

Aug 19, 2014

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 9531a 001 CANADIAN POLITICS: INSTITUTIONS**  
**COURSE OUTLINE, FALL 2014**

**Instructor: Dr. Cristine de Clercy (Email: C.Declercy@uwo.ca)**

**Office: SSC 4135**

**Office hours: Wednesdays, 1-3 pm, and by appointment.**

**Classroom: SSC 4105**

**Class time: Wednesdays 10:30-12:30**

### **About This Course**

This graduate seminar provides an intensive analysis of selected topics and scholarship in Canadian politics with an emphasis on political institutions. Topics include the executive, the House of Commons, the Senate, the Crown, parliamentary reform, the prime minister, the constitution and a short introduction to federalism. The content is structured to reflect enduring debates about key features of Canadian political institutions, and also to expose students to some classic and contemporary contributions from leading scholars.

### **Course Expectations**

The course material is communicated through seminar discussion and the required readings. You are expected to read the required material fully and deeply before each class, to attend class consistently and on time, and to take careful notes. You will learn more in this class if you participate in class discussions, and also keep up with the news and current events.

Because this is a seminar course, you are expected to contribute your views during class discussions, and to treat all class members with courtesy and respect. You are expected to pay due attention, refrain from distracting other students, and to turn off all electronic devices during class time (of course, with the exception of those used for any anticipated emergency or medical situation). **Attendance is mandatory.** Students must attend a minimum of 80% of all classes, which amounts to 10 of the 13 classes, to pass the course. Extensive undocumented absences beyond 20% of all classes will result in a failing grade regardless of the student's overall standing in the requisite areas of evaluation, as described in more detail below.

### **Grading Structure Summary**

Critical Reading Reports:	40%
Summary Essay:	20%
Article Presentations and Critiques:	15%
Class Participation:	25%

**Necessary Prior Training:**

In the interests of clear communication and transparency, please note this is a 9000-level course. Owing to this it is assumed all students entering this course have accumulated prior and specialized knowledge concerning social science research generally, and political science research specifically, in their earlier undergraduate (and perhaps MA level) courses. So, this course is designed specifically for students with a minimum of four years of undergraduate training in the field of Political Science. Students with undergraduate expertise in other fields of study (such as English Literature, Spanish, Econometrics, Marketing, Urban Planning, or Chemical Engineering) are not advised to access this course.

Building on prior undergraduate training in Political Science, the objective of this course is to provide graduate students specializing Political Science with a deeper, more sophisticated understanding of some fundamental principles of Canadian politics beyond what they have encountered at the undergraduate (and perhaps master's) levels.

So, to repeat a bit, this course is not advised for any student without prior undergraduate training in social science, and also it is not advised for any student who has not specialized in the study of political science. Owing to its focus, as well, this course assumes all participants have taken at least one second-year course in Canadian Politics.

If you are unsure about whether you have the background for this course, please do consult with the Professor as soon as possible for further guidance and advice.

**Details of Grading Structure.** Note 60% of the total grade is secured through written communication, while 40% is secured through oral communication.

***Critical Reading Reports***

Worth: 40%  
Due: **At the start of each class.**  
Length: Five double spaced, typed pages MAXIMUM for MA students; six pages MAXIMUM for PhD students. One hard copy plus an identical electronic version submitted to TurnItIn, before the class begins, are required.

Late and miss penalties: Late assignments lose 20% per day, to a maximum of three days, after which they will not be accepted for grading. Late assignments pending during weekends or holidays will be counted as submitted when they arrive in electronic form (followed by a hard copy the next regular working day). Missed assignments receive a grade of zero, except in the case of **documented** extenuating circumstances where the penalty may be waived at the Professor's discretion.

These reports aim to help you to refine your research, analytical and writing skills, as well as expose you to central material that is relevant to the subject under study and your own research interests. Each week students will author a reading report on any one of the several eligible readings. One hard copy, and one identical electronic copy submitted to the class TurnItIn site, are due at the start of each class.

They are graded on marks accumulated in four main areas: argumentation and critical analysis, spelling and grammar; organization; and evidence of contextual understanding. An important part of this exercise is to review and respond to the Professor's written comments and suggestions on each assignment. \*\*\* **As well, consulting with the Professor during office hours concerning your performance on these assignments is expected, and usually these exchanges help to increase grades significantly.** These are keyed to the term's reading schedule which is distributed in the first class in September.

