



School of Arts & Science
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
PSC 106
Canadian Politics
Fall 2010

COURSE OUTLINE

This introductory course examines political parties, elections, the role of the prime minister and cabinet, the public service, the legislature, and the judiciary.

1. Instructor Information

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|-----|---------------|---|
| (a) | Instructor: | Mona Brash |
| (b) | Office Hours: | Tuesdays 4:30 – 5:30 pm or by appointment |
| (c) | Location: | Young 210 A |
| (d) | Phone: | Please use email to communicate |
| (e) | Email: | Brashm@camosun.bc.ca |

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to describe and explain (and in some cases critically assess):

1. The nature of politics, government, and the state, with special reference to Canada.
2. The basics of the executive branch of government – the formal, political, and non-political elements, with special reference to the Prime Minister and the cabinet.
3. The basics of Parliament – its elements, functions, procedures, and problems.
4. The basics of the public service – its elements, functions, processes, and problems.
5. The basics of the justice system – types of law, the courts, the administration of justice, and the Charter.
6. The basics of political parties – their roots, ideologies, financing, leadership selection, and campaigning.
7. The basics of the electoral system, and possible alternatives, as well as the role of the press.

3. Required Materials

(a) Texts

Robert Jackson and Doreen Jackson. Canadian Government in Transition. 5th edition. Toronto: Nelson, 2010.

Michael Whittington and Glen Williams, eds. Canadian Politics in the 21st Century. 7th edition. Toronto: Nelson, 2008.

(b) Other

Some readings will be accessed online. Links are in the syllabus.

Useful links:

Eugene Forsey: How Canadians Govern Themselves, “The Institutions of Our Federal Government” at: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/AboutParliament/Forsey/index-e.asp>

Link to Parliament of Canada:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/>

Links to Parliament of Canada Legislation:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/LEGISINFO/index.asp>

This site will give you links to recent Senate and House of Commons legislation

Guide to using LEGISINFO:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/LEGISINFO/index.asp?Language=E&list=faq#proc>

4. Course Content and Schedule

September 7: Introductory Class

Introductions

Description of Course

Mock Quiz

Syllabus

Basics of Politics

Media Brainstorming

September 14: Role of the Media and Politics, Party financing

Reading:

Whittington, Ch 14

Media lecture and discussion

In class group work: Look at assigned homepages/www of Liberal, Conservative, NDP, BQ, and Green parties: www.blocquebecois.org

www.conservative.ca

www.greenparty.ca

www.liberal.ca

www.ndp.ca

another party?

To access links to all registered federal parties in Canada, go to <http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=pol&document=index&dir=par&lang=e&textonly=false>

In class group discussion: analyze website of assigned political party, present analysis to class.

Lecture: Party financing

Discussion: What are the pros and cons of taxpayer funding of parties? Are contribution limits and expenses reasonable?

September 21: Political Parties' History, leadership selection, introduction to MPs and their role

Reading:

Jackson Ch. 10, 206-224

Whittington, Ch. 6 & 12 pp. 293-294 (section regarding parties and minority representation)

Lecture: Party roots and ideology, leadership selection

Discussion: What is an MP? What should their role be?

Intro: Party Discipline and the Gun Registry see:

Private Members Bill C 391

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Docid=4329995&file=4>

September 28: MPs, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Opposition Parties, Constitution Act, 1867

Reading:

Jackson, Ch. 6 pp. 125-142

Whittington, Ch. 2 pp. 34-53

Lecture: How does one become an MP? Constituency Associations and nomination meetings. Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Discussion: What is the role of opposition parties?

Introduce: Constitution Act, 1867

Article Review due

October 5: Governor General, Lieutenant Governor, Conventions and Law

Reading:

Jackson, Ch. 6 pp. 122-125

Whittington, Ch 2 pp. 28-29

The Constitution of Canada at: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/const/index.html>
(Review Constitution Act, 1867, Preamble, Section III: Executive)

Bill C 16, the Fixed Election Date legislation

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Docid=3294668&file=4>

The Coalition Crisis and Competing Visions of Canadian Democracy by

Melissa Bonga at:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/Infoparl/english/issue.asp?param=198&art=1378>

Discussion: who has the legal power according to the CA 1867?

Lecture: review of legal powers, role and nature of conventions, Fixed Election Dates or not?

Discussion: role of Responsible government in current Parliament, co-alition governments

Intro: Parliamentary process (session, prorogation, dissolution)

October 12: Prorogation, Party Discipline, Review for Quiz

Reading:

Andrew Heard Article: "The Governor General's Decision to Prorogue Parliament: A Dangerous Precedent" at:

<http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/prorogation-2008.html>

Peter Hogg Article: "PROROGATION AND THE POWER OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL"

(attached in earlier email)

Discussion: What is each author saying? What are the political implications of prorogation as it has been used lately?

