Course Description

This is the first of two courses examining political institutions in Canada from a political-management perspective. This course focuses on Parliament and political parties; the sister course, POLM 5002, examines cabinet and the bureaucracy. Together, they aim to help students become strategic thinkers by providing a critical understanding of the complexities of the Canadian political process.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to explain and think critically about:
- the place of Parliament and political parties in the Canadian constitutional framework;
- the role of Parliament's key officers;
- the basics of the legislative process;
- the functioning of parliamentary committees;
- the purpose of and the rules governing members' statements and oral questions in the House of Commons;
- the functions of Canadian political parties, including policy development, fundraising, candidate nomination and election, and leadership selection; and
- the similarities and differences among Canada's main parties.

Evaluation

In-Class Contribution	25%
Member's Statement	15%
Test	30%
Group Presentation	25%
Peer Review	5%

To pass the course, you must receive a passing grade in each component above.

In-Class Contribution

Students are expected to treat the classroom as a professional work environment. For example:
- Attendance – You should show up on time for all classes except on the rare occasions when you are ill or there are other extenuating circumstances. As a benchmark, consider that political offices typically expect a higher rate of attendance than in the public service, where employees may take 6 per cent of their workdays as sick leave, the equivalent of less than 1 in 12 workdays (or, in our case, classes). If you absolutely must miss class, please inform me beforehand.
- Participation – You should participate actively in class discussions, addressing the substance of the issue at hand, engaging guest speakers with intelligent and relevant

questions, and demonstrating that you have read and reflected upon the required readings. Strive for a balanced contribution, neither dominating nor remaining silent. Your tone should foster an open and cooperative group environment.

- <u>Monotasking</u> – Your attention should be fully devoted to the class. Telephones should be turned off. Laptops should be closed. If you need a laptop to take notes, turn off your Wi-Fi connection so that you will not be tempted to read your e-mail, scroll through your Twitter feed, or engage on other social media platforms. Better yet, take notes with a pen and paper—research shows that students are much more likely to remember information that they have written down. You will be considered absent if you are engaging in social media, reading e-mail, or using an electronic device for anything other than taking notes.
- <u>Confidentiality</u> – Class operates according to the Chatham House Rule: "participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed."

Member's Statement

You will write a member's statement and will deliver it orally in class, as though you are a member of Parliament speaking in the House of Commons. The statement should be timely and well-written and should show an understanding of the purpose of member's statements and the rules governing them. Your party and riding will be assigned to you.

The statement should be formatted to make it easy for an MP to read aloud (e.g., in an easy-to-read 16-point typeface with 1.5 line spacing). Please submit a hard copy at the beginning of class or send an electronic version in advance.

Test

A test will be held in class. You may bring paper notes but no electronic devices to the exam room. The test will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

Group Presentation

Students will be divided into groups to assess one aspect of Canada's parliamentary system and explore potential reforms to it. Presentations will take place in the final two classes.

You need not accompany your presentation with PowerPoint slides, but if you decide to use them, you should follow the course guidelines on the best practices for PowerPoint (posted on Brightspace).

The purpose of the assignment is to encourage students to think critically about both the institutions and common proposals for reform. The presentation should:

- show an understanding of why the institution exists in its current form (e.g., *why* is there strict party discipline in Westminster systems?);

- explain clearly how the reform will be accomplished (e.g., it is easy to say that there should be more free votes in the Commons; you would need to explain how you would ensure that MPs will actually be free to break ranks); and
- evaluate all the consequences of the proposed reform, if the students are proposing changes to the status quo (e.g., what will happen to the government if free voting leads to deadlock between the executive and the legislature?).

Peer Review

Within one week of your group presentation, you will complete a confidential peer review, assessing the contribution of each of your fellow group members to your presentation. Instructions will be provided by email.

Academic Integrity

In all written work, you must use quotation marks when you are reproducing someone else's words and must provide credit if you are quoting or paraphrasing someone else's work. (In this context, *someone else* includes artificial intelligence.) You should give credit in a way that is appropriate for the assignment. In a member's statement, credit must be given in the text. As required by university regulations, work suspected of plagiarism will be forwarded to the dean.