



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – SUMMER 2012

PO 1030 (A3): MODERN POLITICAL ISSUES

3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763
OFFICE: E401-6 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca
OFFICE HOURS: M, W; 1:30 – 3:30 pm, or by appointment

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

- Political Studies 1030 course package.
- Readings to be accessed through library databases and the internet, as listed in the syllabus.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This is an introduction to contemporary political issues and events. Topics vary but include matters of contemporary national and international concern such as the Quebec Question, Rights and Environmentalism.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 credits (3-0-0)/45 hours

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture

OBJECTIVES: Is a greater role for the private sector the solution to problems facing Canada's health care system? What should be done to prevent catastrophic consequences of global warming? What role do Western sellers and consumers of cotton, coffee, and chocolate play in

producing poverty elsewhere? How is the political personal? These are some of the political issues which we will examine in this course.

In addition, we will also consider some key political concepts and themes which remain important as issues change. These include basic ideologies, individual liberty, rights, and democracy. My objective is:

- To provide you with a basic political vocabulary of concepts and ideas which will enable an understanding of contemporary issues facing local, national, and global societies.
- To examine different political issues carefully, by looking at the nature of the issues and opposing points of view.

TRANSFERABILITY: This course has university transferability to Athabasca University, Canadian University College, Concordia University College, Grant MacEwan University, King's University College, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and the University of Lethbridge. For complete information, consult the Alberta Transfer Guide (www.transferalberta.ca).

**** 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**

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A ⁺	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A ⁻	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B ⁺	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B ⁻	2.7	70 – 72	
C ⁺	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C ⁻	1.7	60 – 62	
D ⁺	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

EVALUATIONS:

You can choose to do either 3 position papers, or 2 papers and a midterm. You will need to inform me via email **by June 6** which of these you are choosing.

Evaluation Structure I

- Participation 10%
- Political Values Paper..... 10%
- 2 Position Papers 15% x 2
- Midterm 20%
- Final exam 30%

Evaluation Structure II

- Participation 10%
- Political Values Paper..... 10%
- 3 Position Papers 15% x 2
- Final exam..... 35%

Participation: You will be required to complete 5 in-class quizzes or take-home assignments at random throughout the semester. Each assignment will be worth 2% the participation grade.

Political Values Paper:

This assignment is designed to get you acquainted with your political values and determine where you stand on the political spectrum. Some of you may have thought about where you stand on the political spectrum. You may think of yourself as left-wing or right-wing, or identify with the political party that most closely approximates where you stand. Others may be much less acquainted with where they stand politically and this assignment should help shed some light for these students. This assignment is designed to help you determine where you stand on the political spectrum.

Position Papers: You will write a minimum of two papers focusing on a debate theme that you have selected. These should be approximately 6 – 8 pages in length, but remember the key is to have made a good argument, not hit a certain length. I suggest using a theme which we have discussed in class, but others are acceptable as long as they are cleared with me.

This paper will require you to summarize the issues under discussion, explicate the various positions on these issues, and offer your own perspective and recommendations. While we may have discussed these issues in class, this is NOT a summary of class discussions – I expect you to examine the issues in greater depth, and look at sources beyond those used in class. I will be distributing a handout with more information on this paper in class.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Full participation in class will require demonstration that you have completed the assigned readings, as well as an active role in group work and class discussions.

Punctual submission of assignments:

- An electronic copy is due by midnight on the due date. It should be submitted via Moodle, and should be formatted as a PDF.
- Please title your paper as follows: LASTNAMEFirstname-1030-S2012. (Ex. Jane Smith's paper should be saved as SMITHJane-1030-S2012.)
- Late assignments will be docked 3% (i.e. an A becomes an A-) for each day they are late. If extenuating circumstances necessitate an extension on an assignment, you are required to speak with me AHEAD OF TIME, and appropriate paperwork (i.e. a medical note) may be required. Also, please note that you are required to write the final exam on the date scheduled by the College. You should take this into account when making any travel plans.

