

	School of Arts & Science SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT PSC 106 Canadian Politics Fall 2012
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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:	Thurs. 4:30 – 5:30 pm, Wed & Fri 11:35 – 12:30, 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 syllabus (copy emailed Sept. 8).

4. Course Content and Schedule

The topic(s) for each class is noted below, along with the required readings to be done **before** each class

September 6

Introductory Class

Introductions

Description of Course

Syllabus

Mock Quiz

Basics of Politics & Government

Break

Political System

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 1

Q. How does government affect your life?

Role of the Media and Politics

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 7

Q. How does the media impact politics?

September 13

Political Culture, Socialization, and Participation

***Quiz: Reading your Syllabus ***

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: Nanos, Nick. From a Nothing Election to a Seismic Shift. Policy Options. June-July 2011. <http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/jun11/nanos.pdf>

Q. How do you critically read an article? Do you have any critiques of this one?

September 20

Parliament

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

Q. Is the House of Commons democratic?

Q. What are dissolution, prorogation, and the stages for passing legislation?

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?*
Q. What would you change about the role of MPs?

Constituency Assignment due (see p. 7-8)

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?*

Current Ministries and Cabinet Ministries

Reading: Review the Government of Canada website,

<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/cabinet.asp?featureId=8&pageId=38>

- Q. What are the different ministries? How many cabinet ministers are women?*

October 4

Senate

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

- Q: What is a Senator? 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?*

Review for midterm.

October 11

*****Midterm*****

Break

The Bureaucracy

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

- Q. What should the role of the bureaucracy be?*
Q. In what ways can the bureaucracy influence policy?

October 18**The Court System**

Reading: Dyck Chapter 16, pp. 399-418

How to read a Court Case: Canada (Prime Minister) v. Khadr, 2010

<http://scc.lexum.org/en/2010/2010scc3/2010scc3.pdf>

Scan case and we will go over it in class

Q. Why are the courts separate from the political branch of government?

Break**Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Judicial Review, Notwithstanding Clause**

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 11, pp. 266-279

Q. Who has the final say regarding policy and legislation, Parliament, the Government, or the judiciary? Who should have it?

October 25**Electoral Organization**

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

Q. How are elections run in Canada?

Break**Electoral Systems**

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 8, 188-193

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

November 1**Past Elections & Voter Turnout**

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 6, pp. 147-151 (reread)

Q. Why is voter turnout so low? Why do so few people participate in politics?

Break**Electoral Controversies**

Reading: To be determined based on current events and recent court case(s)

Major paper proposal and preliminary bibliography due (see p.8-9)

November 8

Electoral System Presentations (see Assignments, p. 9)

Mandatory voting or not?

Majority systems:

- Alternative Vote/Preferential Vote
- Double Ballot

Break

Electoral System Presentations (see Assignments, p. 9)

Proportional Systems:

- Proportional Representation
- Mixed Member Proportional
- Single Transferable Vote

November 15

(Please bring laptops, netbooks, or smartphones to class)

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

Leaders, Membership, focus (platform, party, opposition, issues?)

November 22

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=qua2012&dir=pol/qua&lang=e>

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

Break

3rd Party Advertising

Reading: none, complete your essays

Q. Should 3rd parties (unions, corporations, private individuals) be able to advertise during elections?

Q. Why are there ads between elections?

****Major paper due (see p. 9-11)****

November 29

Aboriginal Politics

Reading: Dyck, Chapter 4, pp. 74-81

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

<http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/about-afn/description-of-the-afn>

Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC)

<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/about/mandate.html#axzz1hwYZ64oV>

Q. What are the different views about aboriginal politics and governance?

Municipal Politics

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

Q. What is a municipal government and how does it differ from a federal, provincial, or band government? How does the role of a municipal politician differ from that of federal, provincial, or band politicians?