The essays are to be original works that communicate your individual thoughts and insights in your own words. **These are not group-authored projects. All acts of plagiarism are serious academic offences and will be dealt with as per UWO's articulated sanctions. All material that is borrowed from other sources must be appropriately acknowledged through using quotations and/or proper reference citations. Be aware that The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Your essays may be reviewed via such software for the purpose of plagiarism checking.**

### *Summary Essay*

Worth: 20%  
Due: Thursday December 11, 2014.  
Length: Ten double spaced, typed pages MAXIMUM for MA students; twelve pages MAXIMUM for PhD students. One hard copy plus an identical electronic version submitted to TurnItIn on the due date are required.

Late and miss penalties: Late assignments lose 20% per day, to a maximum of three days, after which they will not be accepted for grading. Late assignments pending during weekends or holidays will be counted as submitted when they arrive in electronic form (followed by a hard copy the next regular working day). Missed assignments receive a grade of zero, except in the case of **documented** extenuating circumstances where the penalty may be waived at the Professor's discretion.

The summary essay exercise is designed to offer students the opportunity to synthesize an overarching understanding of the material covered across the whole term. All of the readings covered during the course form the basis for the analysis; additional research is not required or desired. Near the end of the semester the Professor will distribute a specific question or questions that help(s) to focus the synthesis. Students then will draw on the class material to formulate an answer. The summary essay is graded in four main areas: argumentation and critical analysis,

spelling and grammar; organization; and evidence of a deep and defensible understanding of the main institutions covered in the course material.

One hard copy, and one identical electronic copy submitted to the class TurnItIn site, is to be submitted. The essays are to be original works that communicate your individual thoughts and insights in your own words. **These are not group-authored projects. All acts of plagiarism are serious academic offences and will be dealt with as per UWO's articulated sanctions. All material that is borrowed from other sources must be appropriately acknowledged through using quotations and/or proper reference citations. Be aware that The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Your essays may be reviewed via such software for the purpose of plagiarism checking.**

### *Article Presentations and Critiques*

Worth:	15% in total
Due:	As scheduled.
Miss penalty:	Students who are not in class on the day they are to present receive a grade of zero, except in the case of <b>documented</b> extenuating circumstances where the penalty may be waived at the Professor's discretion.

On a minimum of three occasions (more in the case of smaller classes), students will be responsible for introducing an article to the class. Each time, you will give a brief summary of the article, highlight its main points, discuss it with reference to other articles under discussion that day and in prior classes, evaluate its overall argumentation, and identify key weaknesses and omissions. Marks are awarded based on overall understanding of the article's arguments, merits and weaknesses, context and value for studying politics. In the case of books and longer readings, students may be asked to introduce parts of the work, depending on class size.

**These are not group-authored projects. All acts of plagiarism are serious academic offences and will be dealt with as per UWO's articulated sanctions. All material that is borrowed from other sources must be appropriately acknowledged through using quotations and/or proper reference citations.**

### *Class Participation*

Worth:	25%
Due:	Every class.
Miss penalty:	Students who are not in class and who do not submit documentary evidence of extenuating circumstances will not accumulate credit for participation on such days.

Every seminar day, students will sign a register of attendance. The instructor will take note of the quality and quantity of verbal contributions, and will award marks based on the intellectual content and evidence of learning contained within such remarks. The total grade will be calculated as the sum of marks obtained in all the sessions beyond the first introductory class.

Note that all assigned material is to be read and contemplated before each class begins.

As a seminar course, class participation is mandatory. Zero class participation will result in a grade of “0” for each such session. Undocumented absences negatively will affect grades. Students must attend a minimum of 80% of all classes to pass the course. Extensive undocumented absences beyond 20% of all classes will result in a failing grade regardless of the student’s overall standing in the requisite areas of evaluation, as described above.

### **Required Texts and Readings**

There is no required text for this course. A Term Reading Schedule will be distributed on the first day of classes. This document lists the readings for each class and where to locate them. Students will secure the weekly readings from sources such as the on line archive JSTOR and UWO’s Weldon Library Course Reserve list.

### **Class Website and Supplementary Materials**

Note there is a class website on OWL; you will receive instructions on how to access this during the first class. Be sure to check the class website site regularly for additional materials and communications from the Professor.

### **Support Services**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

End.

### **(Graduate) Statement of Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)