Lecture: Party Discipline, reward and punishment

Review for Quiz

October 19: Quiz, Legislative Process, Senate

Reading: really short (leaves time for studying for quiz!), Whittington Ch. 1 pp. 9-10 and 21-22

Quiz on material covered to date (excluding today's reading)

Lecture: Legislative Process (how does a bill become law?)

Discussion: What is a Senator and what should the role of the Senate be? Should the Senate be reformed?

October 26: The Police and the Courts System

Reading:

Jackson Ch 9 pp. 181-188 and 199-205

Lecture: Who has jurisdiction over policing?

Role of the Courts

Introduce Charter of Rights and Freedoms

November 2: Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Equality

Reading:

Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Whittington, pp. 367-373

Whittington Ch. 111 & 12

2006 Census: Immigration, citizenship, language, mobility and migration at:

<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/071204/d071204a.htm>

Refugees and immigration: see FAQs at:

<http://www.irb.gc.ca/eng/brdcom/abau/faq/pages/index.aspx>

Lecture: Basics of the Charter, role of judiciary.

Court Cases regarding the Charter

Outline for major assignment due

November 9: The Charter and the Judiciary

Reading: Jackson Ch 9 pp. 188-199

Whittington: Ch. 8 & 9

Lecture: who has the final say, the politicians or the judiciary?

More cases to illustrate the issue

Discussion: Who should have the final say, the politicians or the judiciary?

Lecture: Current Electoral system

November 16: Voting and Electoral Systems

Presentations

Discussion: Should voting be mandatory? Should we have a different electoral system?

If so, which system should be adopted?

Lecture: electoral reform thus far in Canada, impact on party financing and vice versa

Outline for presentation due

November 23: Role of the Bureaucracy.

Reading:

Jackson Ch. 8

Whittington Ch. 3

Lecture: Bureaucracy: elements, functions, processes, and problems. Populism.

Discussion: What role should the bureaucracy provide?

Leaks and firing? Role of expert opinion vs. political agenda

Major paper due

November 30: Unfinished business, Current Events in Canadian politics

Lecture: what is happening now?

Discussion: in class group work – explain assigned event utilizing Political Science concepts and terms with focus on role of responsible government, role of political parties, leaders, MPs, Senators, the judiciary, and elections.

Unfinished business?

December 7: Final Class

Review changes in politics over the past few decades

Discussion: What are the main problems relating to the practice of politics in Canada? What are some suggestions for improving citizen engagement, voter turnout, and public perceptions of politicians?

Redo Mock quiz

Review for Quiz

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting) Assignments explained below

- (a) Article Review 10%
- (b) Mid-term exam 20%
- (c) Outline and Preliminary bibliography for major assignment (5% + 5%) 10%
- (d) Outline for discussion of Voting/Electoral Systems (5% + 5%) 10%
- (e) Major paper 25%
- (f) Final exam 25%

(a) Article Review (10%) due September 28

Read: Developing Political Leaders: The Case for a School of Government by Paul G. Thomas in the Canadian Parliamentary Review at:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/Infoparl/english/issue.asp?param=195&art=1340>

For this assignment you should, in a properly structured paper of 500-700 words in length, do the following:

- Have an introductory paragraph, body, and concluding paragraph
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the author's thesis and structure of the author's argument.
- Demonstrate appropriate language usage and grammatical structure.
- Critically evaluate the author's credibility, position, and where necessary provide documented evidence to support your position.
- The final product should include, a title page, your name and the date; a 2-3 page critical evaluation; and where necessary footnotes or endnotes to document ideas taken from other authors.

We will discuss this article in class in terms of the above questions and the political implications of the prorogation.

(b) Mid-term exam based on material covered to date October 19

(c) Outline and preliminary bibliography for essay or portfolio November 2

1) Provide an outline, in topic outline form (refer to handout provided in class in September)

- Describe what your topic will be
- What is the objective of the research, what do you intend to explore?
- Include a hypothesis explaining what your argument will be

2) What are some of the sources you intend to use (in general terms)?

Provide, in Chicago Manual of Style:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

- 3 primary sources
- 2 secondary sources

(d) Outline and Presentation: Voting and Electoral Systems November 16th

Group Presentations:

Voting:

Each group will explain and analyze the following:

Voter Turnout in Canada

Mandatory voting in Australia

Electoral Systems

Describe the electoral system, analyze its pros and cons, discuss other states that use it, provide a sample ballot, and conclude whether it should or should not replace Single Member Plurality taking into consideration the results of the 14 October, 2008 Federal election.

Each group will have one of the following systems to present:

Mandatory voting

Two-Round System

Proportional Representation

Mixed Member Proportional

Single Transferable Vote

Hand in an Outline: summary of points, in point form, 1-2 pages, typed, submitted individually based on your research, include sources, Chicago Style

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

(e) Major Paper (25%) due November 23

You have a choice from the 2 options below for this assignment, an essay or a portfolio.

