throughout the term as necessary. If you have any concerns about participation, please contact the instructor.

Preparation: Students will come to class prepared to engage with the material and ask questions. This will be achieved by completing the assigned readings before class.

Attendance: Students will attend lectures regularly in order to benefit from the material covered (lecture material is testable).

Online learning: Students must have access to a reliable internet connection and webcam and microphone. It is expected that students will make every effort to participate as much as possible. We will cover expectations around online learning in our first class and re-visit as necessary throughout the term.

Assignment deadlines: You are expected to submit your assignments on time as per the syllabus. If you need an extension, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor *prior* to the deadline in order to discuss options.

Recording or photographing content is not allowed, unless permission has been granted by the instructor.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the Northwestern Polytechnic Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/> or the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy which can be found at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.