

PSCI 260: Canadian Government and Politics

Winter, 2014

MC 2066, Mondays 10:30am-12:20pm

Instructor: Dr. Anna Esselment

Email Address: alesselm@uwaterloo.ca

Office Location: Hagey Hall 304

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00-4:00pm or by appointment

Contact Policy: Email is likely the best way to get in touch with the professor or your TA outside of usually scheduled office hours. A few things to remember when emailing:

- **Please use your official UW email account.** To ensure your privacy, your professor/TA will not reply to emails sent from a non-UW account (such as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, Sympatico, etc.).
- Please address your email to the professor or TA appropriately (i.e. 'Dr. Esselment', 'Professor', Brandon, Alex, Chris, Quinton, etc.).
- Please remember to sign your email with a first and last name.
- Please allow 24-48 hours for a response to your email.
- Please note that your professor and TA generally do not answer emails after 4:00pm on weekdays or on weekends (4:00pm Friday to 9:00am Monday).
- **Email should be used for brief questions that can be answered quickly.** If you want to discuss course material, assignments, or another matter in greater detail, please see the professor or TA during his or her office hours or make an appointment to meet at some other time convenient for both.

Course Description: This course is designed to familiarize you with key concepts, institutions, political processes, issues, and cleavages inherent in the study of Canadian politics. Canada is known as a thriving liberal democracy, and yet we often hear criticisms that our politics and political institutions suffer from a "democratic deficit". Through our examination of Canadian government and politics, we aim to understand where areas of our democratic structure could use improvement or, perhaps, simply a better understanding of their functions by Canadians themselves.

Pre-Requisites: PSCI 100, PSCI 150, PSCI 101, or PSCI 110.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should:

- Have a basic understanding of the main institutions and key concepts tied to the study of Canadian politics;
- Be able to identify areas where a “democratic deficit” may exist;
- Be able to critically assess the structures and processes of politics in Canada;
- Have enhanced reading, writing, and critical thinking skills;
- Be able to better evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments based on their logic and supporting evidence.

Teaching Assistants:

We have four great TAs for our course. They are here to lead the discussion groups and help facilitate more intimate and in depth conversations about course content, provide assistance to you when you have questions about your assignments or tests, and to mark your work. If you have a question about the course, your first email should be to your TA. If the TA cannot answer your question, feel free to send an email to me. The TAs will hold regular office hours and are available to all the students in the class – you are not restricted to only talking with your own TA. TA contact information, including their office hours, are posted on our LEARN website.

University Regulations:

Cross-listed courses:

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. Please be sure to review the information and take the tutorial on Academic Integrity and what it means from the U Waterloo Academic Integrity website at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/index.html>

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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>.

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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>.

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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>.

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

[Academic Integrity Office \(uWaterloo\): http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

Turnitin.com: Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course. If you do not wish to have your assignments submitted to Turnitin, an alternative arrangement between you and the professor can be worked out where your work can still be rigorously assessed to ensure its academic integrity.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), 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 OPD 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: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-success/academic-and-life-wellness-services>.

Texts:

Dyck, R. (2012). *Canadian politics: Concise* (5th ed). US: Nelson Education Ltd. *(Required)*

Charlton, M. and Barker, P. (2013). *Crosscurrents: Contemporary political issues* (7th ed.). US: Nelson Education Ltd. *(Required)*

Texts are available for purchase at the University of Waterloo bookstore and are sold as a package.

Texts are also on 3-hour reserve at the Dana Porter Library.

Course Requirements, Expectations, and Standards:

Assignments, Tests, and Examinations:

1. Tutorials 15%

There will be discussion groups led by the Teaching Assistants to foster a more in-depth examination of the issues that we will study in class. Discussion groups will meet eight times over the course of the term and students are expected to have read the assigned readings for each tutorial and be prepared to offer meaningful contributions to the discussion. The tutorial grade is based on both attendance and participation.

2. Midterm Test 20% February 10th, 2014:

The midterm test will be administered in class and will cover all lecture and text material to this point.

3. Research Paper 30% DUE March 17, 2014 :

Everyone will write a 9-11 page research paper on an aspect of Canadian politics. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your ability to write a research essay with a clear and concise argument, and to show an understanding of the subject of enquiry. To write a successful paper you must take a position, construct an argument and marshal evidence to support your position. Students also must consider the arguments against their own position and, where possible, rebut those counter arguments. Your objective is to present and defend an argument in a clear, logical, and organized manner. *A detailed description of the assignment will be posted on our LEARN website, including a selection of topics on which you can choose to write.*

4. Final Exam 35% (scheduled during normal final exam period)

A final exam will take place during the regularly scheduled exam period. The content of the entire course will be reflected in the exam which may include a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. You will have 2.5 hours to complete the exam.

Other Course Policies:

Course Website

The course outline, detailed assignments, class announcements, grades, etc. will be available on the course website on LEARN . If you have questions about when assignments are due, late policies, sickness accommodation, etc., your first source of information is the course outline. Users can login to LEARN via: [Learn http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/](http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/). Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

Class Attendance and Participation

The professor 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 she be supplying any of her lecture notes to the class.

