

PSCI 2003 A
Canadian Political Institutions
Fridays, 8:35 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.
This course will be held remotely online

I General Information

Instructor: Elsa Piersig
On-line Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.-11a.m. Office hours are held on Big Blue Button.
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II Course Description

This course examines the evolution, structure, functions, and critiques of Canada's major political, constitutional, judicial, and bureaucratic institutions and processes. In Canada, these institutions are linked by two themes: the central role of the Crown in organizing the Canadian state, which Canada inherited from its Westminster parliamentary roots, and the relationship between the Crown (state) and Indigenous peoples. These two themes tie the course together and feature throughout the discussion of each Canadian political institution and process. Importantly, these themes illustrate how institutions evolve and adapt to changing circumstances and the connections that exist between institutions. One noted Canadian scholar wrote that ours is an 'an age of reform' (Franks, 1987). Certainly, as indicated by the 'democratic deficit,' Canadians remain consistent in their demand for reform. This course helps students understand how institutions work and whether reform to one institution may lead to changes in other political institutions and processes.

III Course Format

Course delivery combines pre-recorded video and live sessions. Most of the lecture content is covered through the videos and related readings. For all weeks other than those featuring Quizzes 1 and 2, there will be a short live class to link students to the weekly live tutorials. This is the weekly format:

1. Begin with watching the introductory video.
2. Complete the assigned reading from the Cochrane et al. or others posted on ARES.
3. Continue with additional lecture videos and follow any additional reading prompts.
4. Attend weekly live classes featuring a 10-15-minute lecture, preparation for tutorial activities, and a chance to ask questions. There will be *no live sessions* on Oct. 9 and Nov. 13, 2020.
5. Attend your weekly tutorial session through the Big Blue Button meeting room link on cuLearn. Tutorials run every week from Sept. 11-Dec. 4, 2020.

IV Learning Outcomes

By taking this course, students will:

- Develop a strong knowledge base about Canada's political institutions, their historical development, and contemporary debates

- Apply knowledge of Canada's political institutions to systematically evaluate features of the Canadian regime
- Develop critical thinking skills by breaking critical thinking into its five components and applying each to course assignments
- Improve written and oral communication skills through online tutorials and course assignments
- Practice responding to feedback in a professional environment.

V Texts

- Christopher Cochrane, Kelly Blidook and Rand Dyck. 2020. *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches*. 9th Edition. Toronto: Nelson. (Available from the Carleton Bookstore or the [publisher](#).)
- Additional readings posted on cuLearn either through the ARES system or via hyperlink.

VI Evaluation at a Glance

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Participation and Attendance	Throughout the semester	10%
Briefing Note	Friday, Oct. 2, 2020	10%
Briefing Note Reflection	Friday, Oct. 16, 2020	5%
Quizzes (3)	Oct. 8, 2020; Nov. 12, 2020; exam period	35%
Paper Proposal	Friday, Oct. 23, 2020	15%
Research Paper	Friday, Nov. 27, 2020	25%

VII Evaluation in Detail

Participation and Attendance

Students earn participation through weekly online discussion groups and cuLearn forums. The online discussion groups will begin on September 11, 2020 to introduce students to the online format and the first assignment. Students are expected to attend and contribute to the live group discussions. In expectation that the internet can act up, students can also contribute to the cuLearn forum for the weekly topic. Students should email their TA if they are unable to attend the discussion group.

Briefing Note – Due Friday, October 2, 2020 (Week 4)

The Briefing Note assignment is a short assignment of 2 pages (maximum). Students are expected to draft a Briefing Note to the newly appointed Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations on why the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* remains relevant today for Indigenous peoples and the Crown. The document can be in bullet note form and single-spaced. More details on briefing notes and the assignment will be provided on cuLearn.

Briefing Note Reflection – Due Friday, October 16, 2020 (Week 6)

This assignment provides an opportunity to respond to feedback and reflect upon their experience with the Briefing Note Assignment. In about 500 words (1-2 pages), consider the following questions:

- What is the utility of Briefing Notes and why do ministers and civil servants rely on them?
- Where else could you have found evidence for the assignment?
- Do you think your own opinions came through in your Briefing Note?

Quizzes

There will be 2 quizzes throughout the course and one scheduled during the formal exam period.

