

University of Western Ontario: Department of Political Science

POLITICAL SCIENCE 2511F

The Politics of Economics

Fall 2026

Lectures: See outline on Mondays 3:30-5:20, SSC 2028

Tutorials: Mondays 5:30-6:20 SSC 2028 and SSC 3006

Course Director

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Course Description

This course examines the politics of economic issues. It focuses on the competition between free market and interventionist economic ideas and how businesses, unions, think tanks, and lobby groups seek to influence government policy on issues such as taxes, spending, regulations, recessions, trade, finance, diversity, and labour. No prior economics training is required.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to: recognize and apply the key economic theories that underpin contemporary policy debates at the domestic and international level; demonstrate knowledge of the key actors, interest groups and institutions which influence contemporary policy debates in Canada, the United States and more broadly; identify and apply key economic, political and policy concepts related to monetary, fiscal, regulatory, trade, financial, labour, and other policies; acquire knowledge of Canadian and U.S. economic history and recognize key milestones and events; recognize the inherently political nature of economic policy debates in terms of the relationship between ideas and interests; demonstrate an ability to critically assess policy arguments; acquire and apply knowledge in communicating in a clear and analytic fashion, in written and verbal as well as scholarly and public outreach formats; recognize the importance of time management, listening and proper note-taking skills; and apply research skills.

Required Readings

All course readings are posted on the course OWL BrightSpace site on the Home page in the 'Readings' folder and then under the specific weekly topic. All readings in the folders are required readings and will be tested on the Midterm and Final Exam as outlined in class. See the Reading Guide for the specific points that will be tested from each reading.

Course Structure

The course includes a two-hour lecture on Mondays from 3:30-5:20 followed by a one-hour tutorial from 5:30-6:20 pm. There are two double-sized tutorials for this class (Section 002 and Section 003 of about 60 students each). Both are on Mondays from 5:30-6:20 pm immediately following the lecture. The first two tutorials will be run by the course instructor in the lecture room and used to discuss the course assignments. Tutorial debates will start in the third week. Students in Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room (SSC 2028). Students in Tutorial 003 will move to SSC 3006. Debates are comprised of two teams of 4 students each debating an economic policy issue with the rest of the tutorial acting as the audience.

Signing-Up for a Debate: Opens 1 September

All students must sign-up for a debate topic/team, in their assigned tutorial, through the course OWL BrightSpace site. Only sign-up for one spot. The sign-up will open on 1 September and all students must be signed-up by the end of the day on 21 September or be assigned randomly. Debates start in the third week of classes. Students are encouraged to volunteer for the first week of debates. We go easier on the marking for the first week. After 21 September, you cannot change debate teams without the course instructor's permission. If some topics are under-subscribed, some students may be asked to choose other topics to ensure at least three students per team.

To sign up, go to the course OWL BrightSpace site and look on the Home page for the Debates folder. There you will find instructions and links to the debate teams sign-up.

Evaluation

Debate	10%	In scheduled tutorials
Midterm Exam	30%	Monday 2 Nov – in class Friday 13 Nov: make-up exam
Essay	25%	Friday 20 Nov: e-copy on BrightSpace
Final Exam	35%	In-person during Exam Period

Debate, Debate Write-Up, and Tutorial Attendance 10%

Each student will participate in one group debate which includes handing-in a group debate write-up and participating in the tutorial debate. Debates will take place from 5:30-6:20 pm during the tutorial period after the lecture. A list of debate topics and dates will be available on the course website. The debates will be graded based on an overall team mark worth 10% of the course. A Debate Instructions and Format document and a Debate Topics and Research Tips document are available in the Debates folder on the course website. Students who miss their debates without prior arrangement with the course instructor will be given a grade of zero. Tutorial attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken with penalty marks being deducted from individual debate grades as outlined below.

Missing Your Own Debate

- If you have to miss your own debate, email the other members of your group, your TA, and myself as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for the rest of your team. Please also send your debate notes to your teammates as they will have to carry on without you.

- As this is a group assignment, missing your own debate is highly problematic. Therefore, all documentation will be followed up with phone calls to confirm. If you use your one Undocumented Absence, it cannot be used on any other assignment.
- If you miss your own debate, it will be replaced with an equivalent written assignment. This assignment will be *hand-written* to offset copying and pasting from other group members.
- Under no circumstances will you be allowed to miss your debate and have your other grades reweighted.

