



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Social Sciences

PSC-106-001
Canadian Politics
Winter 2018

COURSE OUTLINE

The course description is available on the web @ <http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/psc.html>

Ω Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for their records, especially to assist in transfer credit to post-secondary institutions.

1. Instructor Information

(a) Instructor	Mona Brash		
(b) Office hours	M: 9:30-10:20, Tues: 1-2:20, W: 9:30-10:20, 2:30-3:00, Th: 4:30-5:30 or by appointment		
(c) Location	Paul 237		
(d) Phone	3352	Alternative:	---
(e) E-mail	brashm@camosun.bc.ca		
(f) Website	n/a		

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

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
Mintz, Eric et al. Canada's Politics: Democracy, Diversity, and Good Government (3rd Edition). Toronto: Pearson, 2017.
- (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 8 Introductory Class
Description of Course
Syllabus
Mock Quiz

January 10 Basics of Politics & Government
Media and Politics

Reading: Mintz, pp. 256-258

Q. How does government affect your life?

Canadian Identity

Reading: Mintz, pp. 60-64

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

Who are you?

January 15 Political Culture

Reading: Mintz pp. 1-16, 121-125

Political Influence

Reading: Mintz, pp. 175-203

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?

*****Constituency Assignment due*****

January 17 Parliament & Parliamentary Officers

Reading: Mintz, pp. 383-387 & 442-446

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

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

January 22 Political Parties & their Histories

Reading: Mintz, pp. 204-238 (not 210-211)

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

January 24 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 29 Question Period

Watch Question Period from either January 24, 25, or 26.

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

*****Question Period worksheet (handed out previous week) due*****

January 31 Members of Parliament – representatives or trained seals?

Reading: Mintz, pp. 388-408, 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/docs/default-source/mp-exit-interviews/welcometoparliament_eng25ef579a50cd6a04a19bff0000c565b1.pdf?sfvrsn=2 Chapter 1 & 2

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

February 5 *Quiz 1*****

On material covered to date

February 7 The executive

Reading: Mintz, pp. 352-mid 358 & mid 245-246

*Q. What is the role of the Crown (GG) in Canadian government?
Do we have fixed election dates in Canada and BC?*

February 12-16 No Class, Family Day & Reading Break

February 19 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Reading: Mintz, pp. 358-381
Current Ministries and Cabinet Ministries
Review the Government of Canada website,
<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/cabinet>

*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 21 Senate

Reading: Mintz, pp. 409-417

Q: What is a Senator? What should the role of the Senate be? Should the Senate be reformed?
*****Paper Proposal and Preliminary bibliography due*****

February 26 The Bureaucracy

Reading: Mintz, pp. 420-429

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

February 28 The Court System

Reading: Mintz, pp. 460-467

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

March 5 Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Reading: Mintz, pp. 288-297, not box 10-3
Carter v. Canada (Attorney General), 2015 SCC 5, [2015] 1 S.C.R. 331
at <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14637/index.do>
Read up to “Cases Cited”

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 Carter v. Canada? What has happened since the judgment?

March 7 *Quiz 2*****

On material covered since Midterm

Time for groups to meet re: Presentations

March 12 Electoral Organization

Reading: Mintz, pp. 239-246

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

March 14 Electoral Systems

Reading: Mintz, pp. 246-249

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

March 19 Past elections, including Oct. 19, 2015 federal election

Reading: Mintz, pp. 250-255 & 210-211

Q. What were the main issues in the last federal election? How have elections changed since the 1990's? What are the issues in the upcoming BC election?

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

March 21 Voter Turnout

3rd Party Advertising

Past election ads (esp. negative ads)

Reading: Mintz pp. 152-162

Q. Should 3rd parties (unions, corporations, private individuals) be able to advertise during elections? Why are there ads between elections? Why is voter turnout so low? Why do so few people participate in politics?

March 26 *Electoral System Presentations *****

Mandatory voting or not?

Majority systems:

- Alternative Vote/Preferential Vote
 - Double Ballot
-

March 28 *Electoral System Presentations *****

Proportional Systems:

- Proportional Representation
- Mixed Member Proportional
- Single Transferable Vote

Note: Final Question for April 11 to be discussed

April 2 No Class (Easter Monday)

April 4 Party financing

Reading: Mintz, pp. 258-259

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=qua2015&dir=pol/qua&lang=e>

Q. Should unions and corporations be allowed to donate to political parties? Should taxpayers fund political parties?

How much did the parties and candidates spend in 2015? (Link to be sent later in semester once papers are filed by parties and candidates)

Redo Mock Quiz from Day 1

April 9 Proposals for Electoral Reform (Liberal Platform)

Redo mock quiz from first class (review)

<https://www.liberal.ca/realchange/electoral-reform/>

Q. What is the current state of the push for electoral reform?

April 11 Last Class Quiz 3

*****Final Question*****

One question: will be discussed *in class only*, 2 weeks ahead of time, on March 28th.

