

PSCI 100: Canadian Politics and Public Policy in Comparative Perspective

Spring 2015

AL 208, Wednesdays 11:30 am - 2:30 pm

Instructors: Ajay Sharma (Section 1) and Brent Needham (Section 2)

Email Address: a69sharm@uwaterloo.ca and bneedhamuhb@hotmail.com

Office Location and Hours: Ajay Sharma - Hagey Hall 351, Wednesday, 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Brent Needham – TBA

Contact Policy: **Email is the most efficient way to contact the instructors outside of scheduled office hours. Please note the following when emailing:**

- *Please use your official University of Waterloo email. The Instructor may not reply to emails send from a non-UW account.*
- **Please allow 24-48 hours for a response to your email.**
- **The Instructor may not respond to emails after 5pm on weekdays or on weekends**

Course Breakdown:

- This course is composed of two sections.
- **Section 1** is taught by Ajay Sharma. **It is worth 65% of your final grade.**
 - It starts on Wednesday, May 6, 2015.
 - It ends on Wednesday, June 24, 2015.
- **Section 2** is taught by Brent Needham. **It is worth 35% of your final grade.**
 - It starts on Wednesday, July 8, 2015.
 - It ends on Tuesday, July 28, 2015.

In Section 1 of the course, students are introduced to the comparative study of ideas, institutions, and interests central to politics and key policy issues in Canada and elsewhere. It focuses on how the formal institutions of the state and elements of the Canadian polity, like party competition, interest groups and regionalism, have shaped political behaviour, public policy, the work of government and the state of democracy in Canada and elsewhere.

In Section 2 of the course, students will examine how these various features of the Canadian system influence our politics and consider contemporary debates about the relative health of particular institutions, processes and public policies as well as various proposals for reform. The topic and reading schedule for Section 2 will be released by Brent Needham.

Pre-Requisites: None.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should:

- Have a broad understanding of the institutions, interests, and ideas central to politics in Canada and elsewhere.
- Be able to identify and distinguish between political systems generally – for example, parliamentary vs. presidential, federal vs. unitary, etc.
- Be able to evaluate major policy areas – for example, social policy, immigration policy, and environmental policy, etc.
- Be more skilled in researching scholarly information and identifying broad themes and questions in academic books and journals.
- Develop the necessary skills to critically analyse academic literature and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [Student Discipline](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [Student Petitions](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70) <http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>. In addition, consult

[Student Grievances http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/student-grievances-faculty-arts-processes) for the Faculty of Arts' grievance processes.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [Student Appeals http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72](http://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72).

Academic Integrity website (Arts): [Academic Integrity http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo): [Academic Integrity Office http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Services (AS) Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Academic/Personal Counselling:

Life at university can sometimes have unexpected challenges. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, anxious, stressed, or have other personal or academic issues that are affecting how you are managing your workload, please see counselling services offered at U Waterloo. You do not need to divulge personal information to me, you can simply talk to a counselor and he or she can advise your professors whether or not you require accommodation vis-à-vis extensions, etc.. Visit the following website for more information:

[Counselling Services https://uwaterloo.ca/student-success/academic-and-life-wellness-services](https://uwaterloo.ca/student-success/academic-and-life-wellness-services)

Texts:

PSCI 100 Custom Courseware (packaged with *The Nelson Guide to Research and Writing in Political Science*) **(Required)**

The text is available for purchase at the University of Waterloo bookstore.

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Standards:

Assignments, Tests, and Examinations:

Section 1:

1. Reflective Writing Assignment (20%): Wednesday, May 27, 2015

Your reflection, which should be a maximum of 5 double-spaced pages, shall articulate what you think of a particular topic in Canadian politics. How you compose this assignment can be varied. You are free to focus on a set of readings, or concepts raised in class. Alternatively, you can provide a thoughtful analysis on events that are currently impacting Canada's political system. Additional details shall be posted to Learn by the end of the first week of class.

Late assignments will be penalized 15 percentage points if they are not received by the deadline. Assignments will be assigned a mark of zero if they are not submitted at the start of class on **Wednesday June 3, 2015**. Technical problems, such as hard drive crashes, are not grounds for an extension - please ensure that you routinely 'back-up' your work.

2. Annotated Bibliography (20%): Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Students will put together an annotated bibliography on a specific subject matter. The purpose of this assignment is to increase your ability to find good information on a subject, assess several themes and arguments on the selected topic, and write a short excerpt detailing the merits of the scholarly source. Additional details shall be posted to Learn by the end of the second week of class.

