


| | |
|---|--|
|  | School of Arts & Science SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT PSC 106 Canadian Politics Winter 2015 Section 001 |
|---|--|

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: | Tues. 1-2:30, Wed. 4:30-5, Thurs. 1-2:30 and 4:30-5:30, 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: Mintz, Eric et al. Canada's Politics: Democracy, Diversity, and Good Government (2nd Edition). Toronto: Pearson, 2014.
- (b) Other
Some readings will be accessed online. Links are in syllabus (copy will be emailed).

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

January 5

Introductory Class

Description of Course

Syllabus

Mock Quiz

January 7

Basics of Politics & Government

Media and Politics

Q. How does government affect your life?

January 12

Canadian Identity

Reading: Mintz, pp. 87-100

Q. What are some different ways of understanding Canadian identity?

Who are you?

January 14

Political Culture

Reading: Mintz pp. 1-22, 126-142

Political Influence

Reading: Mintz, pp. 210-238

Q. What is democracy? Is Canada democratic?

What influences Canadian political culture?

Q. Who has much political influence? Who has little? Why or why not?

January 19

Parliament

Reading: Mintz, pp. 443-449 & 456-465

Q. What is Parliament? What are its elements, functions, procedures, and problems?

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

*****Constituency Report due*****

January 21

Political Parties & their Histories

Reading: Mintz, pp. 242-273

Q. What is the function of a political party? Who are the different parties? What might they look like in 10 years?

January 26**Political Party websites (please bring laptops, iPads, phones if possible)**

Reading: Scan these, Elections Canada, Registered Political Parties at:

<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?)

January 28**Question Period**

Watch Question Period from either January 26 or 27

Live On CPAC: 11:00 a.m. (rebroadcast at 8 p.m. or previous day from links)

Complete the Question Period worksheet (handed out previous week)

February 2**Members of Parliament – representatives or trained seals?**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 274-277, 449, and

Samara, April 18, 2011. *“It’s My Party”: Parliamentary Dysfunction*

Reconsidered. Go to Samara,

<http://www.samaracanada.com/research/mp-exit-interviews/it-s-my-party-report/two-main-trends>

<http://www.samaracanada.com/research/mp-exit-interviews/it-s-my-party-report/chapter-1> and continue reading until Chapter 1 and 2 are complete.

click on *Full Report PDF* on right navigation bar

Q. What factors constrain the independence of MPs? What would you change about the role of MPs?

February 4*****Test # 1*****

On material covered to date

February 9 No Class (Family Day)**February 11****The executive**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 410- 415 & 449-455

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

*****Paper Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography due*****

February 16**Prime Minister and Cabinet**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 416-439

Current Ministries and Cabinet Ministries

Review the Government of Canada website,

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

Q. What power does the PM have in Canadian government? How is that power limited? What are the different ministries? How many cabinet ministers are women?

February 18**Senate**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 466-473

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

February 23**Compare and Contrast the role of Senators and Members of Parliament**

Q. How are they similar and how do they differ?

Current events in the Senate**February 25****The Bureaucracy**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 476-506

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

*****Paper Proposal and Bibliography due*****

March 2**The Court System**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 515-525

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

March 4**Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

Reading: Mintz, 343-345, not box

“Bedford Case” <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/decisia-scc-csc/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/13389/index.do> Read paras. 1, 2, 167 - 169

Q. Who has the final say regarding policy and legislation, Parliament, the Government, or the judiciary? Who should have it? What was the ruling of the SCC in Bedford?

March 9*****Short Quiz*****

- On material covered since Midterm

Time for groups to meet re: Presentations**March 11****Electoral Organization**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 279-288

Q. How are elections organized in Canada? What is the role of Elections Canada? What is the role of political parties?

March 16**Electoral Systems**

Reading: Mintz, pp. 289-292

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

March 18 Past elections, Voter Turnout

Reading: Mintz, pp. 292-299

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

***** Major paper due *****

March 23

*****Electoral System Presentations (see Assignments, p. 10) *****

Mandatory voting or not?

Majority systems:

- Alternative Vote/Preferential Vote
 - Double Ballot
-

March 25*Electoral System Presentations (see Assignments, p. 10) *****

Proportional Systems:

- Proportional Representation
 - Mixed Member Proportional
 - Single Transferable Vote
-

March 30

Party financing

Reading: Mintz, pp. 299-301

Reading: 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=qua2014&dir=pol/qua&lang=e>

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&document=qua2013&dir=pol/qua&lang=e>

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=pol&document=qua2012&dir=pol/qua&lang=e>

Q. Should unions and corporations be allowed to donate to political parties? Should taxpayers fund political parties? Why have party allowances decreased so much?