Redo Mock Quiz from first class

December 6

Final Question (see p. 11)

NOTE: NO FINAL EXAM DURING EXAM PERIOD

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

(a) Syllabus quiz	(September 13)	2% _____
(b) Media Assignment	(ongoing)	10% _____
(c) Constituency Assignment	(September 20)	8% _____
(d) Midterm	(October 11)	20% _____
(e) Proposal and Preliminary bibliography for major assignment	(November 1) (5% + 5%)	10% _____
(f) Electoral Systems Presentation	(November 8)	
	(5% presentation, 5% outline)	10% _____
(g) Major assignment	(November 22)	25% _____
(h) Final question	(December 6)	5% _____
Total:		_____/100

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

Details for Assignments

All assignments will be completed using the following:

- USE DEFAULT MARGINS Type
- Double-space
- Times Roman 12 font
- 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

ASSIGNMENTS

(a) Syllabus quiz- September 13

Answer questions about the course schedule and assignments

(b) Media Assignment – ongoing

- Read Dyck, Chapter 7, in order to complete the assignment.
- Cut and paste the questions below and answer them.
- 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, incorporating concepts from the textbook where applicable:

A) Answer in complete sentences (in one to five 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...). What does the prominence (or not) tell you?
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**?

B) 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?)?

Submit a hard copy for marking **and** email the assignment to me the morning of your date.

(c) Constituency Assignment - September 20

1) In 2-3 pages, essay format, determine the following for the constituency/riding in which you live:

- Name of riding
 - Results of last federal election (who ran, what was the final vote count)
- Name of MP
 - How long have they been in office in Ottawa
 - What is their past political experience
 - What is their contact information
 - Ottawa MP office
 - Local Constituency office

- Describe a political “issue” of concern to the residents of the riding
- Do you think the MP will be able to resolve it? Why or why not?

(d) Mid-term exam based on material covered to date – October 11

Short answer, paragraph, and short essay questions

(e) Proposal & preliminary bibliography for major paper - November 1

Read Assignment (g) on pages 9 -11

1) Proposal:

In 1-2 pages:

- Describe what your topic will be
- Why did you choose this topic?
- What is the objective of the assignment, what do you intend to explore/find out?
- What are some of the sources you intend to use (in general terms)?

2) Provide, in full Chicago Manual of Style (how-to at: <http://camosun.ca.libguides.com/chicago> or http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

- 3 primary sources
 1. **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
 1. **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)

(f) Electoral Systems Presentations (5%) Outline (5%) - November 8

Group Presentations: Each group will explain and analyze one of the following, 15 minute presentations, everyone in the group must speak

- Mandatory Voting
- Alternative Vote/Preferential Vote
- Double Ballot/Two-Round System
- Proportional Representation
- Mixed Member Proportional
- Single Transferable Vote

Describe the system, analyze its pros and cons, discuss other states that use it, provide a sample ballot, conclude whether it should or should not replace Single Member Plurality taking into consideration the results of the May 2, 2011 Federal election.

Hand in an Outline: summary of points, 1-2 pages, typed, submitted individually based on your part of the presentation, include at least 2 sources, referenced in Chicago Style

A useful link to get you started: <http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/reform.html>

(g) Major Assignment – November 22

You have a **choice from the 2 options** below for this assignment (an essay or a portfolio)

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 leadership selection process
 - the political and “work” background of each leader
 - the degree of focus on the leader vs. focus on the party or platform
- ii) Write a paper on **one** aspect of elections, for example:
 - Voter turnout
 1. what the current situation is
 2. why voter turnout should increase
 3. how turnout can be increased
 4. analyze the probability of the change and, if successful, the political implications of the change
 - Voter suppression
 1. what is it
 2. provide examples of its occurrence in Canada

3. analyze how it impacts politics, especially voter turnout and confidence in politics.
- Electronic voting
 1. Why is there a “push” by some for e-voting federally
 2. What examples of e-voting are there in Canada
 3. What examples of e-voting are there in other places
 4. Should e-voting be adopted federally or not, explain why or why not
- Role of polls
 1. do polls enhance voter knowledge or not
- Multi-party system
 1. would a two party system be better
 2. is a multi-party system better
- Party financing
 1. focus on one aspect that either is problematic or a solution to the issue of financing political parties
- Party discipline
 1. Does it enhance politics or not

iii) Choose a topic of interest to you (clear it with me first, by **September 27**)

iv) Choose a current federal political issue in Canada

- Discuss this with me (by **September 27th**).
- Follow the issue for the next two months and discuss the following, if applicable:
 - 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.)

--or--

2. Portfolio

YOU NEED TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC WITH ME BY **September 27th, 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.

(h)Final question - April 11

You will be provided with one question to answer. This question will be given to you 2 weeks in advance and will ask you to critically assess the state of politics in Canada, with a specific focus.

Note that only one of these assignments is group work. The rest 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 (Counseling). 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.