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Quiz 1	Week 5	The Crown and Responsible Government	10%
Quiz 2	Week 10	Parliament and Representation	10%
Quiz 3	Formal exam period	The Constitution and Regime Principles	15%

Research Paper and Paper Proposal

- Paper Proposal: due Friday, October 23, 2020 (Week 7), 600-700 words/2-3 pages
- Research Paper: due Friday, November 27, 2020 (Week 12), 2000 words/8 pages

The **Research Paper** is an argumentative essay that identifies an important issue with a Canadian political institution and how a specific reform *may or may not* mitigate the problem. The paper can argue *for or against* the reform option depending on how the benefits and risks for the targeted institution and/or other institutions stack up against each other. The institution can be any covered as one of the weekly topics for the course. Some examples include whether Canada should reform...

- the electoral system to switch from FPTP to another system?
- the Senate to adopt a triple-E Senate or more formal guidelines for the Independent Senate Advisory Board?
- the House of Commons to address issues of gender?
- the federal system to recognize treaty federalism?

The paper must include *6 relevant academic sources* beyond the textbook, feature a thesis statement that ties the entire paper together, and demonstrate a strong understanding of the chosen topic. The paper will be evaluated based on balance and the appreciation of the appropriate counterarguments, clear organization and coherence, and spelling and grammar. To help with organization, papers should answer these 3 questions:

- What is the main issue with the institution and what is the case for reform?
- What reform should Canada adopt for the targeted institution and why?
- What are the implications of the reform for the institution? How might the reform alter the logic of the institution and impact other Canadian political institutions?

The **Paper Proposal** outlines the plan for the upcoming Research Paper. It engages the five components of critical thinking (explanation, evidence, evaluation of context and assumptions, analytical argument/thesis, and developing a conclusion and possible implications) by addressing the following:

- Briefly explain the institution and issue identified
- Briefly evaluate possible sources for evidence and potential bias: propose 3 sources and explain why they are useful to the project, whether there is any bias, and if the source reflects a particular context that shapes its questions or findings.
- Propose a preliminary thesis or argument and how it might be supported, including a possible outline in bullet form
- Briefly consider the consequences of the thesis/argument (i.e. think of what it means for the institution being reformed or other Canadian political institutions).

Depending on how far you are with the essay, this is an excellent opportunity to submit a draft introduction for feedback. Keep in mind that a good introduction avoids general statements about the world and lays out the paper's main question or issue followed by a thesis that answers the problem. The thesis statement should feature the main justifications for the argument and may include some possible consequences of adopting the paper's position.

The Paper Proposal and Research Paper must use proper **citation** for all evidence and arguments from sources other than yourself. Doing so is important for a) giving credit where credit is due (recognizing intellectual property), b) justifying evidence, and c) avoiding [plagiarism](#). The preferred style and citation format is to use an in-text option such as MLA, Chicago Author-Date system, or the [Canadian Journal of Political Science](#) guide. Please see the course's cuLearn page for more information.

*** Remember, the course instructor and teaching assistants are here to help! Once you have identified your topic and done some preliminary research, you can post questions to the Paper discussion forum on cuLearn, email your TA, or attend online office hours with the instructor.

VIII Course Procedures and Policies

Online Meetings

- Online meetings are your opportunity to ask questions and discuss course material. When joining a meeting, please ensure that you mute yourself. Questions can be asked by unmuting and posing them through audio or the public chat. If you wish to use audio, use the hand emoji to flag the instructor and/or teaching assistant.
- Please be considerate of others' internet capabilities and avoid sharing the video feed unless necessary or working in small groups.
- Tutorials will frequently involve the use of breakout rooms. Please share the role of presenter in the breakout rooms so all students have a chance to lead the discussion.

Assignment Submission

- All assignments are due on cuLearn. Students are responsible for ensuring that the correct file has been uploaded. Assignments should be uploaded as Microsoft Word documents (not PDFs) to the appropriate online dropbox by midnight of the due date.
- Carleton offers MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, etc.) for free from ITS: <https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/get-microsoft-office-for-students/>.
- There is up to 3% bonus on the final course grade for completing all assignments detailed in the syllabus and any other worksheets/reflections questions assigned by the course instructor.

Late Penalties

- Late papers will lose 3% per day, inclusive of weekends and holidays. If there is a valid reason for submitting an assignment late, please contact your teaching assistant or the course instructor as soon as possible. Please see [Sections X](#) and [XI](#) below for accommodations.

Extensions

- Extensions will only be granted in cases of special circumstances (i.e. illness and bereavement) provided that the student has provided verifiable documentation.

