

PSCI 2003A
Canadian Political Institutions
6:05pm – 8:55pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: John Crysler
Office: C660 Loeb Building
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30pm – 6:00pm
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Course description

This course introduces students to major Canadian political institutions. We explore the factors that led to the adoption of particular institutions, and we assess the impact of institutional design on the Canadian political system.

We begin with an overview of Canada's constitutional foundations and evolution. The classes that follow focus on particular institutions: elections, political parties, advocacy groups, media, the bureaucracy, the executive and Parliament. Through lectures, the textbook, discussion readings, and open class discussion, emphasis is placed on how these institutions work in practice and whether Canadian democracy might be improved through institutional changes. In addition, this course takes advantage of Carleton's location in Canada's capital through a series of guest speakers who are practitioners in the institutions we will study.

Course objectives

Political institutions are important because they influence where power is located in the political system and the means by which that power can be leveraged. The course is designed to help students decode the workings of political institutions, and thereby learn how and to what extent ordinary citizens can influence political outcomes through participation in Canada's political institutions.

The course is also designed to help students improve their writing skills by providing feedback on a short writing assignment before the research essay is due. Finally, it is anticipated that frequent open class discussions will help students improve their oral communication skills and reinforce the concepts covered in lectures and the textbook.

Required textbook (available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore)

Dyck, Rand. 2008. *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches*. 5th ed. Toronto: Nelson.

Other readings

Students are also expected to read and to be prepared to comment on the discussion readings indicated in the class schedule. Readings will be available on Web CT and/or through library reserves.

Evaluation Summary

- 15% short paper – **due July 16**
- 35% research essay – **due August 11**
- 35% final exam – to be scheduled during the regular examination period (**August 20-25**)
- 15% participation

Written Assignments

The **short paper** is due at the beginning of class on July 16, 2009.

Students must select an editorial or op-ed piece on an issue that relates directly to a federal political institution (e.g. the constitution, Senate, House of Commons, prime minister, cabinet, governor general, political parties, elections, the bureaucracy, the media or advocacy groups). The piece must have appeared in a major Canadian newspaper in the last six months.

The task is to write a fictional letter to the editor in response to the article. The letter should be no more than two pages double-spaced, and should accomplish the following things:

- Identify any biases, logical inconsistencies, or other problems in the presentation of the argument
- Identify any factual errors
- Include any important information or perspectives that were left out
- Develop your own argument

You should – at the very least – read the chapter(s) of the textbook related to the institution in question to help you evaluate the author's argument (and cite appropriately). **You must append a hardcopy of the article with your paper.**

The graded short paper will be returned to students on or before July 28th, which is prior to the July 31st withdrawal date.

The **research essay** is due at the beginning of class on August 11, 2009.

The instructor will provide several research questions in class and on Web CT. Students must address one of these research questions in their research essay, which should be 8-10 pages double-spaced.

Grading Policy

Both written assignments will be evaluated in terms of quality of argument, quality of writing, accuracy and appropriateness of citations. For the research paper, breadth and depth of research is an additional criterion. Assignments will be assigned a grade out of 100, which will be converted to a grade out of 15 for the short paper and a grade out of 35 for the research essay.

Submission of written assignments

Assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of class on July 16th and August 11th respectively. If, for some extraordinary reason, you are unable to attend class, you may submit your paper through the departmental drop box (a mail slot in the wall) located outside room B640 Loeb Building. Assignments are retrieved once every business day at 4:00pm, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. Assignments submitted after 4:00pm will be date stamped as received the next business day.

Late papers may either be submitted through the departmental drop box or at the instructor's office hours (4:30pm to 6:00pm Tuesdays and Thursdays). A penalty will be applied (see below).

E-mail submissions of written assignments will **not** be accepted.

Late paper policy

Late papers will be assigned a penalty of 5% per business day. For example, a research essay awarded a grade of 80% would be reduced to 75% if it were submitted one business day late, and the mark out of 35 would be reduced from 28 to 26.25.

Late papers will be accepted up to and including seven calendar days following the due date. For example, the short paper is due on July 16th. One could hand in the short paper as late as July 23rd with a penalty of 25% (5% multiplied by 5 business days). However, **any paper submitted more than seven calendar days after the due date will not be accepted.**

Extensions will be considered only in extraordinary circumstances. For example, significant illness as documented by a medical certificate.

Final Exam

The **final exam** will be scheduled sometime during the regular examination period for the late summer term (August 20-25th).

All material covered in the course is examinable, including lectures, assigned textbook and discussion readings, guest speakers and films. However, class discussions will not be examinable to facilitate a more comfortable environment for discussion.

