Canadian Politics II: Society
Political Science 9532a
University of Western Ontario
Winter 2017

Seminar: Wednesday 9:30-11:30, SSC 4105
Professor: Laura Stephenson
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm; or by appointment
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Important Notice Re: Prerequisites/Antirequisites

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis for appeal. If you are found to be ineligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. **This decision cannot be appealed.** If you find that you do not have the course requisites, it is in your best interest to drop the course well before the end of the add/drop period. Your prompt attention to this matter will not only help protect your academic record, but will ensure that spaces become available for students who require the course in question for graduation.

Course Description

This course concentrates on understanding governance in Canada from the perspective of the role that citizens play. We will survey some of the main ways that citizen preferences, opinions and ideas are transmitted to the government, either directly or indirectly. Topics will include theories of democratic governance, political culture, political participation, vote choice, political parties, pressure groups and social movements, and the media.

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this course, students will be able to communicate the many ways that citizens influence democracy in Canada.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how academic research is conducted on issues in Canadian politics.
- Students will have the opportunity to sharpen their analytic and argumentative skills, through classroom discussions and their summary analysis assignments.

Assignments

**MA Students**

1) Weekly Reading Summaries (weeks 2-12, due start of class) 40%
2) Participation (including active participation in discussion and presentation of reading summaries) 20%
3) Summary Analysis Paper (due April 5, start of class) 40%
**PhD Students**

1) Weekly Reading Summaries (weeks 2-12, due start of class) 30%
2) Participation (including active participation in discussion and presentation of reading summaries) 20%
3) Lead Seminar 10%
4) Analysis of Canadian Democracy Paper (due April 5, start of class) 40%

**Weekly Reading Summaries**
Students will be asked to write summary papers for each of weeks 2-12. The papers should be no less than 3 and no more than 5 double-spaced pages in length. In that space, students should provide comments on three aspects of the readings. First, what are two themes that arise from the readings? Some weeks the readings will be less obviously connected than others, and some thought should be given to how the readings contribute to the overall theme of the course (citizen input in politics). Second, what insights did you gain by doing the readings? These can be either new pieces of information you acquired or confirmation or comment on previously-known information. Third, provide 3 questions for discussion based on the readings.

Papers are due at the beginning of each class (9:30am) and students will be asked to provide a brief report on their paper each week. Late papers will not be accepted. In the case of absence, papers can be sent to the instructor by email prior to the start of class.

**Lead Seminar**
PhD students will be asked to lead discussion once during the term. Students will be graded on the extent to which they are able to bring out the key issues in the material and guide a stimulating discussion.

**Summary Analysis Paper**
MA students will produce a summary analysis paper at the end of the course. The purpose of the assignment is to provide students an opportunity to summarize what role they think citizens play in Canadian democracy. In addressing this issue, it is expected that students will draw upon what they have learned in the course as well as their own understanding of Canadian politics. The paper is expected to make use of course materials, rather than outside research (although outside research is not prohibited). More information about the assignment will be provided in class.

The papers should be no more than 20 double-spaced pages in length. The assignments will be graded on the quality and comprehensiveness of argumentation. The paper is due before noon on April 12 (by email).

**Analysis of Canadian Democracy Paper**
PhD students will produce a research paper that analyses the quality of Canadian democracy as their final course assignment. Students are expected to take a theory of democracy (either from week 2 or elsewhere) and use empirical evidence to analyze how
well Canada meets the standard. It is expected that outside research will be incorporated into the paper, as well as readings from the course.

The papers should be no less than 20 and no more than 30 double-spaced pages in length. The assignments will be graded on the quality and comprehensiveness of argumentation. The paper is due before noon on April 12 (by email).

**Readings**

All readings will be available online or from the instructor. There is no required text.
**Topics and Readings**

1) **January 11: Introduction**

2) **January 18: Democratic Theory and Canadian Democracy**

3) **January 25: Political Culture**
4) February 1: Participation

5) February 8: Electoral Input – How Canadians (Should) Express their Opinions

6) February 15: Voting Models
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0008423913000875

http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S000842390000295X

7) February 22: Reading Week - No class 😎

8) March 1: Other Considerations in Voting


9) March 8: Direct Democracy and Citizen Engagement


10) March 15: Political Parties

11) March 22: Pressure Groups and Social Movements

12) March 29: Underrepresented Groups in Canada

13) April 5: Media and Politics