

We cannot safely leave politics to politicians...

Henry George, American economist & reformer 1839-97

**GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE**

Political Studies 1030

**Modern Political Issues**

University transfer, 3 credit course

Fall 2007

Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD

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Office hours: TBA and by appointment

Room: B305

Time: Tues. 6-8:50 p.m.

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. [There are no prerequisites.]

Course description fall 2007:

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? Should the Canadian government take a "made-in-Canada" approach to address climate change? When should Canada withdraw troops from Afghanistan? Is torture ever justified? Should medical personnel ever participate in torture? To what extent are rich countries of the world responsible for the plight of the poorest ones? What role do Western sellers and consumers of cotton, coffee, and chocolate play in producing poverty elsewhere? Should nonmedical use of marijuana and other drugs be legalized? 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, political resources, law, rule of law, individual liberty, rights, democracy, and federalism.

The course will also present the institutional arrangements of Canadian and American government, consider the values they embody, and assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Course objectives:

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

Course requirements:

First exam .....	30%
Term paper.....	30%
Final exam .....	40%

Please **NOTE:** You are required to write the final exam on the date scheduled by the College. Take this into account when making any December travel plans.

Students who miss an excessive number of classes may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in the Calendar on p. 40.

You are expected to reference sources fully and properly for your term paper. An instructor's handout will provide assistance. See College Calendar, pp. 44-45, for information on the range of penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

For information on key dates and other important matters, see the Calendar as well.

Marks will be given in percentage figures before conversion to a letter grade.

Conversion table:

A+ 90-100	B+ 76-79	C+ 67-69	D+ 55-59
A 85- 89	B 73-75	C 64-66	D 50-54
A- 80- 84	B- 70-72	C- 60-63	F 0-49

Required texts:

1. Political Studies 1030 course package.
2. Course Blackboard postings.
3. Readings to be accessed through library databases and the internet.

**TOPICS AND DATES**

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

- 11 Sept. I. **Introduction** to the course. Introduction to the world of politics.  
What is politics? Law and politics. The rule of law. Morality and politics.
- 18 Sept. I. **Introduction** continued. Political resources and methods.  
II. Democracy. Components and requirements. Is democracy the highest virtue of political institutions?
- 25 Sept. III. **Parliamentary vs. Presidential System.** Processes, values and consequences. Strengths and weaknesses.
- 2 Oct. III. **Parliamentary vs. Presidential System** continued.
- 9 Oct. IV. **Federalism.**  
V. **Health Care.** Federalism and Health Care. Private vs. Public Sector. A Third Way?

16 Oct. **FIRST EXAM**

V. **Health Care** continued.

23 Oct. VI. **Global warming and climate change.** Who should do what?

30 Oct. VI. **Global Warming** concluded.

VII. **Canada in Afghanistan.** When should Canadian forces be withdrawn and why?

6 Nov. VIII. **Torture.** International Law. Morality of torture. Role of the medical profession. Canada, the United States and torture.

13 Nov. IX. **Obligations of the rich nations of the North.** Conditions, causes and responses to poverty, illness (including AIDS), and other challenges. The stories of cotton, coffee and chocolate.

20 Nov. X. **John Stuart Mill and individual liberty.**

XI. **Decriminalization or legalization of marijuana and other drugs.**

27 Nov. XII. **The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** and related issues including a right to private health care, medical use of marijuana, same-sex marriage, abortion and euthanasia.

4 Dec. XIII. **Political Obligation.** When and why is there a moral obligation to obey the law, if there is one?

Any changes made to this outline will be discussed in class.