

SUMMARY COURSE OUTLINE
POLM 5002
THE CORE EXECUTIVE IN CANADA
FALL SEMESTER, 2024

Course Description

POLM 5002 (0.5 credit): The Core Executive in Canada: An examination of how public policy originates, and how its development is managed within the executive branch, with particular emphasis on the Cabinet process and the relationship between political actors and the public service.

Required Books and Other Readings:

- Ian Brodie, *At the Centre of Government: The Prime Minister and the Limits on Political Power*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. (Available electronically through MacOdrum Library)
- Eddie Goldenberg, *The Way It Works: Inside Ottawa*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2006.
- Donald Savoie. *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*. University of Toronto Press, 1999. (Available electronically through MacOdrum Library)

Other readings will be assigned and will be available online or made available through the Library or Brightspace.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

An introduction to the course, including review of the course outline and expectations.

Week 2: Cabinet and "The Centre"

A theoretical perspective on the Cabinet, the Prime Minister and the locus of power in the Canadian federal system.

Week 3: Privy Council Office

The role of PCO and its senior personnel, and principles for the relationship between the public service and the political side of government.

Week 4: The Prime Minister and PMO

The role and prerogatives of the Prime Minister, including cabinet formation and the political roots of government policy direction (platform, mandate letters, Speech from the Throne), and the role and structure of the Prime Minister's Office.

Week 5: Ministers and the Cabinet Process

The federal Cabinet and its subcommittees, including composition, powers, process and paperwork, and its relationship to the House of Commons.

Week 6: Finance and Budget Process

The federal budget process and the fiscal framework, including the role of the Minister of Finance, the Department of Finance, and other participants including the Prime Minister, other Ministers, PCO, Treasury Board Secretariat, and outside stakeholders.

Week 7: Treasury Board and Expenditure Management

The role and process of the Treasury Board cabinet committee (Part A) and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Week 8: Caretakers and Transition

Examination of the principles and evolution of the Caretaker Convention which governs ministers, ministerial staff and public servants during an election campaign, and consideration of the process of transition after a general election.

Week 9: Minister of Justice, Attorney General and Department of Justice

The role of the Minister of Justice/Attorney General as a cabinet minister and chief legal advisor to the government, as supported by the federal Department of Justice.

Week 10: Treasury Board and the Regulatory Process

Examination of Treasury Board in its role as cabinet committee responsible for most orders in council and regulations (Part B).

Week 11: Cabinet Simulation

Presentation of student "memoranda to cabinet" to the class as part of a simulated cabinet meeting.

Week 12: Cabinet Simulation 2

Further presentation of student "memoranda to cabinet" to the class as part of a simulated cabinet meeting.

Week 13: Cabinet Simulation 3

Further presentation of student "memoranda to cabinet" to the class as part of a simulated cabinet meeting.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

Assignment	Date Due	% final grade
Class Participation:	Cumulative	15%
Ministerial Staff and Lobbyists Memo	Week 4	5%
Fiscal Monitor Memo	Week 6	5%
First In Class Quiz	Week 8	10%
Second In Class Quiz	Week 10	10%
Memorandum to Cabinet	Weeks 11, 12, 13	35%
Deck and talking points	Weeks 11, 12, 13	10%
Oral presentation	Weeks 11, 12, 13	10%