

# PSCI 231: GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

Spring, 2015

B1 271, Mondays 12:30pm-2:20pm

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**Instructor:** Heather Whiteside

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**Office Location:** Hagey Hall 318

**Office Hours:** Mondays 2:45pm-4pm or by appointment

## **Teaching Assistants:**

Brigitte Belanger

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**Course Description:** This course takes a critical political economy approach to understanding the relationship between government and business within the capitalist system, and the Canadian context in particular. It introduces students to the theory and practice of political economy; the politics of business and work (including alternatives to private enterprise); governance of the national and global economy; and the key eras, issues, and policies that have come to define the Canadian political economy since the postwar era. The latter also involves analyzing recent political economy developments that (re)shape the political and social context of business, namely the 2008 global financial crisis and its aftermath of recession and austerity.

**Pre-Requisites:** Level at least 2A.

## **Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to critically analyze and engage with course texts and related academic literature (to be demonstrated through written and oral assignments); and will be able to evaluate core introductory level political economy concepts relating to the following themes:

- Market exchange, production, and the corporation.
- Wage work, unions, and the workplace.

- Alternatives to private enterprise such as co-ops and the social economy, the public sector and state owned enterprises.
- Basic concepts in macroeconomics and its politics (relating to national economies, growth, crises).
- Globalization, multinational corporations, and international trade.
- Eras in Canadian political economy since World War II (Keynesianism, neoliberalism).
- Controversial Canadian economic policies (such as free trade, privatization, liberalization, deregulation, resource extraction, austerity).

## University Regulations:

### 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>.

**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/>

### **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.

### **Texts:**

Paul Phillips. 2003. *Inside Capitalism: An Introduction to Political Economy*. Fernwood: Winnipeg.

Stephen McBride and Heather Whiteside. 2011. *Private Affluence, Public Austerity: Economic Crisis and Democratic Malaise in Canada*. Fernwood: Halifax.

Texts are available for purchase at the University of Waterloo bookstore.

### **Course Requirements, Expectations, and Standards:**

#### **Assignments:**

##### **Research Essay (35%):**

- ❖ Research essay centred on the relationship between business and government, the economy and politics
- ❖ 2,500 words

- ❖ A minimum of 7 sources required, 5 of which must be academic in nature (scholarly books, journal articles, chapters in edited books). The others may be from popular press sources (newspaper articles, magazines such as *The Economist*). Instruction on how to use library resources will be provided during week 1
- ❖ Students must choose from the following topics (an alternative topic may be selected upon approval by the instructor):
  - How private enterprises shape and are shaped by government/public policy
  - The theory, purpose, and practice of co-operatives and/or state owned enterprises
  - The extent to which the state is able to manage its national economy
  - The social and/or economic implications of at least two of the following: the privatization of state owned enterprises, market liberalization, and/or deregulation of private enterprise
  - How workers might augment their power vis-à-vis multinational corporations
  - The impact of globalization on business and/or government

***Participation (20%):***

- ❖ Conduct and expectations set out in the beginning of the course (e.g., attendance and showing up late, mindful level of participation)
- ❖ Tutorial discussions, attendance

**Tests & Examinations:**

***Midterm exam (20%):***

- ❖ Held in-class
- ❖ Closed book
- ❖ Short answer questions
- ❖ Unit 1 readings and lecture
- ❖ Choice will be given (e.g., answer 3 of 5)

***Final Examination (25%):***

- ❖ Held during exam period
- ❖ Closed book
- ❖ Long answer, essay-style questions
- ❖ Cumulative with an emphasis on units 2 and 3

- ❖ Choice will be given (e.g., answer 3 of 5)

**Please note: Student travel plans are not an acceptable reason for granting an alternative examination time.**

### **Late Policy:**

Research essay: if handed in after the due date, a late penalty of 10% per day, including weekends, will be applied (except in the case of a documented medical emergency). The essay is due in class at the start of the final lecture (July 27, 12:30pm). The late penalty will begin after this deadline.

### **Policy About Collaborative Work:**

The research essay must be sole authored. In the event that any in-class group work is required, participation will be evaluated on an individual basis.

### **Schedule:**

#### **Week 1**

##### ***Course Introduction***

Course overview (readings, assignments, expectations, conduct), how to conduct library research

Reading 1: Buckley, J. 2010. *Fit To Print: the Canadian student's guide to essay writing*. Toronto: Nelson. (Recommended reading throughout the course.)

Reading 2: Muller, J. 2010. *Writing in the Social Sciences*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada. (Recommended reading throughout the course.)

## **UNIT 1) POLITICAL ECONOMY: THE POLITICS OF BUSINESS AND WORK**

#### **Week 2**

##### ***What is political economy?***

Basic concepts of political economy theory and issues in Canadian political economy

Reading 1: Phillips. *Inside Capitalism*. Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-34).

### **Week 3**

**Monday May 18, 2015: Victoria Day, lecture cancelled this week.**

### **Week 4**

#### ***Exchange, production, corporations***

Sectors, prices, the organization of production, private enterprise (history, behaviour)

Reading 1: Phillips. *Inside Capitalism*. Chapter 2 and 3 (pp. 35-68).

### **Week 5**

#### ***Work, workers, and workplaces***

Labour, labour markets, unions

Reading 1: Phillips. *Inside Capitalism*. Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 85-116).

### **Week 6**

#### ***Alternatives to private enterprise***

Co-ops and the social economy, the public sector and state owned enterprises

Reading 1: JJ McMurtry. 2010. "Introducing the Social Economy." In JJ McMurtry, ed. *Living Economics: Canadian perspectives on the social economy co-operatives, and community economic development*. Toronto: Edmond Montgomery.

### **Week 7**

#### **MIDTERM EXAM**

In-class mid-term exam (20%)

## **UNIT 2) THE MACRO AND GLOBAL ECONOMY AND ITS POLITICS**

### **Week 8**

#### ***Macroeconomics***

National economies, growth, crises

Reading 1: Phillips. *Inside Capitalism*. Chapters 8 and 9 (pp. 129-168). (Required reading.)

Reading 2: McBride and Whiteside. *Private Affluence, Public Austerity*. Chapter 2 (pp. 18-34). (Recommended reading.)

## **Week 9**

### ***Globalization***

Trade, multinational corporations, commodity chains, globalization and the state

Reading 1: Phillips. *Inside Capitalism*. Chapter 10 (pp. 169-192).

## **UNIT 3) CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY**

## **Week 10**

### ***Eras and issues in Canadian politics and economics***

Keynesianism, neoliberalism

Reading 1: McBride and Whiteside. *Private Affluence, Public Austerity*. Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 35-79).

## **Week 11**

### ***Controversial Canadian economic policies***

Free trade, privatization, liberalization, deregulation, resource extraction

Reading 1: McBride and Whiteside. *Private Affluence, Public Austerity*. Chapters 4 (pp. 52-79) and 6 (pp. 92-111).

## **Week 12**

### ***The 2008 global financial crisis, recession, and aftermath in Canada***

From stimulus to austerity

Reading 1: McBride and Whiteside. *Private Affluence, Public Austerity*. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-19) and Chapter 5 (pp. 80-91). (Required reading.)

Reading 2: McBride and Whiteside. *Private Affluence, Public Austerity*. Conclusions (pp. 112-123). (Recommended reading.)