Missed Tutorials

- Tutorial attendance is mandatory. Any tutorials missed, without an accommodation, will be penalized with 3/100 per tutorial missed off your overall debate grade.
- If you have to miss a tutorial (other than your own debate), please do not email me or your TA. Accommodations for missed tutorials will only be dealt with at the end of the course. This is due to the otherwise prohibitive number of emails that must be managed.
- If you have to miss a tutorial for a medical or compassionate reasons, make sure you get and retain the relevant documents to hand-in at the end of the course. If you receive an accommodation from academic advising, keep a screenshot of it to hand in at the end of the course.
- If you have accommodations for any missed tutorials, you must send one overall email to your TA within 2 days following your last tutorial. The email must contain:
 - A numbered list of the specific dates you missed and the reason for each.
 - A screen shot of each of your accommodations from academic advising and/or your specific documentation for each missed tutorial. If you have not otherwise used your one Undocumented Absence, you can list it for one of the tutorials you missed.
 - If you do not send this email by the deadline, including all necessary screenshots/documents, your tutorial participation will be graded as if you received no accommodations and absences will count against you.
 - It is your responsibility to send this email to your TA by the deadline.

Debate Write-Up and Bibliography

- See the Debate Instructions for details on the debate write-up.
- You must have a hyperlink for each source in your bibliography so it can be confirmed by the TA if necessary. You must also keep copies of all sources cited as the TAs may ask for any they can't find.

Mid-Term Exam

30%

The midterm exam will occur in-person during the scheduled class time. Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time must register with Accessible Education as soon as possible. If you miss their registration deadline, you will have to write the exam with the rest of the class.

It will be a 1 hour exam with 50 multiple choice questions based on all the lectures and readings before the midterm. A brief study guide with example questions will be posted one week before the midterm. Phones, smart watches, smart glasses, and other wearable technologies are strictly prohibited during the exam.

The multiple-choice questions on the lectures will comprise 35/50 questions. They will focus on concepts, individuals, organizations, acronyms, and historical events associated with the free market and interventionist approach, Canadian economic actors, economic history, and domestic and international macroeconomics. Some questions will cross different lectures.

The multiple-choice questions on the readings will comprise 15/50 questions and will be based on the points listed in the Reading Guide including the main arguments/points, main supporting points/concepts, and, where relevant, any basic history from each of the articles. You must also know the approach of the author where relevant. The last page of the exam will include a list of the authors and titles of each of the readings as a memory aide as this is how some articles will be referred to in the questions. If you actually do the readings, take decent notes and study them, you will be well prepared. If you leave many of the readings until the end of the semester or only try to look for Control F shortcuts based on the reading guide, you won't be.

Accessibility Accommodations

- Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time etc. must be registered with Accessible Education.
- You will write the exam with them and not with the rest of the class. They will tell you where you write. If you have not heard from them, make sure you contact them.
- We are not able to provide extra time or other accommodations in the main exam.
- Having the 'flexibility with assignment deadlines' accommodation does not apply to the date you write the exam.
- If you miss the midterm, you must register again with Accessible Education for the midterm make-up exam.

Make-Up Exam

- Exams cannot be written early under any circumstances.
- All requests for medical or compassionate accommodations must go through the Student Absence Portal. The course instructor will not grant any accommodations. Please do not email me unless it is absolutely necessary and not just because you are advised to by academic advisors. I will only return your email if your situation is not covered in the examples below.
- Any students using their one Undocumented Absence must also go through the Student Absence Portal and fill out the signed self-attestation and accompanying rationale. The only difference is you don't have to provide documentation.
- Any students missing the midterm will be required to write the scheduled midterm make-up.
- **The one hour make-up exam is scheduled for Friday 13 November.**
- The format for the make-up exam is exactly the same as for the main exam and it will cover the exact same material as the main exam and no more.
- Having another class or tutorial scheduled during the make-up exam will not be accepted as a reason to miss it. If you have a test or assignment that makes it impossible for you to attend the make-up exam, you must email me the course name and number, its exact start/finish times on the day, the professor's name and email (not a TA), and the reason you can't miss it. I will contact them to confirm.

- We cannot schedule multiple make-up exams. The new Faculty of Social Science policy is that only one make-up exam will be scheduled and, if students miss this exam, they will receive a grade of zero.
- Under no circumstances will you be allowed to miss the midterm and have your other grades reweighted.