April 1

3rd Party Advertising

Past election ads (esp. negative ads)

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

April 8

Last Class

Final Question

Redo Mock Quiz from Day 1

NOTE: NO FINAL EXAM DURING EXAM PERIOD

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

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| (a) Media Assignment | (ongoing) | 10% | _____ |
| (b) Constituency Assignment | (Jan. 19) | 6% | _____ |
| (c) Question Period Worksheet | (Jan 28) | 4% | _____ |
| (d) Test # 1 | (Feb.4) | 20% | _____ |
| (e) Proposal and Preliminary bibliography for major assignment | (Feb.25) (5% + 5%) | 10% | _____ |
| (f) Test # 2 | (Mar. 9) | 5% | _____ |
| (g) Major Paper | (Mar. 18) | 25% | _____ |
| (h) Electoral Systems Presentation (Mar. 23 and 25) | (5% presentation, 5% outline) | 10% | _____ |
| (i) Final question | (April 8) | 10% | _____ |
| 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://camosun.ca.libguides.com/chicago>
- Include a bibliography
- Include a title page with your name, student number, title of assignment, course name, date

ASSIGNMENTS

(a) Media Assignment – ongoing

- Follow a reputable news source (print, online, radio, television). 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 Jan. 5 & 7).
 - Submit a hard copy for marking **and** email the assignment to me the morning of your date. It is your responsibility to present on the day for which you signed up.
 - Complete the following assignment
- 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. 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?
6. **Why** did the story catch your attention? Was there a sensational title, an attention getting photo, words in the title that were of interest...
7. Does the story try to **influence** you or is it **objective**?
8. Does the story have any **biases**?

B) Answer in a few properly structured paragraphs (1 to 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) Constituency Assignment - Jan. 19

Part 1. In outline format (cut and paste with answers below), determine the following for the constituency/riding in which you live:

- Name of riding
 - Results of last federal election or by-election
 1. who ran
 2. what was the final vote count
- Name of MP
 - How long have they been in office in Ottawa
 - What is their past political experience, including elected and unelected
 - What is their contact information
 - Ottawa MP office
 - Local Constituency office

Part 2. In a 1-2 page essay, 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?

(c) Question Period Worksheet - Jan. 28

Watch Question Period from either January 26 or 27

- Live On CPAC: 11:00 a.m. (rebroadcast at 8 p.m. or from links)
Complete the Question Period worksheet (handed out previous week)

(d) Test # 1, based on material covered to date –Feb. 4

Short answer, paragraph, and short essay questions

(e) Proposal & preliminary bibliography for major paper – Feb. 25

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?
 - How will you approach your research, 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>)
- 3 primary sources
 1. **Primary sources** are the basic materials for conducting original research in a given discipline. They include documents such as letters, diaries, autobiographies, newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, eyewitness accounts, photographs and sketches, and census data. Compelling evidence is needed in order to substantiate any claim. 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) Test # 2 – material since midterm – March 9

(g) Major Paper – March 18

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

L. Essay 5-7 pages

Choose **one** of the following topics:

i) Write a paper about **one** aspect of elections, for example:

- **Youth 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. How does the “Fair Elections Act” impact voting
 4. Analyze how voter suppression impacts politics, especially voter turnout and confidence in politics.
- **Nomination papers must be signed by party leaders**
 1. What is the legislative authority for this
 2. Is this positive or negative in a democracy
- **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
- **Robo-calls**
 1. What are they
 2. What is the current status of investigations into them
 3. How do they impact democracy
- **Fixed Election Dates**
 1. What is their legal status
 2. Have they been upheld since the legislation was passed
 1. Why or why not?
 3. Do any provinces have fixed election date legislation
 4. Do fixed election dates serve a purpose (for whom?)

ii) Choose a topic of interest to you (**clear it with me first, in person, by January 28**)

iii) Choose a current federal political issue in Canada

- **Discuss this with me (by January 28).**
- For example:
 - Reduction in environmental legislation
 - Freedom from discrimination based on Gender (Garrison’s bill)
 - Muzzling of the Bureaucracy **or** Scientists

- Access to information (Freedom of Information)
- F 35's
- 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 including 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) Follow the Leader

- Choose **a** leader of **one** of the 5 sitting parties in the House of Commons
- Provide a **very brief** biography of the leader
- Follow and document the media coverage of that leader in at least **3 different** media sources **for the next 2 months** and analyze the following:
 - Issues that leader raised
 - Coverage that leader received
 - Comparative analysis of coverage of leader
 1. difference/similarity in the three media in terms of:
 1. tone
 2. amount of coverage
 3. prominence of coverage (photos, headlines, page placement)
- Provide an analysis of the effectiveness of that leader in gaining both media coverage and in raising issues of concern/importance to them

--or--

2. Portfolio

YOU NEED TO DISCUSS THIS TOPIC WITH ME BY January 28th, in person. You may submit a portfolio based on a **current political issue in which you** are already 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 and
- Copies of responses to your lobbying efforts
- A 3-4 page essay 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) Electoral Systems Presentations (5%) Outline (5%) –March 23 and 25

Groups will be randomly assigned and emailed to you in early February.

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

- Mandatory Voting
 1. What is it
 2. Where is it used
 3. What are the pros and cons
 4. Should it be implemented in Canada

- Double Ballot/Two-Round System
- Proportional Representation
- Mixed Member Proportional
- Single Transferable Vote
 1. Describe the system,
 2. Analyze its pros and cons,
 3. Discuss other states that use it,
 4. Provide a sample ballot,
 5. 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 on day of your presentation: summary of points, 1-2 pages, typed, submitted individually based only 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>

(i)Final question – April 8

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. You will obtain the question in class and not via email.

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, at the start of class**, and will be handed to me in person.

(Do not submit papers under my door or show up at the end of class to submit it.)

If you have a serious problem **before the due date**, notify me immediately and we will make alternate arrangements for you to complete your work.

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).

Useful links:

Elections Canada:

<http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>

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. (For these courses a final grade will be assigned to either the 3 rd course attempt or at the point of course completion.) |
| 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.