The exam will be three hours and will include multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. More details on the exam will be provided in class and on Web CT. Exams will receive a grade out of 100, which will be converted to a grade out of 35.

Participation

Each week there will be a class discussion. Students are expected to read and to be prepared to comment on assigned discussion readings. Students will be evaluated on the quantity and quality of their interventions (with more emphasis on quality). Those whose comments engage with the assigned discussion reading and other relevant course material will be rewarded. Question and answer sessions with guest speakers are other opportunities for participation.

Attending class without participating in the class discussion will not contribute to the participation grade.

Any students uncomfortable participating in class discussion should visit the instructor during office hours to discuss ways to facilitate their participation.

CLASS SCHEDULE*

* Note: this schedule has been modified to accommodate the schedules of our guest speakers and is subject to change.

July 7

Introduction

July 9

Federalism and the Constitution (Part I: Historical Foundations and Division of Powers)

- Dyck, Chapters 2 & 18

Discussion readings:

- Chapter 5 "Should the federal government play a leading role in health care" in Mark Charlton and Paul Barker, eds. 2006. *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues*. 5th ed. Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson. 100-125.

July 14

Federalism and the Constitution (Part II: Constitutional Change)

- Dyck, Chapter 17

Discussion readings:

- "Trudeau speaks out". 1992. *Maclean's*, 28 September, 22-26.
- "Who was that talking about fear-mongering?" 1992. *The Globe and Mail*, 20 October, A30.

Film: *The Road to Patriation*

July 16

Elections, Voting and the Electoral System

- Dyck, Chapters 13 & 15

Discussion reading:

- Hiemstra, John L. and Harold Jansen. "Getting What You Vote For." in Mark Charlton and Paul Barker, eds. 2006. *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues*. 5th ed. Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson. 290-302.

SHORT PAPER DUE

July 21

Political Parties

- Dyck, Chapter 14

Discussion readings:

- Flanagan, Tom. "Only voters have the right to decide on the coalition." 2009. *The Globe and Mail*, 9 January, A13.
- Cross, William. 2009. "And the future is: coalition; Yes, the Liberal-NDP deal may be dead. But minority parliaments are the new norm." *The Globe and Mail*, 26 January, A13.

Film: *The Right Candidate for Rosedale*

July 23

Advocacy Groups and Lobbying

- Dyck, Chapter 16

Discussion reading:

- Rana, F. Abbas. 2006. "Duguay: five-year cooling off period a challenge for GR." *The Hill Times*, 12 June, 35.

July 28

The Media

- Dyck, Chapters 12

Discussion readings:

Sears, Robin V. 2009. "Extra! Extra! Read all about the death of newspapers". *Policy Options*, June, 22-29.

Waddell, Christopher. 2009. "The future for the Canadian media." *Policy Options*, June, 16-20.

July 30

The Bureaucracy

- Dyck, Chapter 22

Discussion readings:

- O'Neil, Brian R. et al. 2006. "The Gomery Commission Report, Phase 2, An Overview." *Parliamentary Information and Research Service*. Library of Parliament. 16 February. Available at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb0560-e.htm>
- Clark, Campbell. 2006. "Report seeks to change the very way Ottawa works; Administrators should be insulated from political interference, Gomery says." *The Globe and Mail*, 2 February, A4.

August 4

Courts and the Charter

- Dyck, Chapters 19 & 24

Discussion reading:

- M v. H [1999] (Supreme Court Judgment), pp. 1-18.

August 6

The Executive: The Prime Minister, Cabinet and Crown

- Dyck, Chapter 21

Discussion readings:

- Chapter 8 "Is the prime minister too powerful" in Mark Charlton and Paul Barker, eds. 2006. *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues*. 5th ed. Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson. 180-213

August 11

Parliament: The House of Commons

- Dyck, Chapter 23 (pp. 599-625)

Discussion readings:

- Chapter 10 "Should party discipline be relaxed" in Mark Charlton and Paul Barker, eds. 2006. *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues*. 5th ed. Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson. 233-247.

RESEARCH ESSAY DUE

August 13

Parliament: The Senate

- Dyck, Chapter 23 (pp. 625-634)

Discussion readings:

Carty, R. Kenneth. 1997. "Electoral Reform Should Begin With The Senate". *Policy Options*, November, 39-41.

Geiger, John. 2006. "Ontario's selfish side". *National Post*, 7 March. A14.

Hébert, Chantal. 2008. "Harper's Senate move may be a necessity." *Toronto Star*, Dec 15. A10.

August 18

Exam Review



Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **June 12, 2009 for early summer examinations**, and **July 31, 2009 for late / full summer examinations**.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material,

regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;

- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfil all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.