

	School of Arts & Science SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT PSC 106 Canadian Politics Fall 2011
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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

(a)	Instructor:	Mona Brash
(b)	Office Hours:	Tuesdays 4:30 – 5:30 pm or by appointment
(c)	Location:	Paul 237
(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) Text: Dyck, Rand. Canadian Politics. Concise Fifth Edition. Toronto. Nelson Education Ltd. 2012
(ISBN 978-0-17-650343-7)
- (b) Other
Some readings will be accessed online. Links are in the syllabus.

4. Course Content and Schedule

Classes will have 2 sections with a break in between. You must do the readings for both sections of each class.

September 6: Introductory Class

Introductions

Description of Course

Syllabus

++Break++

Basics of Politics & Government

Media Brainstorming

Mock Quiz

September 13:

Political System

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 1

Q. How does government affect your life?

++Break++

Role of the Media and Politics

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 7

Q. How does the media impact politics?

September 20:

Political Culture, Socialization, and Participation

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 6

Q. What are Canadians' political values?

What are some of the agents of political socialization?

++Break++

How to read an article and review it

Reading: Layton, Jack. Something's Wrong in Ottawa: Getting Canadians Re-engaged in Democracy at <http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/sep10/layton.pdf>

Q. Look at Article Review Assignment (on page 7) and think of the questions in it as you read this article. Note: This is not the article for your assignment but an article we will review so that you understand how to complete your assignment later.

September 27:

The Executive

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 13, pp. 315-322

Q. What is the role of the Crown (GG) in Canadian government?

++Break++

Prime Minister and Cabinet

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 13, pp. 322-338

Q. What power does the PM have in Canadian government? How is that power limited?

Article Review due

October 4:

Midterm

++Break++

Current Ministries and Cabinet Ministries

(Group exercise in class, no reading this week, study for your midterm)

October 11:

Parliament

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 15, pp. 367-388

Q. Is the House of Commons democratic?

++Break++

Members of Parliament

Reading: Samara, April 18, 2011 *"It's My Party": Parliamentary Dysfunction Reconsidered*. Go to Samara, [*It's My Party: Parliamentary Dysfunction Reconsidered*](#), click on *Full Report PDF* on right navigation bar

Q. What factors constrain the independence of MPs?

October 18:

Senate

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 15, pp. 388-394

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

++Break++

Comparative analysis: MPs and Senators, how are they similar and how do they differ?

Q. Should the Senate be reformed? Why or why not? What are the implications of change?

Major paper outline and preliminary bibliography due

October 25:

The Bureaucracy

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 14, pp. 343-362

Q. What should the role of the bureaucracy be?

++Break++

The Court System

Reading: Dyck Chapter 16, pp. 399-418

*Q. Why are the courts separate from the political branch of government?
Should judges be elected? Why or why not?*

November 1:

Political Parties

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 9, pp. 205-218

Q. What might the evolution of parties be in the next 10 years?

++Break++

Political Party websites

Reading: Scan these, Elections Canada, Registered Political Parties

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&dir=par&document=index&lang=e>

In class analysis of websites, group work

November 8:

Political Party Leadership & membership

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 9, pp. 223-227

Q. What role do members and leaders play in a political party?

++Break++

Political Party Financing

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 8, pp. 193-197

Elections Canada, Limits on Contributions at:

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&dir=lim&document=index&lang=e>

Elections Canada, Quarterly Allowances at:

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&document=qua2011&dir=pol/qua&lang=e>

Q. What are the pros and cons of taxpayer funding of political parties?

November 15:

Municipal Government Structure

Reading: Local Government Department, Municipal Incorporation at

http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/boundaries/municipal_incorporation.htm

Local Government Department, Organization of Governance at

http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/governance/organization_governance.htm

Elections BC, Local Government Elections at

http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/gov_structure/Elections/

Q. What is a municipal government and how does it differ from a federal government?

++Break++

Municipal Politics and Current Issues

- *Electoral system, Candidacy, role once elected*

Reading: Look up your municipality and its local paper and determine if there are any current political issues being contested

Q. What are some major municipal issues in the current elections? How does being a member of council differ from being an MP?

