Carleton University

Political Management

POLM 4012/5012 Advocacy and Government Relations in Canada
COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2026

<u>**Brief Description**</u>

From the Calendar: Through applied exercises, case studies and a project with an external organization, students will build knowledge and skills required for advocacy and government relations in the private and voluntary sectors.

This course takes a practical but critical approach to understanding the practice of government relations in Canada. Students will work throughout the term in small teams to gradually build an analytical case study of an organization that works to influence Canadian public policy. The course works through advocacy activities as a stepwise if long-term endeavour to determine a policy goal, identify target audiences and employ various tactics to influence policy decisions and implementation. There will be particular attention to the differences facing charitable organizations.

<u>**Learning Objectives**</u>

- To gain an understanding of the practice of policy advocacy as a broad area of professional activity across the private and non-profit sectors.
- To gain a set of key concepts that can be used to think critically about the impact of advocates on policy.
- To understand the governance of lobbying and participation in public policy dialogue by charities in Canada.

<u>**Instructor's Note:**</u>

This course is going to demand a lot of collaboration. You'll be working as a member of a team on a shared project for the duration of the term. There will be several milestones, of varying degrees of difficulty, to meet. You are expected to be a full and active contributor to the work required. Your contribution will be evaluated throughout the term and will form part of your final grade.

<u>**Texts**</u>

This course has no required textbooks. All required readings and resources are available through the Carleton University library or online. In addition to the assigned weekly readings/resources, students may benefit by subscribing to one or more of the following resources:

- *The Functionary newsletter:* https://policyoptions.irpp.org/functionary-newsletter/
- *Politico Canada Playbook:* https://www.politico.com/newsletters/canada-playbook
- *The Hill Times: https://ocul-crl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_CRL/hgdufh/alma991022627932005153*

Evaluation

Group draft assignments are complete 1% per draft assignment x 5 plus meeting with instructor (5%)	Individual performance on a quiz 1 or 2 opportunities	Assessment of individual contributions to the group assignments (2 x 7.5%)	Group interview with key informant (7.5% for questions 1 week in advance + 7.5% for conduct)	Group presentation	Group final case study due
Weeks 4-8	Week 3 OR 8`	Weeks 6 and 12	Weeks 7-9*	Weeks 11 or 12	April 23
10%	10%	15%	15%	15%	35%

*Depends on key informant availability

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

A detailed discussion of each written assignment follows.

Draft case study elements and meeting with instructor
In each of weeks 4 through 8 your group will be expected to upload a draft of part of your case study report for your designated organization. These will be evaluated as "complete" or "incomplete". and you should come to the weekly class meeting ready to discuss the draft work. Detailed instructions and key questions to prompt your thinking are posted on Brightspace for each weekly assignment. It is your responsibility, as a peer group, to distribute the work for these assignments equally amongst group members. You are expected to work collectively on each draft piece. The Brightspace site can be configured to support your collaboration, including online chat and asynchronous work on shared documents. If you prefer to use Google Hang Out or Zoom, you are welcome to do so but the instructor cannot provide you with support for those platforms. Submit only 1 (one) copy per group. Include the names of all contributing group members on the first page. You will also be scheduled to meet, as a group, with the instructor during Office Hours (in one of weeks 5 through 10). This will be an opportunity to discuss your groups' performance, identify key challenges and plan ahead for the next tasks. These elements are graded as complete/incomplete.

Individual quiz
In either Week 3 or Week 8, you will write a brief (10 item) multiple choice quiz. The quiz in week 3 will cover material in assigned readings from week 2. The quiz in week 8 will cover the material in assigned readings from week 8. Students may write both quizzes and receive the higher of the two grades received. Students writing a quiz will have 30 minutes of class time.

Assessment of individual contributions to the group assignments
In each of Weeks 6 and 12, you will be required to complete an online (in Brightspace) assessment of your own performance in the group tasks, as well as that of your group peers. If you do not complete the online survey you will receive a grade of 0 on this task. All evaluations will be on a 7 point scale. Your final grade will be the average of the evaluations for your performance (2 from you, plus 1 from each group member), plus .5% for completing the task.

Group interview with case study key informant
Working as a team, you will lead a conversation with one or more key informants from the organization on which you are building a case study. The conversation is an important opportunity for you to check your understanding of how the organization works to influence public policy in Canada. You are required to invest time in determining your key questions in advance, to have these reviewed by the instructor at least one week before the interview, and to distribute these to the key informant by noon on the Monday before your scheduled interview. If you are not part of the group leading the discussion, you are still expected to attend as an observer so you can enhance your own learning about how the practice of policy advocacy is done in Canada. Note: the date and time for these discussions with guests will be scheduled by the instructor with an aim to stick to the weekly meeting time, subject to the availability of the invited speaker.

Group presentations
Working as a team, you will prepare a 30 minute presentation providing your analysis of the case study you have gradually been preparing over the term. You can but are not required to use slides. All group members are expected to participate actively in the preparation and delivery of the presentation. Your presentation will be followed by a 20 minute semi-structured Q&A session. If your group is not presenting that week, you'll be tasked with asking constructive questions to test the assumptions, analysis and conclusions of the presenting group. Following a presentation, you'll have 10 minutes to caucus as a group to decide on three questions that promote learning.

