

## The Design and Evolution of Public Institutions

### PSCI 4404A

- Instructor:** Scott Edward Bennett  
C 672 Loeb Building  
[scott.bennett@carleton.ca](mailto:scott.bennett@carleton.ca)
- Class Times:** 8:35pm to 11:25pm on Thursdays beginning on September 7 and ending on December 7. The course will be conducted in person. Check the location of the course online just before the week of the first class.
- Office Hours:** There are no fixed office hours, but you can communicate with the instructor by email at any time. He will usually get back to you within 48 hours.

Read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus stipulates class and university policies. Exemptions from these policies are almost never granted.

**Note: In so far as possible, you should try to communicate with the instructor in class or through electronic mail. There are no in person office hours. There are very few matters that cannot be dealt with in class or by email.**

### Course Description

This course is an examination of the emergence and development of institutional collective action in a broad historical context with attention to probable future scenarios for change. The broad historical backdrop to the evolution of public institutions will be examined using the works of various anthropologists, evolutionary economists, historians and political theorists. For example, aspects of the work of Niall Ferguson, Daniel Friedman, Francis Fukuyama, Ian Morris, Elinor Ostrom and Joseph Tainter will be considered as they relate to the design, development and design of major institutions of control/coordination in human communities

Apart from mastering the substantive knowledge involved in the course, it is hoped that students will also develop some intellectual habits that may not have been central to some of their other academic experiences. For example, you may find that the work in this course involves a greater degree of counterintuitive and speculative thinking compared to other courses you have taken. Such thinking does not always lead in the direction of some happy view of the future based on a simplistic view of change and progress.

In looking back over recent examples of this class, the instructor concludes that there are differences between a good class and an excellent class. At the practical level, in an excellent class, all students take their presentation responsibilities seriously. At the conceptual level, in an excellent class there is a willingness to consider the possibility that conventional government institutions are not necessarily more effective and important in meeting public needs than market institutions or community cooperative institutions.

## Class Format

**This is a seminar in which, by definition, the students must have the primary responsibility for using course time effectively. You must be prepared to do your part in covering course material and participating. Also note that the way students are evaluated in a seminar is different from evaluation in large lecture classes. Therefore, do not expect to have a precise knowledge of the number of “points” you have earned in the grading system on any given day in the term. The seminar experience requires a greater degree of maturity than that, but it is also more forgiving in terms of typical grade distributions.**

## Grade Components

Major Seminar Paper	65% of course grade
Participation	35% of Course Grade

More details on the paper will be provided in class. It is due in digital form (email attachment in WORD format) by the end of December 7. In order for the student to have a chance at a reasonable grade, the paper must be at least 6250 words long at a bare minimum. Typically, many papers will likely be considerably longer than this. The instructor may suggest paper topics later in the course. However, the amount of work for an instructor defined paper topic is the same as the amount of work for any other kind of paper topic.

Class participation will probably be judged primarily in terms of presentations of one's own work and presentations of readings for which one is responsible. There may be other elements to participation (such as attendance), and these will be clearly determined and defined later. Generally, it is expected that a student will be principally involved in at least 2 presentations on readings. In addition, students will also do a brief mid-course presentation on their proposed major paper. If time permits, there will also be a presentation of final papers. **We will not finalize the exact details of presentation procedures until we know more about the people enrolled in the seminar.**

**This term we are also requiring that you must attend at least one of the first two meetings of the course if you wish to pass the course. This is essential for the continuity of the course under current circumstances.**

If you are principally responsible for a particular part of the readings in a given week, you should prepare an electronic/typed summary of that part and provide copies of that summary to the class. Copies of slide files may also be appropriate.

## Useful Books

Why Nations Fail, Acemoglu & Robinson, published by Crown, 2012

Civilization: The West and the Rest, Ferguson, published by Penguin, 2011

The Great Degeneration: How Institutions Decay and Economies Die, Ferguson, published by Penguin, 2013

Morals and Markets: The Dangerous Balance (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Friedman and McNeil, published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

The Origins of Political Order, Fukuyama, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011

Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy, Fukuyama, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014

Why The West Rules – For Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal about The Future, Morris, published by McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2010

Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions of Collective Action, Ostrom, published by Cambridge University Press, 1990

Understanding Institutional Diversity, Ostrom, Princeton University Press, 2005

The Collapse of Complex Societies, Tainter, published by Cambridge University Press, initially published in 1988 with many subsequent reprints

**Note: Do not purchase texts until you have been to the first class. You are not expected to purchase all of the texts. For the most part, texts should be available at Haven Books.**

## Course Topics & Readings

It is possible that the readings will be modified. Perhaps they will be extended in some areas and reduced in others. It may even turn out to be the case that certain secondary topics cannot be covered at all due to lack of time. Some patience is required in this regard.

**Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy and probably bad administration to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. In general, we hope to reach topic 5 (preliminary proposals) no later than the beginning of week 5 or 6 of the course. However, this is an expectation that can be altered in light of student background, interests and progress. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below.**

### **1. Introduction to the Course**

#### **2. The Broad Contours of Institutions and their Interrelations**

Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 1 to 3

Ferguson (2013), Introduction

#### **3. History of Governing Institutions and Related Institutions**

##### **a. Emergence**

Fukuyama (2011), Chapters 1 to 5

Tainter, Chapter 2

Morris, Chapters 1 and 3 are useful background reading here.