NOTE: NO FINAL EXAM DURING EXAM PERIOD

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

(1) Media Assignment	(ongoing)	10%	_____
(2) Constituency Assignment	(Jan. 15)	6%	_____
(3) Question Period Worksheet	(Jan. 29)	4%	_____
(4) Test # 1	(Feb. 5)	20%	_____
(5) Proposal and Preliminary bibliography for major assignment	(Feb. 21) (5% + 5%)	10%	_____
(6) Test # 2	(Mar. 7)	5%	_____
(7) Major Paper	(Mar. 19)	25%	_____
(8) Electoral Systems Presentation (Mar. 26 or March 28)	(5% presentation, 5% outline)	10%	_____
(9) Final question	(April 11)	10%	_____
Total:			_____/100

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

Details for Assignments:

(a) Assignments

(1) Media Assignment – ongoing (10%)

- 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. 8 & 10 (you are responsible for remembering your date)).

- Submit a hard copy for marking **and** email the assignment to me before noon on 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...

B) Answer in a few properly structured paragraphs (1 to 1 & 1/2 pages):

7. 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?)?

(2) Constituency Assignment - Jan. 15 (6%)

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
 1. Results of last federal election
 2. Who was the incumbent MP
 3. Who ran in that riding
 4. What was the final vote count for **each** candidate
- Name of current 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 your riding. Do you think the riding’s MP will be able to resolve it? Why or why not?

(3) Question Period Worksheet – January 29 (4%)

Watch Question Period from either January 24, 25, or 26

- Live On CPAC (Channel 115): 11:00 a.m. (rebroadcast at 8 p.m. or from links on CPAC)
- Complete the Question Period worksheet (handed out previous week)

(5) Proposal & preliminary bibliography for major paper – Feb. 21 (10%)

Read Assignment (g) on pages 8-10

1) Proposal:

In 1 page, in point form or sentences:

- What is your topic?
- Why did you choose this topic?
- What is the objective of the assignment, what do you intend to explore/find out?
- How have you begun your research? What else are you going to do?

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

- 3 primary sources
- **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

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)

(#7) Major Paper – March 19 (25%)

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

1. Essay 5-7 pages

Choose **one** of the following topics:

i) Write a paper about **one** aspect of elections, choose one topic below, and discuss the points for each:

- **Youth Voter turnout**
 1. What was the 2015 Federal Election youth turnout
 2. How does it compare to past results and to USA statistics
 3. Why youth voter turnout should increase
 4. How youth voter turnout can be increased
 5. 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 (excluding robocalls)
 3. How have the USA examples impacted Canadian elections
 4. Analyze how voter suppression impacts politics, especially voter turnout and confidence in politics.
- **Electronic voting in Canadian federal Elections**
 1. Why is there a “push” by some for e-voting federally in Canada
 2. What examples of e-voting are there in Canada
 3. What examples of e-voting are there in other states/countries
 4. Should e-voting be adopted federally for Canada or not, explain why or why not
- **Leadership Selection**
 1. Choose **either** the Conservative Party of Canada or the New Democratic Party to study in terms of leadership selection
 2. Describe the selection leadership selection process for party
 3. Who are the candidates (include brief description of their platforms, if CPC, choose 5 candidates
 4. Who won (provide results) ...what are the reasons given for their success
 5. Was this selection process democratic
- **Electoral Reform in Canada**
 1. What did the federal Liberals promise in the last election
 2. What have they done since the election
 3. What is the current status of electoral reform
 4. Explain the Liberals’ online survey, include support and critiques of it
 5. Will we have First Past the Post in the next federal election or not .. Why or why not

ii) Essay: Choose a topic of interest to you (**clear it with me first, in person, by January 31**)

iii) Essay: Follow the Leader

- Choose a leader of **one** of the 5 sitting parties in the House of Commons
- Provide a **very brief** (no more than ½ a page) biography of the leader
- Follow and document the media coverage of that leader in at least **2 different** media sources **for the next 2 months** and analyze the following:
 - Issues that leader raised in those 2 months
 - Coverage that leader received in those 2 months
 - Comparative analysis of coverage of leader
 1. difference/similarity in the three media over the two months 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 31st, 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.

(b) Quizzes

(# 4) Quiz 1, based on material covered to date –Feb.5

Short answer, paragraph, and short essay questions

(# 6) Quiz 2 – material since Test 1– March 7

Short answer, paragraph, and short essay questions

(#9) Quiz 3 – one question (10%) April 11

To be given out 2 weeks ahead of time

(c) Exams: No final exam

(d) Other (Group Work)

Electoral Systems Presentations (5%) Outline (5%) – March 26 or March 28

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

Voting Systems

- *Double Ballot/Two-Round System*
- *Proportional Representation*
- *Mixed Member Proportional*
- *Single Transferable Vote*

For the assigned system

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 Oct. 19, 2015 Federal election.

For all presentations: 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, which includes other links:

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

6. Grading System

Standard Grading System (GPA)

Competency Based Grading System

7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

You should be following a reputable newsfeed or media source for coverage of federal political events and issues.

8. College Supports, Services and Policies



Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support

If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @

<http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html> or <http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent>

College Services

Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library,

and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/>

College Policies

Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

A. GRADING SYSTEMS <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html>

The following two grading systems are used at Camosun College:

1. 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		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

2. Competency Based Grading System (Non GPA)

This grading system is based on satisfactory acquisition of defined skills or successful completion of the course learning outcomes

Grade	Description
COM	The student has met the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
DST	The student has met and exceeded, above and beyond expectation, the goals, criteria, or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.
NC	The student has not met the goals, criteria or competencies established for this course, practicum or field placement.

B. 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 at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html> 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 are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
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.