Classroom Conduct:

GPRC has committed to promote an environment free of harassment or discrimination where respect will be given to ethnic, cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity, and expects individuals will conduct themselves with respect for one another. This means your behavior should exhibit respect for yourselves, each other, the instructor, and the course material. As such:

- Students are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared.
- Laptops and cellphones are permitted in class, with a few caveats.
 - Cellphones should be on silent or vibrate mode, and I expect you wait to check calls or messages until after class. If an emergency requires otherwise, I expect you to advise me at the beginning of class.
 - Laptops are to be used for class work ONLY. Students carrying out other activities will be asked to leave their laptops at home.
- Working on assignments for other courses is not permitted. Students doing so will be asked to leave the class.
- I encourage an atmosphere of positive and constructive debate. Expressing criticism or annoyance with a view expressed by another person, either through a comment, audible noise, facial expression or body language, is not acceptable, unless you are prepared to debate your position openly & respectfully in class.
- Regular attendance. If you know you are going to be absent from class, I expect you to contact me prior to class with a reason. Students who miss more than 1/3 of classes (9 or more) may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in GPRC's Examination Policy (www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/).

For information on key dates and other important matters, please refer to the GPRC Calendar, available www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Plagiarism and/or cheating can result in serious consequences (i.e. a grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: A Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty) and/or suspension or expulsion from the College). If I suspect plagiarism on assignments, I reserve the right to submit these to an online plagiarism detection service, as specified in Section 1.4 of the GPRC Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating (www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/).

It is your responsibility to ensure that you fully understand what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating. If you have any question as to what these acts involve, please refer to the Student

Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/.

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

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Schedule of Lectures & Readings (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students)	
June 4 (Week 1)	<p>Course Introduction: What do we mean by ‘politics’?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) Mark Dickerson, Thomas Flanagan and Brenda O’Neill. "Chapter 1: Society, Government & Politics." In <i>An Introduction to Government and Politics</i>. P. 3 – 13. • Canadian Nurses Association, “Nursing Is A Political Act – The Bigger Picture,” <i>Nursing Now</i>, May 2000. 4 pages available online at http://www2.cna-aiic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/Nursing_Political_Act_May_2000_e.pdf
June 5 (Week 2)	<p>POLITICAL VALUES ASSIGN. DUE – June 5</p> <p>Ideologies: What do we want in a ‘good society’? What is the left – right spectrum in modern politics?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) Joseph, Thomas W. “Ch. 4: Political Ideologies.” In <i>Essentials of Canadian Politics and Government</i>. P. 87 – 120. • (CP) Dickerson, Mark, Thomas Flanagan and Brenda O’Neill. “Ch. 9: Ideology.” <i>In An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach</i>. P. 113 – 125.
June 6 (Week 3)	<p>Ideologies (continued)</p>
June 7 (Week 4)	<p>Democracy: What does democracy need to function? What does citizenship mean?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) Paul Johnston & Tom Pocklington, "Democracy and Representative Government." Tom Pocklington, ed. <i>Representative Government: An Introduction to Politics and Government</i>. P. 2 – 15. • (CP) Christina Gabriel. “Ch. 12: Citizens & Citizenship.” Frm. <i>Critical Concepts: an introduction to politics</i>. Eds. Janine Brodie & Sandra Rein. P. 157 – 169.
June 11 (Week 5)	<p>POSITION PAPER #1 DUE</p> <p>The Canadian Context: Basics of Canada’s political system & structure. How do we define ourselves?</p>

	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) Eric Mintz, Livianna Tossutti, & Christopher Dunn. "Ch. 13: The Federal System, "Ch. 14: The Executive, & Ch. 15: Parliament" <i>Democracy, Diversity and Good Government: An Introduction to Politics in Canada</i>. Toronto: Pearson Canada, 2011. P. 346 – 397, 403 – 408, 412 – 438.
June 12 (Week 6)	The Canadian Context (continued)
June 13 (Week 7)	<p>Elections & Electoral Reform: How does our electoral system function, & should it be reformed?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugh Segal. "First Past the Post Wins Again." <i>Policy Options</i> Nov. 2007: 27 – 30. http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/nov07/segal.pdf • Tom Kent. "Electoral Reform for Constructive Competition." <i>Policy Options</i> Nov. 2007: 31 -34. http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/nov07/kent2.pdf • Andrew Heard, "Reform of the Electoral System," at http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/reform.html
June 14	<p>**MIDTERM EXAM – ES I**</p> <p>**POSITION PAPER #2 DUE June 15 – ES II**</p>
June 18 (Week 8)	<p>Local government: What is local government & how does it affect us?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) C. Richard Tindal & Susan Nobes Tindal. "Municipal Government at the Crossroads." In <i>Local Government in Canada</i>. • Dave Cournoyer. "Making Cities Matter in Alberta's Election." <i>daveberta.ca: Alberta politics blog</i> 8 Apr. 2012. http://daveberta.ca/2012/04/making-cities-matter-alberta-election/ (Please make sure to watch both the videos as well.)
June 19 (Week 9)	<p>Health Care: How is health care regulated & funded? Private vs. Public Sector: A Third Way? The Harper Doctrine.</p> <p>Readings (continued on next page):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) C. Richard Tindal. "The Many Myths of Medicare." In <i>A Citizen's Guide to Government</i>. P. 286 – 298. • (CP) Kevin Taft. "The Special Case of Health Care." In <i>Shredding the Public Interest: Ralph Klein & 25 Years of One-Party Government</i>. P. 93 – 105. • (CP) David Gratzer. Excerpt from <i>Code Blue: Reviving Canada's Health Care System</i>. P. 167 – 187, 192 – 4. • Antonia Maioni. "Health Care Funding: Needs and Reality." <i>Policy Options</i>: May 2010. P. 69 – 72. http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/may10/maioni.pdf • Geoff Norquay. "The Death of Executive Federalism and the Rise of the "Harper Doctrine": Proposals for the Next Health Care Accord. <i>Policy Options</i>, Dec. 2011-Jan.2012, P. 46 – 50. http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/dec11/norquay.pdf