Late assignments will be penalized 15 percentage points if they are not received by the deadline. Assignments will be assigned a mark of zero if they are not submitted at the start of class on **Wednesday, June 24, 2015**. Technical problems, such as hard drive crashes, are not grounds for an extension - please ensure that you routinely 'back-up' your work.

3. Midterm Exam (25%): Wednesday, June 24, 2015

The Midterm exam will cover material from the lectures and assigned readings. You will be tested on material up to and including **Wednesday, June 17, 2015**. The format will be short answer.

Section 2

4. Additional Assignment (15%): TBA

The format/content TBA

5. Exam (20%): Tuesday, July 28, 2015

The format/content TBA.

Other Course Policies:

Course Website

The course outline, detailed assignments, class announcements, grades, etc. will be available on the course website on LEARN. Users can login to LEARN via: [Learn http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/](http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/). Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

Lecture Attendance and Participation

The professors will not be taking attendance at lecture but attending lectures is crucial if you are hoping to do well in the course. If you are sick or must be away from class, find a friend from whom you can borrow notes. While lecture slides MAY be posted on the class website, there is no obligation on the professor to do so, nor will he be supplying any of his lecture notes to the class.

Extension Policy

Extensions will be granted only on **humanitarian grounds or on medical grounds (for which written proof of substantial distress must be provided in accordance with university policy)**.

Technical problems, such as hard drive crashes, are not grounds for an extension - please ensure that you routinely 'back-up' your work.

Grade Appeals

To request a review of your assignment you must provide a one page explanation as to why you believe your assignment was improperly graded (i.e. what do you think you did that should have been given more weight?). The explanation, the original assignment, and a clean copy of the assignment should be submitted to your instructor.

SECTION 1: Schedule of Weekly Lecture Topics and Required Readings

May 6

Introduction

- Course overview and expectations.
- The study of politics.
- Competing approaches to political analysis.

The Political Culture of Canada

- What is political culture and how do we identify it?
- What is the importance of political culture?
- How does political culture vary?

Required Reading

- Courseware, Ch1.

May 13

Understanding Political Systems

- Classifying Political Systems and Liberal Democracies.
- Parliamentary and Presidential Systems.
- Unitary and Federal Systems.
- Contrasting American and Canadian federalism.
- Political Economy of Canada: What does this mean?
- Regional identities: Western, Central and Eastern Canada.

Required Reading

- Courseware, Ch2 and Ch3.

May 20

Institutions of Canadian Federalism

- The principles of the Canadian Constitution.
- Constitution Act, 1982.
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms [CCRF].
- The Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords.
- Evolution of provincial power.
- The "Charter Era" and the protection of rights.

Required Reading

- Courseware, Ch4 and Ch5.

May 27

Law and Politics

- The role of the Judiciary.
- The intersection between politics and the law.
- The Supreme Court of Canada: Umpires of Canadian federalism?

- Rights vs. Jurisdiction: The 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Required Reading

- Courseware, Ch6.

June 3

The Canadian Electoral System

- Elections as a fundamental component of democracy.
- Understanding the electoral process.
- Evaluating the “First Past the Post” system.
- The “Political Party”.
- Ideological and Class-based parties.

Required Reading

- Courseware, Ch7A and Ch7B.

June 10.

The Evolution of Canada as a Multinational/Multicultural Nation

- The French-English compact.
- The Quiet Revolution.
- Aboriginal Self-Government and a history of colonialism.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
- Ethnic diversity and the evolution of Canadian demographics.
- Regionalism and Western Alienation.

Required Reading

- TBA

June 17

Gender, Class, Religion and Political Culture

- Evolution of gender rights in Canada.
- The evolution of class cleavages.
- The emergence of the “Social Safety Net”.
- The intersection of politics and religion

Required Reading

- TBA

June 24

Public Policy and Administration in Canada

- The Policy Cycle.
- Public Administration in Canada.
- Policy Networks and Communities.
- Advocacy Groups.

Required Reading

- Courseware, Ch8 and Ch9, Ch10 and Ch11.

June 24

Midterm Exam

Section 1 Concludes

July 1

NO LECTURE - Canada Day Holiday

*** Section 2 Begins***

SECTION 2: Schedule of Weekly Lecture Topics and Required Readings

*** Topics and Assigned Readings will be posted to LEARN***

July 8

Topic TBA

Required Reading

- TBA

July 15

Topic TBA

Required Reading

- TBA

July 22

Topic TBA

Required Reading

- TBA

July 28

EXAM