



GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
Department of Arts and Education
POLITICAL STUDIES 2220
**INTRODUCTION TO CANADIAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, FEDERALISM & THE
CONSTITUTION (UT)**
Winter 2014

Instructor: Tom Enders, PhD
Office: C303
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Prerequisite: none

Required texts/resource materials:

- Rand Dyck & Christopher Cochrane, Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches, 7th edition. Toronto: Nelson, 2014.
- Selected readings from the internet and databases, Moodle postings and handouts.

College Calendar Course 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.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course you should be able to understand better how the Canadian political system works (and fails to work), and how it might be improved. You should also have greater insights into some significant political issues.

This course and PO2210 (The Canadian Political Environment) provide a full year introduction to the study of Canadian Politics. The two courses together provide preparation for further studies in Canadian politics at the postsecondary level and serve as a prerequisite.

Credit/Contact Hours: This is a three credit course with three hours of instructional time a week.

Delivery Mode:

Classroom times will be used for lectures and discussions.

Course requirements:

Attendance and participation	10%
Midterm exam	25%
Assignments.....	30%
Final exam	35%

*Please be informed that it is not the instructor’s policy to allow exams or assignments to be rewritten, or extra work done to increase marks. You are welcome, however, to consult with the instructor prior to exams and assignment due dates.

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

For conversion of letter grades to the four-point scale used in grade-point averages, see the College calendar.

Transferability: UA, AU, UC, UL, CUC, KUC.

* Note that credit for both PO2210 and 2220 is needed to receive credit for the core Canadian Politics course at the U of A, POLS 220. The University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge have their own distinctive designations for transferring the combination of PO2210 and PO2220.

* The grade of D or D+ may not be accepted for transfer to other postsecondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability. Arrangements are subject to change.

Student Responsibilities:

* You are expected to devote time in the classroom to the class itself. Use of cell phones and use of laptops for nonclass purposes is unacceptable. It is also not acceptable to socialize or do other work on this course, or work for other courses during the class.

* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your own of any work you submit for grading at least until you have your work returned to you.

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

**You are expected to write the final exam when scheduled by the Registrar’s Office - with possible exceptions in the case of compelling and urgent circumstances beyond your control. Also note and observe other key dates during the term as provided in the Calendar.

Statement on Plagiarism and Cheating:

* You are required to reference sources fully and properly for written assignments. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with College Calendar information pertaining to cheating and plagiarism, for which there are various penalties depending on the severity of the offense. (An instructor's handout will provide assistance with referencing.)

The Calendar information on student conduct and misconduct can be accessed in the print edition on pages 44-46 and on line at:

www.grpc.ab.ca/programs/viewcatalog.1.-1.14.html

Topics

I. Introduction.

12, 17, 20 Jan. I. Overview of the Canadian political system. Branches of government. How governments are formed - how executives and legislatures are chosen.

II. Institutions.

20, 24 Jan.: A. Formal or Symbolic Executive. The Queen. The future of the monarchy in Canada. The Governor General and prorogation.

27 Jan.: B. Prime Minister and Cabinet. Is the Prime Minister too powerful?

31 Jan.: C. Ministerial Responsibility. When and for what should ministers be held accountable?

3, 7 Feb.: D. Budget Process. Auditor General. Deficits and Debts. Are balanced budget laws a good idea? Should governments have a general policy of avoiding running deficits?

10, 14 Feb.: E. Parliament. "Responsible government" and party discipline. Functions of Parliament and the Legislative Branch. Roles of MPs: should they be trustees, delegates or something else? Question Period: embarrassing spectacle or key means for accountability? Parliament in general: increasingly irrelevant or pivotal forum for democracy?

24, 28 Feb.: F. The Senate. Functions. Expense scandals. Reform options.

First Exam Monday, 3rd of March

7 March: G. The Courts. Organization and functions. Selection processes: are they sufficiently nonpartisan? Minimum sentences, victim surcharges and judicial discretion.

10, 14 March: H. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Does it enhance or detract from the democratic process? Major decisions including ones pertaining to prostitution, marijuana use, same-sex marriage, abortion, euthanasia and other topics.

III. Influencing and Forming governments..

- 17 March: A. Interest or advocacy groups. Social movements. When do they add to, when do they take away from the democratic process?
- 21, 24 March: B. Political parties. Do they provide meaningful alternatives? Are they internally democratic?
- 28, 31 March: C. Elections. Financing parties and elections. Recent and not so recent changes. How should politicians and political parties be funded? Electoral Systems: can we do better than the SMPS? Proportional Representation. Explaining voting behaviour. Polling.

IV. Federalism, the Constitution and related issues.

- 4 April: A. Federalism and the division of powers. A good balance? A confused mixture? An imbalance? Shared-cost programs and block funding.
- 7 April: B. Health care and federalism. Public vs. private delivery of health care services.
- 11, 14 April: C. Major developments since Confederation: 1982, Meech Lake, Charlottetown Accord. Is it possible to address discontent of alienated western Canadians, aboriginal people and soft nationalists of Quebec through constitutional change?