Final assignment
Working as a small team, you will prepare and upload a final report on your case study. Your report should be approximately 7,000 words long. More than describing you are also asked to provide your analysis and evaluation of what you observe in the organization's actions or plans. Your final report must include the following sections that will improve on the drafts you submitted in weeks 3 through 8:
- Diagnosis of the policy challenge and relevant factors (social, economic, political, environmental, ethical).
- Summary of the organization's position.
    - Evaluation of the policy-readiness and political-readiness of their position. Include recommendations.
- Decision-maker map and critical analysis of key considerations/constraints/incentives. Include recommendations.
- Stakeholder map and critical analysis of key considerations/constraints/incentives. Include recommendations.
- Critical evaluation of the organization's registered lobbying and comparison to the expected decision-maker targets. Include recommendations.
- Critical evaluation of the organizations' efforts to communicate policy views outside of lobbying. Include recommendations.
- Critical analysis of decision-maker responses.

- Evaluation of the contribution of the organization to public positions of officials and/or government policy. -OR- Critical analysis of the organizational readiness / capacity to influence public policy. Include recommendations where appropriate.

Additional supporting material can be included in an Annex

Citations are required on all written work. Please use footnotes with complete APA-style (or equivalent recognized citation style) for footnote entries. Submit only 1 (one) copy per group. Include the names of all contributing group members on the first page.

A note on citations in all written assignments: It is good professional practice to have the habit of keeping full and accurate citations of facts as well as direct or indirect quotes. You should expect that colleagues and competitors will ask you "how do you know that?". With a source citation, you're ready to answer that question. In an academic environment, citations are essential. I encourage you to use either in-text (author, date) or footnote citation styles. I personally prefer APA citation style but will gladly accept Chicago or MLA as well. The key is that the author, date, title of publication and all other standard information should be readily available in the citation. For direct quotes, this also includes references to page numbers.

A note on the use of generative AI tools: Current generations of LLM AI and related generative tools can be useful and time-saving instruments to support learning and analysis. However, students are expected to produce their own written work. Written work that contains content produced by AI will be considered as a violation of academic integrity standards. Furthermore, generative AI tools make mistakes. Even when you use them for tasks that support your own original work, you should be exercising caution in relying on the output without verifying it.

In this course, you may use AI tools for background research or to copy-edit your own work. In all cases, uses of AI must be documented using the AI disclosure form available on the Brightspace page. That form should be uploaded with each written assignment when AI was used.

Readings:

There is no textbook or reading pack that you will need to purchase for this course. All readings will be posted on the Brightspace site in a manner consistent with Fair Dealing. Students are expected to be ready to comment on any of the readings, whether as a willing or reluctant volunteer. It is never wrong to use class time to say there was content in the reading you didn't understand. You'll be doing your peers (and me as the instructor) a favour if you do.

Schedule:

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change with notice. Please check the Brightspace site regularly for updates. Any information posted by the instructor is deemed to have been distributed to all students after 24 hours.

Week	Topic	Readings
1	Introduction to the course Learning goals Discussion of approaches to GR/advocacy	OECD (2021)

2	How do hearts and minds change? (people)	Albarracin & Shavitt (2017) Yzer (2012) Alkış & Temizel (2015) Guest talk: Ken Boessenkool and Tyler Meredith 2:30-4.
3	How does change happen? (networks, access and mobilization)	Centola (2022) WEF (2022) Han (n.d) Boucher & Cooper (2019) **Individual Quiz 1 (in class)**
4	Knowing and defining the policy issue - How does the policy factory work? - Avoiding traps - Crafting an "ask"	Mulholland (2011) Toomey (2023) Porter Magee (2020) Cairney (2018) Guest Talk: Don Guy 2:45-3:45 **Draft group assignment 1 due: The "ask"**
5	Targeting: Mapping your environment - Decision-makers - Champions - Stakeholders - Opponents	Lagarde et al (2020) Stachowiak et al (2016) Work Group for Community Health and Development (2022) Guest Talk: **Draft group assignment 2 due: The target map** **Group meetings with instructor during office hours (to be scheduled)**

6	Timing - Cyclical events: budgets, campaigns, reviews - Windows of opportunity	Barkhorn et al (2013) Dobson-Hughes (2015) Dobson-Hughes (2016) Suggested: Tellier (2019) **Draft group assignment 3 due: The timeline** **Self and peer evaluations of group contribution, 1 of 2.**

		Group meetings with instructor during office hours (to be scheduled)
	READING WEEK	Anything that refills/renews you
7	Tactics: - Direct action - Encouragement / education - Litigation - Parliamentary routes Key informant interviews begin.	Vining et al (2005) Coffman & Beer (2015) Work Group for Community Health and Development (2022) **Draft group assignment 4 due: Strategic approach and tactics** **Group meetings with instructor during office hours (to be scheduled)**
8	Lobbying - Rules - Best practices - Evidence for impact - Thinking critically about governance	Gold (2020) Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario (2016) Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada (2021 & 2022) Shore & Sabourin (2025) Grinberg et al (2025) O'Malley (2018) **Draft group assignment 5 due: Registrable lobbying** **Individual Quiz 2 (in class)**
9	Key informant interviews conclude	No assigned readings
10	Organizational issues - Charitable organizations and limits - Working in coalitions - Crisis management - Social media - Ethics	Canada Revenue Agency (2019) Schofield (2025) Romer (2022) Maëkelä (2023) Gratton (2016)
11	Group presentations	**½ of groups present**
12	Group presentations	**Final groups present** **Self and peer evaluations of group contribution, 2 of 2.**