##### **b. Development**

Fukuyama (2011), Chapters 29 and 30

Fukuyama (2014) Chapter 1 to 3

Tainter, Chapter 4

Morris, Chapters 9 and 10 are useful background reading here

##### **c. Collapse or Continuation**

Fukuyama (2014), Chapters 31 to 36

Tainter, Chapters 5 and 6

Morris, Chapters 11 and 12 are useful background reading here

##### **d. Current Context and Problems**

Ferguson, Chapter 1 and 3 (2013)

### **4. History of Market Institutions**

#### **a. Emergence**

Friedman and McNeil, chapters 1 and 2

Morris, again, Chapters 1 to 3 are useful background reading here.

- b. Development**  
Friedman and McNeil, Chapter 3  
Morris, chapters 9 and 10 are useful background reading here.
  - c. Collapse or Continuation**  
Friedman and McNeil, Chapter 11  
Morris, Chapters 11 and 12 are useful background reading here.
  - d. Current Context and Problems**  
Ferguson (2013) Chapter 2
- 5. Preliminary Proposals**
- 6. The Middle Ground Between the Government and the Market: Common Pool Resource Institutions and the Work of Ostrom**
- a. Basic Foundations and Frameworks**  
Ostrom, Governing the Commons, Chapters 1 and 2
  - b. Stability, Change and Collapse in Commons Institutions**  
Ostrom, Governing the Commons, Chapters 3 to 5 (6 may also be of some use.)
  - c. A Methodology to Understand and Design Commons Institutions**  
Ostrom, Understanding Institutional Diversity, Part III (particularly Chapter 9)
  - d. Current Context and Problems Scaled up to the Societal Level**  
Ferguson, 2013 Chapter 4
- 7. Concluding Overviews of the Current Status and Likely Future of Related Institutions**  
Ferguson, 2013 Conclusion  
Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 11 to 15
- 8. Concluding Presentations (if time permits)**

You will note that we put Morris in as a background reading for both market and governing institutions, and this is because he writes about social development more broadly and sees everything as part of the same materialistic web of relations. Some of the work of Jared Diamond is also relevant to both market and public institution collapses, and that can be brought forward if desired. Niall Ferguson's larger work, Civilization: The West and The Rest, is mentioned in our list of texts, and it too can

provide useful background. However, all of these must be viewed as secondary in what is already a heavy reading list.

Finally, if one is interested in seeing how some thought on democracy, governance, markets, society and institutions have developed more recently, just for interest, keep in mind:

Principles for Dealing with the Changing World Order: Why Nations Succeed and Fail, Dalio, The Avid Reader Press, 2021

Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe, Ferguson, published by Penguin Press, 2021

Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment, Fukuyama, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2018

Liberalism and Its Discontents, Fukuyama, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2022

## Instructor's Other Important Guidelines and Rules

**First of all, it is extremely important to note that this is a seminar. A significant part of a seminar necessarily involves students making presentations and discussing material. If you are absolutely unable to do this, no matter what the reasons, you cannot succeed in a seminar. In such a case, you should seek a special exemption from any programme requirement for seminar credits or make other adjustments in your programme.**

From the instructor's point of view other important rules in a seminar are:

1. Do your work on time as described in this outline and in class.
2. Do not engage in plagiarism.
3. Do not disrupt the class. This will be interpreted in a more detailed way than in previous years. While participating in the online class, make sure there are no disruptive noises in the background. With respect to persistent behavioural problems, the instructor may limit a person's involvement in the class.
4. Keep an open mind with respect to value systems and approaches to inquiry.

With respect to point one above, the final copy of the course paper should be submitted by the end of December 7, 2023. It must be in electronic form as a WORD attachment to an email. Be sure you keep copies of what you submit, and wait for the instructor's return message that he has received and can open the attachment. If you do not turn in the paper on time, you will initially get an F in the course. However, a failing grade can be changed at some later date if the papers is finally submitted. Nevertheless, the student should keep in

mind that there are elements of grade change policy not within the instructor's control, and authorities in the university hierarchy may not accept a submitted grade change.

Presentations must be done on time as assigned. Failure to observe this will lead to a loss of all marks associated with a presentation.

Other rules of general interest from a departmental or university perspective are contained in the insertion that follows. The instructor only takes responsibility for the essence of the material above.

### Standard Departmental Attachment Follows

## **Appendix**

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### **Student Mental Health**

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

#### ***Emergency Resources (on and off campus):***

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- ***Carleton Resources:***

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- ***Off Campus Resources:***

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

### **Requests for Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

***Pregnancy accommodation:*** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

***Religious accommodation:*** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

***Accommodations for students with disabilities:*** If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation, or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

***Accommodation for student activities:*** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more information, please [click here](#).

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](http://students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

### **Sexual Violence Policy**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support).

### **Academic Integrity**



Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

### ***Plagiarism***

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

### ***Use of Artificial Intelligence***

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

### ***Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations***

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. When an instructor suspects a

violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

### **Intellectual property**

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

### **Submission and Return of Term Work**

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

### **Grading**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

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.

### **Carleton E-mail Accounts**

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

**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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

**Official Course Outline**

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.