

Elections and Voting: Political Science – 3336F
Fall 2014 Course Outline

Course Instructor and Location:

Instructor: Rob Leone
Office Hours: Thursday – 14h00 to 15h00 (please e-mail for an appointment)
Telephone: 519-661-2111 ext. 84929
E-Mail: rleone@uwo.ca
Web site: www.robleone.com

Lectures: Thursday 15h30 to 15h20
Classroom: SSC 3022

Course Overview & Learning Objectives:

This course examines the role of elections in maintaining democratic governance from theoretical and empirical perspectives. Topics to be covered include: electoral systems; the legal framework governing election campaigns; the role of parties and the media in election campaigns; and various influences on voting behaviour, and electoral reform. The focus will be placed on understanding these topics in the Canadian case.

By the end of this course, students should be able to meet the following learning objectives.

1. Understand the context of elections and voting in Canada
2. Participate in the electoral process by actively engaging in the municipal election of 2014
3. Write a campaign strategy to gain skills that can be transferred to real life scenarios

Course Format

- A. The course will be discussion based. Students are asked to come to class having read the assigned material.
- B. There will be a schedule posted with supplementary instructions for the Campaign Plan Assignment that will also take place during class.

Assessment of Learning

Participation:	20%
Democratic Engagement Report:	30%
Campaign Plan Assignment:	50%

Expectations:

Students are expected to attend lectures, read the required readings, and complete all of their assignments to the best of their ability, on time, and honestly. The principles of Western's policy on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students should be aware of what constitutes a breach of academic honesty, and they should also be aware of other aspects of appropriate student conduct. It is expected that students attend every seminar, preferably on time.

Students who cannot complete any of the course requirements due to medical illness or bereavement are expected to follow university policies, and notify the appropriate people as early as possible. Students should be aware of the rules for acceptable practices in this regard.

Participation:

Attendance will be recorded each week and the participation grade will be based on an assessment of each student's contribution to class discussion and attendance at seminars. Please note that ***regular participation in class discussions is essential***. The participation grade will be assigned in December.

Democratic Engagement Report:

Considering that municipal elections are taking place this fall throughout Ontario, students will witness local democracy first hand. This report is designed to explore whether our own practical experiences closely approximates what is happening in the literature. Students will have a couple of choices in terms of the experiences that they will gain in order to develop this report. The preferred choice will be to actually volunteer on a local campaign. With this choice, students are asked to volunteer on a municipal campaign for four hours. It is completely up to you which campaign you choose to help. The candidate of choice can be from the London area, or from your home town. The other option is to witness two municipal council and/or municipal committee meetings. Given the extra interest in what is happening on council in this election year, you will be able to get a flavour of what issues are shaping this local election by your attendance.

A supplementary assignment sheet will be available to help guide your report. The strain on actually gathering more research on the topic should be minimal. A large chunk of time should thus be devoted to volunteering on a campaign or attending official meetings. The goal of this assignment is to reflect on the practice of our democratic process in light of the course themes we will be exploring.

The Democratic Engagement Report is **due on November 6, 2014**. Reports should be organized in a typical essay format. There should be an argument that is the main thrust of your report and it should have a proper introduction and conclusion. Papers should be approximately 4-6 pages in length with an acceptable 11 or 12 pt. standard font, double spaced, and with standard margins. A late penalty will be applied at the rate of 3% of the assignment grade per day. Papers will not be accepted if they are handed in after 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November, 14, 2015. More essay information will be available on OWL and the instructor's web site: www.robleone.com. It's the student's responsibility to check for extra course information.

Campaign Plan Assignment:

The major writing assignment for this course will be the development of a campaign plan. Instead of reviewing research on a question related to the course, students will be asked to apply the research in terms of the development of a campaign plan for a fictional candidate. So much of elections and voting depends on a candidate's preparedness for office, and the creation of a campaign plan is essential to success.

Throughout the term, modules will be delivered during class for different parts of the plan. Examples of how to write the different sections will be delivered during class as well. The goal of this assignment is to get you thinking about the various components of a campaign which may not be apparent to you if you have never participated in one before.

As this is a long assignment, it is important to keep up with the work and do the modules soon after they are presented to the class. Doing so will ensure that you are not caught with too much work at the end of the term.

The Campaign Plan Assignment is **due on November 27, 2014**. This should be written in a typical format of a plan with a table of contents, an executive summary, and sections with appropriate headings. A late penalty will be applied in the following manner. After 2 weeks (December 11, 2014) a late penalty of 3% of the assignment grade per day (including weekends) will apply. Papers will not be accepted if they are handed in after 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December, 18, 2015. More essay information will be available on OWL and the instructor's web site: www.robleone.com. It's the student's responsibility to check for extra course information.

Required Texts:

1. MacIvor, Heather, 2010. *Election*. Emond Montgomery Publications
2. Courtney, John, 2005. *Elections*, UBC Press
3. Law Commission of Canada, 2004. Voting Counts: Electoral Reform in Canada (available online)

Schedule of Lectures:

Week 1 – September 9

Introducing concepts of elections and voting (also outlining course expectations)

- o No assigned readings

Week 2 – September 18

A primer on elections and voting

- o MacIvor Chapter 1 and 2
- o Courtney Chapter 1 and 2

Week 3 – September 25

Democratic Values and Electoral Systems

- o MacIvor Chapter 3
- o Law Commission of Canada, Chapter 3

Week 4 – October 2

Legal Framework of Elections

- MacIvor, Chapters 4 and 5
- Courtney, Chapters 3 and 4

Week 5 – October 9

Modern campaigns

- MacIvor, Chapters 6-8
- Courtney, Chapter 5

Week 6 – October 16

Media and Polling

- MacIvor, Chapters 9-10

Week 7 – October 23

Voting Behaviour in Canada

- MacIvor, Chapter 11-12

Week 8 – October 30 *NO CLASS*****

Week 9 – November 6

Political culture and party preference

- MacIvor, Chapter 13-14

Week 10 – November 13

Is there a democratic deficit?

- Courtney, Chapter 6-7

Week 11 – November 20

Is there a better system?

- Law Commission, Chapters 2, 4, and 5

Week 12 – November 27

Who should decide the process of reform?

- Law Commission, Chapter 6

APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning.

Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- o the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- o the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work refer to current Western Academic Calendar (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>)

"Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

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/scholoff.pdf> ."

Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

Students registered in Social Science should refer to <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/> <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp> for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

Plagiarism

"Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

PLAGARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

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Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History
August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

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.