Late Penalties

All late assignments (that is, assignments submitted after 4:00pm on their due date) will be penalized 3% a day (including weekends). A waiver of this penalty will only be considered in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance (this does NOT include a note from your mother). See "Extension Policy" below. Late assignments can be placed in the professor's drop box in the Department of Political Science. This is cleared out daily.

Final Submission Date for Assignments

The final submission date for assignments is one week (7 days) after their due date (with the imposition of late penalties). The instructor WILL NOT accept the assignment for grading after one week has passed without a documented extenuating circumstance. If an extenuating circumstance may prevent you from submitting an assignment by its submission date, please contact the professor at the earliest possible convenience and be prepared to provide her with official documentation concerning your situation.

Extension Policy for Assignments

All requests for assignment extensions must be directed to your instructor. Your TA does not have the authority to grant extensions.

The professor will only consider granting an extension in the event of an officially documented extenuating circumstance (that is, serious personal illness, critical personal or family crisis, etc.). If a situation arises that may prevent you from completing an assignment, contact the professor as early as possible, ideally before the assignment is due.

The UW Verification of Illness Form can be found at: [Health Services www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html). Please note that midterms will not be deferred. Instead, the final exam will be re-weighted appropriately.

Computer Problems

Students are expected to back up their written assignments and lecture notes. Save copies on a USB stick, email them to yourself, or open an account on Dropbox where you can save your files in the cloud for free ([dropbox https://dropbox.com](https://dropbox.com)). Extensions will NOT be granted for computer-related issues. Furthermore, students will be responsible for finding replacement lecture notes where they fail to back-up their files.

Grade Appeals

If you are concerned that your assignment was not graded fairly, you should first meet with the TA who marked your work. There must be at least a 24 hour waiting period between receiving your assignment or test back and going to see your TA. This gives you time to review your work and the comments that the TA or professor has made, and think about them carefully. TAs spend a lot of time on student papers in order to provide constructive comments and you should give yourself

time to absorb them.

To request a review of your assignment from your TA and, later, your professor if required, you must provide a 1 page explanation as to why you think 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 tutorial leader no later than 3 weeks after the assignment was **made available for return**. If you are unsatisfied after consulting and discussing the matter with your TA, the assignment will be passed on to the Professor for final grading.

NOTE: Students must take responsibility for picking up their marked work in a timely manner. No appeals will be considered more than 3 weeks after the assignment/exam was made available for return. *Grades may be either raised, stay the same, or lowered on appeal.* Students who wish to appeal an examination grade should follow the same procedure noted above for assignments.

Schedule:

PART I – Introduction

January 6 – Introduction to course and expectations/ The Road to Confederation

No tutorials today!

PART II – The Institutional Context

January 13 –Parliament and the Executive (reading: Dyck, Chapters 15 and 13)

No tutorials today!

January 20 – Bureaucracy and the Courts (reading: Dyck, Chapters 14 and 16)

Tutorials begin!

Tutorial reading: Issue 7 (C&B): “Is a Majority Government more Effective than a Minority Government?” pp 175-202.

PART III – The Constitutional Context

January 27 –Federalism and the Constitution (reading: Dyck, Chapter 12)

Tutorial reading: Issue 5 (C&B): “Should the Federal Government Play a Leading Role in Health Care?” pp 108-137

February 3 – The Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (reading: Dyck, Chapter 11)

Tutorial reading: Issue 4 (C&B): “Is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Anti-Democratic?” pp 94-107

February 10 – **MIDTERM TODAY!**

No tutorials today!

PART IV – The Societal Context

February 17 – Reading Week

No tutorials today!

February 24 – Quebec and Regionalism (reading: Dyck, Chapters 2 and 3)

Tutorial reading: Issue 12 (C&B): “Should Religious Beliefs Be Excluded from Consideration of Public Policy?” pp 302-322

Students should also consider how Quebec’s proposed “Charter of Values” law aims to promote secularism in government and how it might impact this question. Please download a copy from our Learn website.

March 3 – The politics of diversity (reading: Dyck, Chapter 4)

Tutorial reading: Issue 13 (C&B): “Should Representation in Parliament Mirror Canada’s Social Diversity?” pp 323-353

PART V – Political Actors and Competition

March 10 – Political parties and interest groups (reading: Dyck, Chapters 9 and 10)

Tutorial reading: Issue 3 (C&B): “Will Conservatism and the Conservative Party Fail?” pp 55-92

March 17 – Mass media, public opinion, and elections (reading: Dyck, Chapters 7 and 8).
RESEARCH PAPER DUE TODAY!

Tutorial reading: Issue 14 (C&B): “Are the Media Political Biased?” pp 354-379.

March 31 – Democratic Deficit Reform and Final Exam Review

Tutorial reading: Issue 1 (C&B): “Is The Canadian Political Culture Becoming too Americanized?” pp2-34.