November 22

Municipal election results

Reading: look at media on Sunday and Monday.

Q. Who will be the mayor of Vancouver, Saanich, and Victoria?

++Break++

Electoral Systems

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 8, pp. 177-187

Q. How are elections run in Canada?

Major Assignment due (essay/portfolio/court case)

November 29

Electoral Systems

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 8, 188-193

Q. What are the pros and cons of our electoral system?

++Break++

Electoral Financing, Past Elections

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 8, pp. 193-196

Q. Should political parties receive taxpayer funding? Why or why not?

December 6: Final Class

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? What are the current political issues?

++Break++

Redo Mock quiz

Review for Quiz

Final Exam Date to be determined

Short answers and 2 essay questions

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

(a) Media Assignment	(ongoing)	15%	_____
(b) Article Review	(September 27)	10%	_____
(c) Midterm	(October 4)	20%	_____
(d) Outline and Preliminary bibliography for major assignment (October 18)			
	(5% + 5%)	10%	_____
(e) Major assignment	(November 22)	25%	_____
(f) Final exam	(TBA)	20%	_____

(you can keep track of your grades by entering them here ↑)

Details of Assignments

All assignments will be completed using the following:

- USE DEFAULT MARGINS AND INDENT FIRST SENTENCE OF PARAGRAPHS rather than using large 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 of assignment, course name

(a) Media Assignment (read Dyck, Chapter 7 in order to compete the assignment)

Choose a current story about politics in Canada. Introduce the story to the class on your chosen day (sign up sheet to be circulated in class on Sept. 6 & 13). Complete the following assignment:

Answer in complete sentences (in one to three sentences per question)

1. **What** is the story about?
2. Source (name of source including reporter or author if available, date)
3. Is the source **publicly** owned or **privately** owned?
4. If privately owned, who owns the source?
5. From which category of **mass media** or **alternate** source is the story?
6. How much exposure might this story have with “frequent consumers” of news?
7. What **prominence** is the story given (what page number and placement or time in broadcast – ex. Leading headline, buried in back page...)
8. **Why** did the story catch your attention? Was there a sensational title, an attention getting photo, words in the title that were of interest...?
9. Does the story try to **influence** you or is it **objective**?
10. Does the story have any **biases**?

Answer in a few properly structured paragraphs (no more than 1 1/2 pages):

11. Does this story and the way in which it is presented enhance citizen participation in politics (ex. Does it adequately inform citizens about the issue or does it erode citizens’ regard for the political process?)?

(b) Article Review

Read: Nanos, Nick. From a Nothing Election to a Seismic Shift. Policy Options. June-July 2011.

Retrieve from <http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/jun11/nanos.pdf>

For this assignment you should, in a properly structured paper of 2 pages, include the following:

- Introductory paragraph
- Body (multiple paragraphs)
 - Brief synopsis of the article
 - Provide a clear explanation of the author's thesis and structure of the author's argument.
 - Critically review and analyze the work (was it properly organized, can any of the points be interpreted differently, were there errors in it, did it assume prior knowledge, was the author credible, were there sources...)
 - What is the value of the article (in terms of its argument, to whom would it be useful, does it add to the discussion of the issue)?
- Concluding paragraph

We will discuss this article in class, on the assignment due date, in terms of the above questions.

(c) Mid-term exam based on material covered to date

Short answer, paragraph, and short essay questions

(d) Outline and preliminary bibliography for essay, portfolio, or court case (*this assignment will be 1-2 pages long*)

Provide an outline, in point form,

- describing what your topic will be
 - What is the objective of the assignment, what do you intend to explore?
 - What are some of the sources you intend to use (in general terms)?
- 2) Provide a properly structured paragraph explaining what your hypothesis/thesis/argument will be.
- 3) Provide, in Chicago Manual of Style (how-to at: <http://camosun.ca/libguides.com/chicago> or http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
- 3 primary sources
 - **Primary sources** are the basic materials for conducting original research in a given discipline. For the historian, they include documents such as letters, diaries, autobiographies, newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, eyewitness accounts, photographs and sketches, and census data. For the scientist, primary sources might be notes on an experiment or a sheet of calculations. For the literary critic, the primary source is the text of the poem, play, or story. In the art of argument—the business of the critical essay—fair and compelling evidence is needed in order to substantiate any claim, whether it be the interpretation of a poem or a judgment on a historical figure. Primary sources constitute the best **evidence**. Original research is only made possible by collection, discovery, and recovery of primary documents and materials.
 - 2 secondary sources
 - **Secondary sources** are books and articles and documentaries that draw on primary sources and interpret them. When you are first researching a topic of interest, the fastest way to come to an understanding of your subject is to read secondary sources. Critical reading of these materials will also give you a sense of how other researchers have approached your research topic, which

