



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2020

PO2220 (A3): INTRODUCTION TO THE CANADIAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, FEDERALISM AND THE CONSTITUTION – 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS FOR 15 WEEKS

INSTRUCTOR: Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763
OFFICE: C415 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. & Wed. 1:00 - 2:00 pm, or by appointment

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course examines the workings of the four branches of government at the national level, as well as Canadian federalism and the Constitution. The course also explores efforts to change institutional arrangements to make them more democratic and more responsive to Western Canadians, people in Quebec and aboriginal peoples.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

- Canada's Politics: Democracy, Diversity & Good Government. 3rd ed. Eric Mintz, Livianna Tossutti, and Christopher Dunn. Toronto: Pearson Education, 2017.
- Internet & database readings as listed in the syllabus appendix.
- Readings assigned by instructor in class.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture and Discussion

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to introduce you to the factors which shape the Canadian public and government & institutions. PO2220 is intended to:

- familiarize you with the formal and informal groups, procedures and arrangements of politics and governing in Canada, including how these interact with the broader Canadian political, social and economic environments, and how these shape the outcomes of those systems.
- introduce you to the basics of the Canadian Constitution and federalism in the Canadian context;

- demonstrate the value of thinking clearly and systematically about the political world and how it affects your daily life;
- prepare you for further studies in Canadian politics at the postsecondary level.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- define and use political terms and concepts;
- describe and differentiate Canadian political institutions and processes;
- demonstrate engagement in formal and informal Canadian politics through discussion of current events;
- research, develop and critique current Canadian political debates;
- assess original and secondary sources of argumentation and evidence, both scholarly and popular, and apply findings to new situations;
- demonstrate effective essay writing skills, through the evaluation of evidence and coherent synthesis of arguments;
- apply these specific skills to further academic study of politics.

TRANSFERABILITY: AU, BU, KU, MU, UA, UL

***Warning:** Although we strive to make the transferability information in this document up-to-date and accurate, **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 Alberta Transfer Guide at <http://transferalberta.alberta.ca/transfer-alberta-search/#/audienceTypeStep>

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

EVALUATIONS:

Participation	10%
Discussion group leadership.....	20%
Briefing Note.....	25%
Midterm Exam.....	25%
Final Exam.....	30%

Participation: You will complete peer evaluations for your classmates' discussion leadership, and you must complete at least 80% of these to receive the participation grade. For example, if there are 10 students in the class, you will need to submit at least 8 evaluations to receive the participation grade. This is an example only; the number of actual summaries submitted will depend on the number of students in the class.

Discussion leadership: You will pick one of six discussion topics, and lead an in-class discussion on that topic. This will involve doing research beyond the assigned reading on the topic, writing questions designed to generate discussion questions, and both/all perspectives on the question are addressed. Evaluation will include instructor and peer assessment. Further instructions will be provided in class.

Briefing Note: You will write a briefing note for a Cabinet minister on a specific topic within the broad subject of Canadian politics. The purpose of a briefing note is to provide basic knowledge to the reader on a topic, and to prepare them to speak knowledgeably to current and pertinent issues of that topic. Further instructions will be provided in class.

Exams: Exams will consist of questions which require demonstration of knowledge of specific concepts and theories (multiple choice, matching questions, and short-response questions), as well as synthesis of that knowledge into original responses (essay-style questions). The mid-term will deal with material covered to date, while the final exam will be cumulative. Both exams will be written online in a computer lab, although the option for hand-writing is also available.

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:

Schedule of Lectures & Readings (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students)	
Week 1 (Jan. 6 – 10)	Introduction and Syllabus Review Lecture 1: Studying Politics in the Canadian Context Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D (Mintz, Tossutti & Dunn) text, Ch. 1, "Introduction."
Week 2 (Jan. 13 – 17)	Lecture 2: The Executive Branch (The Crown, the Prime Minister and Cabinet) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 13, "The Executive." • Curran, Rachel. "How governments get stuff done." <i>Policy Options</i>, 26 Dec. 2017. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2017/how-governments-get-stuff-done/ <i>**Note that <u>Policy Options</u> articles are available at http://policyoptions.irpp.org/. For back issues, click on <Past Issues> and follow the links to the publication date.</i>
Week 3 (Jan. 20 – 24)	L. 2 (con't) <i>Discussion Topic #1: Should Canada remain a constitutional monarchy? (Jan. 22)</i>
Week 4 (Jan. 27 – 31)	Lecture 3 - The Executive Branch (The Civil Service) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 15, "The Public Bureaucracy."
Week 5 (Feb. 3 – 7)	Lecture 4 - The Legislative Branch (The House of Commons and the Senate) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 14, "Parliament."
Week 6 (Feb. 10 – 14)	L. 4 (con't) <i>Discussion Topic #2: Should the powers of the Prime Minister be curtailed? (Feb. 13)</i>
(Feb. 17 – 21)	WINTER BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 7 (Feb. 24 – 28)	<i>Discussion Topic #3: Should the Senate should be reformed or abolished. (Feb. 25)</i>

	Midterm Exam: Thurs., Feb. 27
Week 8 (Mar. 2 – 6)	Lecture 5: The Judicial Branch (The Court System) Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 16, “The Judicial System: Law and the Courts.” • Maxime-St-Hilaire, Alexis, et al. “The false francophone-Indigenous conflict over SCC judges.” <i>Policy Options</i>, 18 Dec.2017. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2017/the-false-francophone-indigenous-conflict-over-scc-judges/
Week 9 (Mar. 9 – 13)	<i>Discussion Topic #4: Is the Supreme Court too activist? (Mar. 8)</i> Lecture 6: The Constitution Acts and Federalism Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 10, “The Constitution, Constitutional Change and the Protection of Rights & Freedoms.” • M, T & D text, Ch. 14, “The Federal System.”
Week 10 (Mar. 16 – 20)	L. 6 (con’t)
Week 11 (Mar. 23 – 27)	Lecture 7: The Party System Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 8, “Political Parties.” • Johnston, Richard . “Canada’s baffling party system.” <i>Policy Options</i>, 17 Oct. 2017. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2017/the-baffling-history-of-canadas-party-system/ <p style="text-align: center;">**Briefing Note Due – Fri., Mar. 27**</p>
Week 12 (Mar. 30 – Apr. 3)	<i>Discussion Topic #5: Is party discipline is beneficial to the democratic process in Canada? (Mar. 31)</i> Lecture 8: Elections Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, T & D text, Ch. 9, “Elections, the Electoral System, and Voting Behaviour.” • Lavergne, Réal. “What would proportional representation mean for Canada?” <i>Policy Options</i>, 27 Nov. 2017. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2017/implications-of-proportional-representation-pr-in-canada/
Week 13 (Apr. 6 – 10)	L. 8 (con’t)
Week 14 (Apr. 13)	<i>Discussion Topic #6: Should Canada reform our current electoral system? (Apr. 13)</i>

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. If you do not know how to save a document as a PDF, please contact me.
- Please title your paper as follows: LASTNAMEFirstname-Assignment-P2220W2020. (Ex. Jane Smith's paper should be saved as SMITHJane-TermPaper- PO2220W2020.)
- 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 is committed to promoting 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 behaviour 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 classwork 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 (available at 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:

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 section on Plagiarism and Cheating in the College policy titled Student Misconduct: Academic and Non-Academic at (<https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/fetch.php?ID=68>).

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. **Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.**

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>