<p>June 20 (Week 10)</p>	<p>Media literacy: What’s the story behind the news? Do we understand what we’re seeing?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) Eric Mintz, David Close & Osvaldo Croci. “Ch. 8: Politics and the Media.” In <i>Politics, Power, and the Common Good: an introduction to political science</i>. 171 – 196. • Richard Liebrecht. “The Real Worry about Election 2012.” Guest Post on <i>daveberta.ca: Alberta politics blog</i>. http://daveberta.ca/2012/05/richard-liebrecht-alberta-election-2012/ • Elizabeth Thoman. “Why I’ve Stopped Watching the 11 o’Clock News.” Centre for Media Literacy website. Available online at http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article289.html • Jay Davis “News: Beyond the Myth of Objectivity.” Centre for Media Literacy website. Available online at http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article48.html • Rachel Dretzen, Producer/Director. “Digital Nation: Life on the virtual frontier.” 2 Feb. 2010. Television Documentary. Available online at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/view/
<p>June 21 (Week 11)</p>	<p>POSITION PAPER DUE June 21</p> <p>Media Literacy (continued)</p>
<p>June 24 (Week 12)</p>	<p>The International System & Canada’s Place in the World: How does the International system work? How can Canada influence other Nations?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) James John Guy. “Ch. 13: The International System.” In <i>People, Politics and Government: A Canadian Perspective</i>. P. 353 – 385. • Brian Easton. “What does a multi-polar world mean?” <i>New Zealand International Review</i> 35.4 July (2010): 21-22. <i>Academic Search Complete</i>. • Maureen Molot. “Introduction: Canada and the BRIC States.” <i>Canadian Foreign Policy</i> 13.2 (2006): 11 – 17. http://www3.carleton.ca/cfpj/documents/IntroductionCFP_13_2.pdf • “What really caused the eurozone crisis?” BBC News. 22 Dec. 3 2011. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-16301630 • Q & A: Greek debt crisis. BBC News. 16 May 2012. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13798000
<p>June 25 (Week 13)</p>	<p>Climate change and global warming: Who should do what?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (CP) Laurie Adkin. “Ch. 18: Environmental Politics” in <i>Critical Concepts: an introduction to politics</i>. P. 237 – 249. • “A Citizen’s Guide on Climate Change” <i>Alberta Acts on Climate Change. Website</i>. http://www.albertaacts.ca/CitizensGuide (Please note: You will need to scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on all of the links under “A Citizen’s Guide...”, incl.

	<p><i>What is Climate Change?, Impacts, Causes, Canada's role, Oil sands, & What should we do?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith Curry. "Demon Coal." 12 Mar. 2012. http://judithcurry.com/2012/03/12/demon-coal/ And "Messses and Super Wicked Problems." 11 Mar. 2012 http://judithcurry.com/2012/03/11/messes-and-super-wicked-problems/ <i>Climate Etc.</i> Blog. • Gregg Easterbrook. "Global Warming: Who Loses – and Who Wins?" <i>The Atlantic</i>, April 2007. Available online at http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200704/global-warming
June 26 (Week 15)	Exam Review
June 27	**FINAL EXAM**