

Carleton University
Department of Political Science

Winter 2019

PSCI 2002B
Canadian Political Environment
Thursday 9:35-11:25
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

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This course on the Canadian Political Environment examines the powerful dynamics of the social, cultural and economic structures influencing politics in Canada. These include our political culture and national identity as Canadians; the interplay between politics and economics; regionalism; the status of indigenous peoples; French-English relations; multiculturalism and race; gender and sexuality, and other social and economic patterns. We explore both how these forces have shaped Canadian politics and in turn how politics affect them. How do different regions in Canada think about politics and public policy? How can we balance the idea of French and English as “two founding nations” with the ever-growing racial diversity of Canada? What do we mean by reconciliation between Canada and indigenous nations, and is this possible? How does gender and the quest for equality unlock new understandings of politics and power? Ultimately, what is Canada? And what makes us Canadian? These and many other issues will be covered in the course.

Text:

Christopher Cochrane, Kelly Blidook and Rand Dyck, *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches* (8th edition) (Toronto: Nelson, 2016)

Grading:

First Assignment (Due Feb 7)	15%
Second Assignment Outline (Due March 7)	5%
Second Assignment (Due Mar 28)	30%
Final Exam (to be scheduled during the regular exam period)	40%
Participation and Attendance	10%

The final exam will be held in the exam period at the end of term.

Attendance and participation in discussion groups forms an important part of the course. If you are not able to attend, e-mail your TA, preferably beforehand.

Assignment #1

Read the short essay “Finding the Plot on the Diversity/Racism Debate” by Jennifer Ditchburn, editor of *Policy Options*. <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/august-2018/finding-the-plot-on-the-diversity-racism-debate/>

In a response of about 500-750 words:

1. Explain what Ditchburn is saying, and to whom or what she is responding. In one or two sentences, summarize her specific argument and where it is directed.
2. Relate Ditchburn’s arguments to specific ideas and concepts covered in class up to and including January 31, and the *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches* chapters covered for those weeks. Draw specific and clear connections.
3. Based on the above, briefly argue whether in your view social cohesion is generally increasing or decreasing in Canada, and why.

The assignment should be structured as a single integrated essay, responding to the above. Assignments will be evaluated based on:

- clear answers to the above questions
- display of a strong grasp of the specific arguments in the Ditchburn essay
- strong connections between the essay and class lectures and the textbook
- general understanding of the complexities of social cohesion in Canada

Assignments are due February 7. Assignments not received by the deadline may receive a zero at the discretion of the instructor.

Second Assignment

In an essay of about 1500-2000 words, respond to one of the following:

1. “Despite their complaints, the western provinces have always received fair and equal treatment from the rest of Canada.” Explain why you agree or do not agree with this statement.
2. Is Quebec separatism dead? And if so, what has replaced it? Evaluate historic and recent trends in how Quebecers view their relationship with the rest of Canada.
3. Are women close to reaching equal social, political and economic status in Canada with men, or are there still significant differences? If the latter, what should be done?
4. Assess the progress of LGBT rights and equality in Canada since the 1990s and whether progress has been consistently steady and forward, or not.

5. What does “colonization” mean in terms of the relationships between Canada and indigenous peoples? Analyze this concept with reference to both the past and the future of these relationships.
6. Trace the evolution of Canada’s relationship with the United States both historically and under the Trump Administration. To what extent has the relationship fundamentally changed in the last two years, and in what ways has it remained the same?

You must submit a preliminary essay outline of your ideas, by March 7. **The outline** should be one to two pages long and give your topic, thesis, key arguments and preliminary sources. It can be in point form or in paragraphs – the objective is to lay out your initial ideas and thinking.

Papers are due on March 28 by the beginning of class. Late papers will lose one-third of a letter grade per day (i.e., from B+ to B), including weekends, unless valid reasons are presented.

Assignments will be graded on the following criteria:

- a clear thesis statement responding to the assigned question
- a strong grasp of the general topic
- appropriate sources and engaging use of these sources
- appreciation of and engagement with key counterarguments
- a clear grounding in theoretical and academic understandings of Canadian politics, while also appropriately engaging with recent trends and events
- the general organization and coherence of the paper
- spelling and grammar

Political science does not have a uniform citation style. Any established academic citation style is acceptable.

Topics and Reading Assignments

The textbook is your friend. Review it before and after class to ensure you are familiar with the concepts under discussion, and to further understand concepts covered in the lectures.

	Topic	Chapter from “Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches”
Jan 10	Introduction	
Jan 17	Multiple Identities	3 – “Regionalism”
Jan 24	Indigenous Peoples	CuLearn Bundle “The First Peoples: A Brief Overview”

Jan 31	Language and Quebec	5 "French Canada and the Quebec Question"
Feb 7	Race and Multiculturalism	6 – "Ethnocultural Minorities"
Feb 14	Gender and Sexuality	7 – "Gender"
Feb 21	Winter Break	
Feb 28	Political Culture	11 – "The Canadian Political Culture"
Mar 7	Class and Religion	9 – "Urban/Rural Location, Religion, and Age"
Mar 14	Media and Communications	12 "Political Socialization, the Mass Media and Public Opinion Polls"
Mar 21	Interest Groups and Social Movements	16 – "Advocacy Groups, Social Movements and Lobbying"
Mar 28	Canada and the World	10 – "Canada's External Environment: The United States and the World"
April 4	Review for Exam	