1. Essay

Choose one of the following topics:

i) Provide a comparative analysis of the four major parties in Canada in terms of their leaders. Discuss the selection process, the political background of each leader, and the degree of focus on the leader vs. focus on the party or platform.

ii) Provide a suggestion for limiting the power of the Prime Minister. Explain:

- which power should be limited
- why the power should be limited
- how the power could be limited
- analyze whether the suggested limit is probable or not and what the political implications of the change would be

iii) Provide a suggestion for increasing voter turnout in federal elections. Explain:

- what the current situation is
- why voter turnout should increase
- how turnout can be increased
- analyze the probability of the change and, if successful, the political implications of the change

iv) Choose a current federal political issue in Canada. Discuss this with me (by September 28th).

Follow the issue for the next two months and discuss the following, if applicable:

- role of responsible government
- role of political parties
- leaders
- MPs
- Senators
- the judiciary
- elections

The most important part of this paper will be:

- your analysis of **why** this is an issue
- the politics behind the issue
- the probability of the issue being resolved
- Provide an **analysis** of the factors that may determine the outcome. (You do not need a crystal ball for this but need to show you understand the relationship amongst the decision makers within our system of politics.)

2. Portfolio

YOU NEED TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC WITH ME BY September 28, in person. You may submit a portfolio based on a **current political issue in which you** are involved or in which **you** are going to be involved.

This portfolio will be a binder with the following:

- An introduction of one to two pages explaining what the issue is, why and how you are involved in it, and how you have addressed or intend to address the issue (lobby for policy change, lobby for retention of a policy, lobby for a new policy). You must state which political actors are involved in this issue.
- Copies of material related to the issue (legislation, media articles)
- Copies of your letters, speeches, etc. lobbying for your position
- Copies of responses to your lobbying efforts
- A 3-4 page essay (following the format noted above) describing:
 - what you wanted to do,
 - what you did,

- the response of those whom you addressed regarding the issue, and
- what you learned about the political process, political parties, and decision making.

For all, whether Essay/Policy Paper/Portfolio:

- Essays/ Portfolios will follow a specific format. This way, you need not worry about which way to present your work or your citations. The focus can then be on your research, analysis, and writing.
 - Essays/Policy papers length: 6-8 pages (TITLE PAGE, FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY are extra pages)
 - Portfolio length: see #2 above
 - USE DEFAULT MARGINS AND INDENT FIRST SENTENCE OF PARAGRAPHS rather than spaces between paragraphs
 - Double-space
 - Type
 - Include page numbers
 - Use Chicago style citations with footnotes or endnotes (your computer is programmed for these – it’s easy –in Word “Help”, just type in “*About Footnotes and Endnotes*”!)
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
 - Include a bibliography
 - Include a title page with your name, student number, title, course name

Be sure to keep a copy of your essay on disc or hard drive.

(f) Final Exam 25% TBA

- will cover material from classes after Quiz 1
- format will be discussed in last class (short answer and short essay)

Note that only one of these assignments is group work. The others are each to be done individually. You are encouraged to ask librarians for help with your research. Be sure to read the College’s policy on plagiarism at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/education-academic/e-2-student-services-&-support/e-2.5.pdf>

Late Policy

Assignments are due in class and will be handed to me in person.

After that, I will only accept your paper if you have a legitimate excuse (*e.g.* medical, family, death of person close to you) and/or bring a Doctor’s note or note from Student Services (Counselling). Please notify me of a problem immediately and we will make alternate arrangements for you to complete your work.

6. Grading System: Standard Grading System (GPA)

| Percentage | Grade | Description | Grade Point Equivalency |
|------------|-------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 90-100 | A+ | | 9 |
| 85-89 | A | | 8 |
| 80-84 | A- | | 7 |
| 77-79 | B+ | | 6 |
| 73-76 | B | | 5 |
| 70-72 | B- | | 4 |

| | | | |
|-------|----|---|---|
| 65-69 | C+ | | 3 |
| 60-64 | C | | 2 |
| 50-59 | D | Minimum level of achievement for which credit is granted; a course with a "D" grade cannot be used as a prerequisite. | 1 |
| 0-49 | F | Minimum level has not been achieved. | 0 |

Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at camosun.ca for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

| Temporary Grade | Description |
|-----------------|--|
| I | <i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family. |
| IP | <i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that, due to design may require a further enrollment in the same course. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course. (<i>For these courses a final grade will be assigned to either the 3rd course attempt or at the point of course completion.</i>) |
| CW | <i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement. |

7. LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning.

This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services, or the College web site at camosun.ca.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**.

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services, and the College web site in the Policy Section.