may give direction to your own argument—either toward or away from established perspectives or conclusions. Academic writing will require you to consult secondary sources to support and direct your own analysis. Most important to the student researcher, good secondary sources will **lead you** to the primary documents and resources noted in a bibliography or footnote. (source: RMC POE 206 CD)

(e) Major Assignment

You have a **choice from the 3 options** below for this assignment (an essay, a portfolio, **or** a court case analysis).

I. Essay

Choose one of the following topics:

i) Provide a comparative analysis of the five 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 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

iii) 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.)

iv) Explain voter suppression. Discuss how it has been utilized by political parties in Canada in recent elections. Analyze how it impacts politics, especially voter turnout and confidence in 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 in the next few months.

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.

3. Analyze a court case

A) Provide the hyperlink to the case from a court database.

B) In **point form**, in no more than 2 pages, answer the following:

Particulars of the Case

1. What was the date of the case?
2. In which court was the case heard?
3. Was the case heard in another court previously? If so, which one(s)?
4. How many judges were on the panel of the case?
5. Who is the appellant(s) and who is the respondent(s)?
6. Are there any interveners? If so, who are they?
7. Which policy or law is being challenged?
8. Reason for judgment
9. What was the ruling of the court?
 - What is the basis of the reason for judgment?
 - Is it the same as the ruling of the lower court (if applicable)?
 - Was the ruling unanimous or were there dissenting opinions?

C) In three to four pages, explain why this case matters in terms of politics in Canada. (for example, it may analyze the role of the Charter, different ideologies, the relationship between the courts and government...)

(informed by: MacIvor, Heather. *Canadian Politics and Government in the Charter Era*. Thomson Nelson. University of Windsor. 2006.

Some cases you may consider

- B. (R.) v. Children's Aid Society (1995) Seizing children for blood transfusions (Jehovah's Witness)
<http://scc.lexum.org/en/1995/1995scr1-315/1995scr1-315.html>

- Bedford v. Canada, 2010 ONSC 4264 (CanLII)
Living on the avails of prostitution, keeping a common bawdy-house, and communicating in a public place for the purpose of engaging in prostitution
<http://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2010/2010onsc4264/2010onsc4264.html>
- E. (Mrs.) v. Eve, (1986) parent/state and Children (Sterilization of adult disabled daughter)
<http://scc.lexum.org/en/1986/1986scr2-388/1986scr2-388.html>
- Harper v. Can. (2004) Stephen Harper and third party advertising in elections
<http://scc.lexum.org/en/2004/2004scc33/2004scc33.pdf>
- Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite_Bourgeois (2006) wearing of the Kirpan in school and religious freedom
<http://scc.lexum.org/en/2006/2006scc6/2006scc6.html>
- Sagen v. Vancouver Organizing Committee
Was it a violation of equality rights of women to not have Womens' ski-jumping at the 2010 Olympics?
<http://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/jdb-txt/SC/09/09/2009BCSC0942.htm>
- Reference re Same-Sex Marriage, [2004] 3 S.C.R. 698, 2004 SCC 79
Questions in advance of a proposed Civil Marriages Act.
<http://csc.lexum.org/en/2004/2004scc79/2004scc79.html>

For all, whether Essay/ /Portfolio/Court Case:

- All 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.
 - Essay length: 6-8 pages (TITLE PAGE, FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY are extra pages)
 - Portfolio and Court Case length: see #2 & #3 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

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

Note that none of these assignments is group work. They 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.

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>

Heard, Andrew. Elections.

<http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/>

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>

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.