Instructor: Robert Young
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SSC 4223
Office: Wednesdays 2-4 or by appointment

General:
This course will critically assess the scholarly literature on the various sources of societal input to the Canadian state. We will cover political culture, political parties, voting and elections, interest groups, social movements, and social media. The objective is to understand how social forces shape and condition what governments do.

Readings:
Most readings will be available on line through the library system or they will be made available. As well, we will read Elisabeth Gidengil et al., Dominance & Decline: Making Sense of Recent Canadian Elections (Toronto: UTP, 2012). This book is available in the UWO bookstore.

Grades and assignments:
15% - participation
25% - weekly reading summaries
15% - presentation and discussion leadership
45% - analytic papers or research paper

**Participation:**

As this is a graduate seminar, students are expected to participate actively each week. The participation grade will be based on evidence of preparation, quality of comments, capacity to analyze ideas, and concern for the views expressed by others.

If you are unable to attend the seminar, please inform the instructor in advance.

**Weekly reading summaries:**

All students are to prepare weekly reading summaries for weeks 2 to 12 inclusive. These are a means of preparing for each week's class, and are intended to help you analyze and comment on the readings in advance. There should be three parts to every summary. First, you should state the most important two or three themes arising from the week's readings. Second, you should describe two or three insights (not simple facts) that you learned from the readings. What did you learn that you did not previously understand? Third, you should lay out some core questions that have arisen for you from the readings.

The summaries should be no longer than 2 double-spaced pages. They are due at the beginning of each class. Late summaries will not be accepted.

**Presentation and discussion:**

All students will be required to give one presentation. This should not be a simple summary of the week's readings; instead, the bulk of the presentation is to contain a critical analysis of the ideas and issues arising from the readings. The presentation is to be an elaboration of the sorts of conclusions reached in the weekly reading summaries, with an emphasis on the core arguments of the authors. You are expected as well to raise issues and to pose questions for your colleagues, and to lead class discussion. A paper copy of the presentation must be provided to the instructor on the morning of the presentation.

**Analytic papers or research paper:**

The first option is to write three analytic papers - one on political cultures, one on parties, party systems and elections, and one on interest groups and social movements. Summary of the readings should be kept to a minimum. The focus should be on
constructing a coherent response to the issues, arguments, and ideas raised in the readings. You could, for instance, highlight how common themes are addressed in the readings; or you might criticize the central arguments of several authors; or you might develop questions about the core issues raised by the readings; or you could criticize one or more authors based on the arguments of others or on your own analysis. Overall, the objective is to make sense of a small body of scholarly literature. These papers should be about 8 pages long. They are due in class on January 30th and March 20th and April 17th.

The second option is to write a substantial research paper on a topic to be decided in consultation with the instructor. The paper should be about 20-25 double-spaced pages. There are many attractive alternatives here, and some primary research will be involved. You could focus on some aspect of a party or parties, or on particular elections, or on some interest group, or on some social movement (especially exploring social media in politics). The paper is due on April 17th.

**Important policies:**

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class.
- Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day.
- Extensions are only granted when there are genuine, serious family or medical problems. Extensions are at the discretion of the instructor.

**Academic offences:**

- Scholastic offences are taken very seriously. Students should read the definition of a scholastic offence (especially of plagiarism) and also the possible consequences of such offences, which can be severe: see [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf)
Weekly topics and readings:

1. January 9\textsuperscript{th}: Introductions and discussion of the course.

2. January 16\textsuperscript{th}: Political culture I.


3. January 23\textsuperscript{rd}: Political culture II.


4. January 30\textsuperscript{th}: Political parties - origins and evolution.

   From Alain Gagnon and Brian Tanguay, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed.*, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007):


February 6th: No seminar this week.

5. February 13: Political parties - current issues.


6. February 27th: Elections and voting I.


7. March 6th: Elections and voting II.

Dominance and Decline, ch. 6-11.

8. March 13th: Elections and voting III.
Elizabeth Gidengil et al., *Citizens* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), ch. 5.


9. March 20th. Interest groups.


Ian Brodie, ‘Interest Group Litigation and the Embedded State: Canada’s Court Challenges Program,’ *CJPS*, 34:2 (June 2001), 357-76.
12. April 10\textsuperscript{th}. Social media and politics.


13. April 17\textsuperscript{th}. Make-up seminar (if necessary).

\textit{(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