

SEP. 24 2002

We cannot safely leave politics to politicians...

Henry George, American economist & reformer 1839-97

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

Political Science 1030  
Modern Political Issues  
University Transfer  
Fall 2002

Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD  
Office: C303  
Telephone: 539-2996  
e-mail: enders@gprc.ab.ca

Room: B306A  
Time: Wed. 6-8:50 p.m.  
Office hours:

College Calendar course 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. It is not intended for students majoring in political science. Not open to students who have or are taking PO 1000.

Course description fall 2001:

What is terrorism all about? What is the best response to it? What should be done to prevent catastrophic consequences of global warming? Is a greater role for the private sector the solution to problems facing Canada's health care system? Is the criminal justice system too lenient with young offenders, even now? Is affirmative action ever the best available option? 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 politics, law, individual liberty, rights, democracy, and federalism.

The course will also present the institutional arrangements of Canadian and American government.

Key questions in this course include: Who has political power? When are the choices, rights and interests of individuals justifiably overridden in the name of the common good?

Course objectives:

1. to carefully examine different political issues - by looking at the nature of the issues and opposing points of view
2. to introduce you to some key political concepts, institutional arrangements, and perennial questions

Course requirements:

Very Interesting Project .....	15%
First exam .....	25%
Essay .....	25%
Final exam .....	35%

Required texts:

1. Political Science 1030 course package.
2. Readings to be accessed through WebCT.

**TOPICS AND DATES**

(\*\*\* Subject to revision \*\*\*)

**I. Introduction.**

- 4 Sept. A. What is politics? Law and Politics. Morality and Politics. Political resources.

**II. International Issues.**

- 11 Sept. A. Terrorism. What is it? Who are the terrorists? Responses to terrorism.  
18 Sept. B. Global warming and the environment. The Kyoto Accord. Alternative energy sources. The Alberta government.  
25 Sept. C. Obligations of the rich nations of the North.

**III. Institutions and Issues.**

- 2 Oct. A. Democracy. Is it the highest virtue of political institutions?  
2 & 9 Oct. B. Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems.  
16 Oct. \*\*\* MIDTERM EXAM \*\*\*  
16 & 23 Oct. C. Federalism and the future of health care.  
30 Oct. D. The Charter of Rights. Decisions and controversies.  
6 Nov. E. Punishment and youth justice. Purposes of sentencing. Restorative justice. New legislation.  
13 Nov. F. Affirmative Action - and women, aboriginals, visible minorities, disabled persons... and football players and musicians and more.

**IV. Individual Liberty and Related Issues**

- 20 Nov. A. John Stuart Mill.  
20 Nov. B. Decriminalization of (Medical) Marijuana and other drugs.  
27 Nov. C. Euthanasia and assisted-suicide.

**V. Obligation to obey the law.**

- 4 December

List of readings follows on the next page.

## READINGS

(Note: CP = from Course Package. WCT = from WebCT)

### I. Introduction.

#### A. What is politics? Political resources.

- (CP) Mark Dickerson & Thomas Flanagan, "Politics: Gathering Support," in An Introduction to Government & Politics: A Conceptual Approach, 5th edition. Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson, 1998, pp. 16-17.
- (CP) Charles Andrain, "Types of Political Resources..." in Political Life and Social Change, 2nd edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1975, pp. 98-101.

### II. International Issues.

#### A. Terrorism. What is it? Who are the terrorists? Responses to terrorism.

- (CP) Stansfield Turner, "10 Steps Against Terror," from Bernard Schechterman and Martin Slann, editors, Annual Editions: Violence and Terrorism, 3rd edition. Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin, 1993.
- (WCT) "Prentice Hall Authors Speak Out: September 11 and Beyond," [www.prenhall.com/phauthorsspeakout](http://www.prenhall.com/phauthorsspeakout). Selected articles. Use "jump to" to find articles.
- (WCT) Noam Chomsky. Selected interviews. [www.monkeyfist.com/ChomskyArchive/interviews](http://www.monkeyfist.com/ChomskyArchive/interviews)

#### B. Global warming and the environment. The Kyoto Accord. Alternative energy sources. The Alberta government.

- (CP) Ross Gelbspan, "Climate Change is Here. Now," pp. 148-56.
- (CP) Brian Tucker, "Science Friction: The Politics of Global Warming," pp. 157-67.

Both readings are from James Harf and Mark Lombardi, editors, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Global Issues. Guilford, Connecticut: McGraw-Hill Dushkin, 2001.

- (WCT) "Savings in the energy account," Canada and the World Backgrounder. March 2000, pp. 24-27
- (WCT) Brian Bergman, "The cost of Kyoto: How far are Canadians willing to go to help prevent global warming?" Maclean's (Toronto edition). 18 March 2002, p. 38.

#### C. Obligations of the rich nations of the North.

- (CP) Garrett Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat," from Thomas Mappes and Jane Zembaty, editors, Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy, 4th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992, pp. 413-20.
- (CP) Peter Singer, "Rich and Poor," from John Ramage & John Bean, editors, Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric With Readings. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1995, pp. 504-13.
- (CP) Robert Van Wyk, "Perspectives on World Hunger and the Extent of Our Positive Duties," from Barbara MacKinnon, editor, Ethics: Theory & Contemporary Issues. Belmont,

California: Wadsworth, 1995, pp. 426-33.