Communication

- The preferred methods of communication are through email, discussion forums on cuLearn, and online office hours on Big Blue Button. All email communication must be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn, not personal emails.
- Students should use email for technical concerns and questions about course procedures. More substantive questions on course content are best dealt with in office hours or scheduling a separate meeting. General questions about course material and assignments can be submitted to the online discussion forums.

IX Course Schedule and Topics

Week	Topic	Description	Readings	Sessions	Assignments
1	Course Overview, The Crown, and the First Peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce course outline, learning objectives and core skills • Canada's regime principles • What is the Crown and why does it matter: The Crown and nation-to-nation relationship? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous-Crown relations • European Settlements 	<p><i>Week 1 readings are <u>all</u> on ARES!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Cochrane et al., Chapter 2: especially pp.19-25 • Cochrane et al. Chapter 4: especially pp. 67-76 • Borrows (1997) • Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malcolmson and Myers, Chapter 1: pp. 3-10 	Class + Tutorial	
2	The Crown and Responsible Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Crown and why does it matter: The Crown in Canadian society and government today? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why responsible Government? • Responsible Government vs. Separation of Powers • What are the advantages/disadvantages of recognizing the Queen of Canada as the country's head of state? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 19: pp. 507-517 • Malcolmson and Myers, Chapter 3 	Class + Tutorial	
3	The Executive: The Prime Minister and Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Cabinet and the Prime Minister • Development of cabinet government • Is the Prime Minister too powerful? Is cabinet government now prime ministerial government? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 19: pp. 517-537 • Lagassé (2016) 	Class + Tutorial	

4	The Crown and the Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the public service do? How is it structured? • The relationship between the political executive and public administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 20 • MacDonald (1980) • Biggs (2020) 	Class + Tutorial	Briefing Note due (Oct. 2, 2020)
5	Parliament I: Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do legislatures do? Introduction to the Canadian parliament • Why is Canada bicameral? The Senate and representation • What does the Senate do? • Recent changes in the Senate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 21: pp. 569-570; 596-606 • Independent Senate Advisory Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the Senate • Mandate • Criteria • Thomas (2018) • Marsland and Thomas (2019) 	Tutorial but NO live Class	Quiz 1 (Available on cuLearn from Oct.8-9, 2020)
6	Parliament II: House of Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legislative process • Representation in the House of Commons • Parliament and accountability: Parliament as the backbone of responsible government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority vs. minority parliaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 21: pp. 570-596 • Rae (2019) 	Class + Tutorial	Reflection Piece due (Oct. 16, 2020)
7	Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the electoral system works and its development • Seat distribution • Consequences of FPTP in Canada • The debate about electoral reform and what are the different options? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 12 	Class + Tutorial	Research Paper Proposal due (Oct. 23, 2020)
8	Reading Week				
9	Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why have political parties? Where do parties come from? • What do parties do? The role of political parties in Canadian government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane et al., Chapter 13 • Cochrane et al., Chapter 14: pp. 337-349 • Carty and Cross in Russell et 	Class + Tutorial	Research Paper Proposal returned to students by

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal and external organization of parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal party organization The Canadian party system 	al. (2016)		Nov. 6, 2020
10	The Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the Constitution and what are its main components? Why have a written constitution? Significant Constitutional developments What does the Constitution omit, and does it matter? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cochrane et al., Chapter 16 Cochrane et al., Chapter 4: pp. 76-83 	Tutorial but NO live Class	Quiz 2 (Available on cuLearn from Nov. 12-13, 2020)
11	Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is federalism? Federalism in the Constitution and the compound monarchy The evolution of Canadian federalism Treaty federalism? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cochrane et al., Chapter 17 Henderson (1994): 325-329 	Class + Tutorial	
12	The Judiciary and the <i>Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The judiciary and the courts: legal access, structure, and independence <i>The Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> Has the Charter politicized the judiciary or legalized democratic and parliamentary politics? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cochrane et al., Chapter 24 Cochrane et al., Chapter 18: especially pp. 453-458 and 471-478 	Class + Tutorial	Research Paper due (Nov. 27, 2020)
13	The Crown in Canada Today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What use is the Crown in Canada today? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Crown and Reconciliation Is Canadian government still responsible? Is there still a role for the Crown in ensuring responsibility? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagassé (2013) Review Cochrane et al., Chapter 4: especially pp. 67-76 	Class + Tutorial	

X Accommodations During COVID

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor's note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to complete the self-declaration form available here: https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf

XI Academic Accommodations

Pregnancy

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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious Obligation

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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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 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, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is 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

Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

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

XII 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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work 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/>

XIII 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).