INSTRUCTOR: Cameron D. Anderson  
E-MAIL ADDRESS: cander54@uwo.ca  
PHONE: 519-661-2111 ext.81163  
OFFICE LOCATION: SSC 4217  
OFFICE HOURS: Thursday 10:00am-11:00am (or by appointment) on Zoom (meeting id will be posted on OWL course site)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the topics of public opinion and democratic engagement. Through the analytical lens of a political behaviour approach, we will address definitional questions of democratic engagement, theoretical explanations of various aspects of democratic engagement, and consider the influences of additional factors on engagement and public opinion including institutions, non-conscious factors, identities and macro public opinion. Lastly, we assess the relationship of engagement and public opinion with democratic representation.

COURSE READINGS:

Selection of articles and book chapters available on OWL or online through the UWO Library system.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

25% Participation  
30% Weekly Reading Summaries (8)  
45% Analytic Papers (3 x 15%) or a research paper
DISCUSSION OF COURSEWORK:

a) Class Participation - As this is a graduate seminar course, there will be no lectures and students are expected to actively participate each week. The participation grade will be based on the quality of comment, evidence of preparation, willingness to challenge accepted ideas and concern for the views expressed by others. If unable to attend, please inform the instructor in advance. Students will be given a preliminary grade for participation in the seventh week of the course. The final participation grade may change based on whether performance improves, declines or stays the same.

b) Reading Summaries - All students will be required to complete eight reading summaries from weeks two through twelve. These summaries should be used as a means of preparing for each week’s class and are intended to provide you with an opportunity, in advance of class, to read, interact with and comment on the readings. The summary should be composed of three parts. The first part should state, in your view, the most important two or three themes arising from that week’s readings. The second part should outline two or three insights gained from these readings. This is to say, what did you learn that you didn’t previously know or understand? The final part of the summary should articulate questions that were generated from the readings. The summaries should not be longer than two double-spaced pages and will be due at the beginning of each class. Please submit summaries through the OWL course page. Each week two to three students will provide a very brief oral report of their reading summary at the beginning of each class. Late summaries will not be accepted. Summaries will be graded on a ‘check system’. Acceptable summaries will receive a ‘√’. Unacceptable or late summaries will receive a ‘√-’. On occasion, an unusually perceptive summary may receive a ‘√+’. For the term, an average of ‘√’ will be equivalent to an ‘A-’ grade of 82%.

c) Analytic Papers (or a research paper) – You are required to write 3 analytic papers: one from each of Weeks 2 and 3, Weeks 4 to 8 and Weeks 9 to 12. These papers should keep summary of the readings to a minimum and instead focus on articulating a coherent response to issues, arguments and ideas raised in the readings. You may choose to highlight how common themes are addressed throughout the readings; you might take issue with the central argument of certain authors; you might pose questions that deal with core issues of the readings or you might criticize one author based on the arguments of another and/or your own analysis. These papers will be graded on how well you interact with and develop your response to the readings. The papers should be 7-8 (double-spaced) pages long. These papers are due February 3 (Weeks 2 and 3), March 17 (Weeks 4 to 8) and April 19 (Weeks 9 to 12). This paper cannot be written on the same week’s material that you present your summary. Alternatively, in lieu of the 3 analytic papers, you may choose to write a substantive research paper of 20-25 pages on a topic related to the course content and agreed upon in consultation with the
professor. The research paper will be due on the date of the third analytic paper. All papers should be submitted through the OWL course page.

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES

**Conduct of Classes:**
All classes will be conducted virtually through the Zoom platform. The link for the zoom meetings is located in the Zoom tab on the OWL page for this course. Please ensure that you have a good internet connection and are prepared to participate in the class discussion each week. Please review this document (https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/medicine/undergraduate/docs/policies_statements/statements/VC-Etiquette-in-UME---Aug-2020.pdf) for series of expectations and guidelines regarding proper etiquette and best practice for participation in this class through Zoom.

**Submission of Assignments:**
Assignments (both reading summaries and analytic papers) are due at the beginning of class and will be submitted through the OWL course page. The third analytic paper and research paper will be due at **12pm on April 19**.

**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. All papers must be submitted through the turnitin program portal on the OWL course page.

**Late penalty:**
Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day. Assignments that are more than 1 week late will not be accepted for grading.

**Extensions:**
Extensions are not given. However, when there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances an extension may be granted at the discretion of the professor.
Part I Introductory Topics

Week 1. January 13 – Course Introduction, Political Behaviour and studying politics, and Democratic Engagement


Available online: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199566020

Available online: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270125.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199270125

Suggested Readings:
Available online: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235476.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199235476

Part II Sources of Democratic Engagement

Week 2. January 20 – Democratic Satisfaction and Support


Nemčok, M., & Wass, H. (2020). As time goes by, the same sentiments apply? Stability of voter satisfaction with democracy during the electoral cycle in 31 countries. Party Politics,

Week 3. January 27 – Attitudes about Democratic Values – (in)equality

Bastian Becker (2021) Temporal change in inequality perceptions and effects on political attitudes, Political Research Exchange, 3:1, 1-21,
DOI: 10.1080/2474736X.2020.1860652


Week 4. February 3 - Turnout


**Week 5. February 10 - Parties and Partisanship**


********** February 17 - No Class - Reading Week **********

**Week 6. February 24 - Voting and Elections**


Week 7. March 3 - Protest Politics


Part III Public Opinion, Engagement and Politics

Week 8. March 10 - Institutional Effects

American Political Science Review. 91 (1): 66-81.


Week 9. March 17 – Biology and Non-Conscious Factors


Week 10. March 24 – Identities – Gender and Race


Recommended:

Week 11. March 31 - Macro Public Opinion


IV Concluding thoughts
Week 12. April 7 – Engagement, Opinion and Democratic Representation