Recommended:

- (WCT) United Nations, "State and Progress of Human Development,"  
ch. 1 of Human Development Report 2002.  
[www.undp.org/hdr2002/](http://www.undp.org/hdr2002/)

III. Institutions and Issues.

A. Democracy. Is it the highest virtue of political institutions?

- (CP) Paul Johnston & Tom Pocklington, "Democracy and Representative Government," from Tom Pocklington, editor, Representative Government: An Introduction to Politics and Government. Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1994, pp. 2-15.

B. Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems.

- (CP) Mark Dickerson & Thomas Flanagan, "Parliamentary and Presidential Systems," in An Introduction to Government and Politics, 6th edition. Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson, 2002, pp. 327-44, 346-7, 350-6.

C. Federalism and the future of health care.

- (CP) C. Richard Tindal, "The Unravelling Social Safety Net," in A Citizen's Guide to Government, 2nd edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2002, pp. 284-92.
- (CP) Kevin Taft, "The Special Case of Health Care," in Shredding the Public Interest: Ralph Klein & 25 Years of One-Party Government. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press & Parkland Institute, 1997, pp. 93-105
- (CP) Dr. David Gratzler, Code Blue: Reviving Canada's Health Care System. Toronto: ECW Press, 1999, pp. 167-87, 192-4.

D. The Charter of Rights. Decisions and controversies.

- (WCT) The Charter of Rights
- (CP) Globe & Mail, "How the Charter changes justice," from Annual Editions: Canadian Politics, 3rd edition. Mahler, editor. Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin, 1997, pp. 43-5.
- (CP) Al Strachan, Globe & Mail, "The hidden opposition," and "The 'Court Party' in practice," from Mahler, editor, Annual Editions, Canadian Politics, 3rd edition, pp. 46-7
- (CP) Rand Dyck, Canadian Politics: Concise edition. Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson, 1998, pp. 211-13, 219-21.

Recommended:

- (WCT) Supreme Court of Canada decisions.  
[www.lexum.umontreal.ca/cso-scc/en/](http://www.lexum.umontreal.ca/cso-scc/en/)

E. Punishment and youth justice. Purposes of sentencing. Restorative justice. New legislation.

- TBA
- (WCT) "Bad rap..." Canada and the World Backgrounder. December 2003.

- F. Affirmative Action - and women, aboriginals, visible minorities, disabled persons... and football players and musicians and more.
- (CP) Jack Roberts, "No - Employment Equity - Unfair" from Mark Charlton & Paul Barker, editors, Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues, 3rd edition. Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson, 1998, pp. 532-41.
  - (CP) L.W. Sumner, "Positive Sexism," from Wesley Cragg & Christine Koggel, editors. Contemporary Moral Issues, 4th edition. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1997, pp. 332-5.

#### IV. Individual Liberty and Related Issues

##### A. John Stuart Mill.

- (CP) John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty" (selections) from John Arthur, editor, Morality and Moral Controversies, 5th edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1999, pp. 324-31.

##### B. Decriminalization of (Medical) Marijuana and other drugs.

- (CP) David Boaz, "A Drug-Free America - or a Free America?" pp. 188-95 and David Courtwright, "Should We Legalize Drugs? No," pp. 196-204 and "Postscript," p. 205, all from Stephen Satris, editor, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Moral Issues, 8th edition. Guilford, Connecticut: McGraw-Hill Dushkin, 2002.
- (WCT) Nancy Bellingham, "Is Mary Jane really bad?" Canadian Speeches. July-August 2001, pp 28-36.

##### Recommended:

- (WCT) Scott Reid, "Should We End Prohibition?" pp. 6-12, and Christopher Manfredi, "Liberal Morality and the Myths of Drug Criminalization," pp. 14-17. Both from Policy Options, October 2001. [www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org).

##### C. Euthanasia and assisted-suicide.

- (CP) James Rachels, "Active & Passive Euthanasia," from Thomas Mappes & Jane Zembaty, editors, Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy, 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997, pp. 61-66.
- (CP) Stephen Potts, "Objections to the Institutionalization of Euthanasia," from T. Mappes & J. Zembaty, editors, Social Ethics, 4th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992, pp. 136-40.
- (CP) Jay Gay Williams, "The Wrongful of Euthanasia," from Stephen Satris, editor, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Moral Issues, 5th edition. Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin, 1996, pp. 290-3.
- (CP) Rudy Krutzen, "The Case of Robert & Tracy Latimer," from Eldon Soifer, editor. Ethical Issues: Perspectives for Canadians. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997, pp. 454-65.

- (WCT) TBA

V. Obligation to obey the law.

- (CP) Plato, "Crito," from John Arthur & William Shaw, editors, Social and Political Philosophy. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992, pp. 1-8.
- (CP) Jan Narveson, "Obeying the Law," ch. of Moral Matters. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, pp. 259-67.