Essay

25%

Students will write one essay that must be 9-10 typed double-spaced pages in length (not including the title page, endnotes, and bibliography). An Essay Instructions and Format document and an Essay Topics and Research Tips document are available in the Essay folder on the course website. They will be discussed in the second week of tutorials. Essays must be submitted on the course website (through turnitin) by 11:59 pm on the due date. The threshold for each day late is then 11:59 pm. Late essays will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day - including weekends, holidays, and reading week - to a maximum of 10%. Late essays not handed in by 11:59 pm on the day of the last class will receive a grade of zero. **The essay is designated as 'not eligible' for an Undocumented Absence.**

Academic Fraud and Plagiarism

- There will be zero tolerance for academic fraud. Students submitting essays based in whole or in part on AI technologies such as Chat GPT will automatically receive a grade of zero on the essay. They will also be reported to the university. In most cases, two instances of academic fraud will get you expelled.
- The required format for the essay is no longer a suggestion. Papers that do not follow the required format will be penalized by 10 percent or greater depending on the deviation.
- You must have a hyperlink for each source in your bibliography so it can be confirmed by the TA if necessary. You must also keep copies of all sources cited as the TAs may ask for any they can't find.
- Turnitin.com is excellent. Do not copy-and-paste from your own or others' previous papers as they are in the Turnitin international database. Do not copy-and-paste from media, blogs, etc. as the Turnitin search engine will find it.
- Plagiarism and fraud are about intent, and we can tell the difference between that and legitimate misunderstandings about citations. If you make an honest mistake in your citations, that is no problem.

Extensions

- **The essay is designated as 'not eligible' for an Undocumented Absence.**
- All requests for medical or compassionate accommodations must go through the Student Absence Portal only and must be no later than 48 hours following the due date. The course instructor will NOT grant any extensions. Please do not email me unless it is absolutely necessary and not just because you are advised to by academic advisors. I will only return your email if your situation is NOT covered in the examples below.
- If it is approved by academic advising, your extension will be for exactly how many days they approve. For example, if the due date was the 10th, and your accommodation is from the 10th to 12th, you will get a 3-day extension (10, 11, 12) meaning your essay is then due by 11:55

pm on the 13th. You must then submit your essay through the course website by 11:55 pm on the new due date. After that it will be counted as late, and the late penalty will start to apply.

- If the accommodation dates given by academic advising start a day or two after the essay due date, your extension is still only for the number of days between their start and end dates. For example, if the essay is due on the 10th, and your accommodation is from the 12th to 13th, you will receive a 2-day extension only from the original due date, making it due on the 12th with a penalty applying after that. Applying for an accommodation on a Friday and not hearing back from counseling until the Monday will not give you extra days.
- Students who have the ‘flexibility with assignment deadlines’ accommodation from Accessible Education do NOT need to email me. You must contact academic counseling to have an extension approved and it will be for a maximum of 3 days. Longer extensions will not be granted. Therefore, if the due date was the 10th, and you receive the 3 day ‘flexibility with assignment deadlines’ accommodation, your essay is then due by 11:55 pm on the 13th.

Final Exam

35%

This will be an in-person exam held at a time and date determined by the Registrar’s Office during the scheduled exam period. The course instructor has no control whatsoever over the time and date of the exam.

It will be a 2 hour exam with 75 multiple choice questions. The first 55 questions are based on the lectures. The final 20 questions are based on the readings and are drawn from the points covered in the Reading Guide. Phones, smart watches, smart glasses, and other wearable technologies are strictly prohibited during the exam.

The exam will cover:

1. All lectures and readings after the midterm i.e. from Domestic and International Macroeconomics onward
 2. The lectures from weeks 2 and 3 on the free market approach and the interventionist approach. You don’t need to study the readings from these 2 weeks.
- The last page of the exam includes a list of the authors and titles as a memory aide.

Accessibility Accommodations

- Students with a formal accommodation to write the exam separately and/or with longer time etc. must be registered with Accessible Education.
- You will write the exam with them and not with the rest of the class. They will tell you where you write. If you have not heard from them, make sure you contact them.
- We are not able to provide extra time or other accommodations in the main exam.
- Having the ‘flexibility with assignment deadlines’ accommodation does not apply to the date you write the exam.

Make-Up Exam

- Final exams cannot be written early, or converted to online exams, under any circumstances. Avoid booking any flights or trains too early until the exam schedule is released.
- **As per university policy, final exams are not eligible for an Undocumented Absence.**

- All requests to write a make-up exam must go through the Student Absence Portal. The course instructor will not grant any accommodations related to the exam.
- Make-up exams for finals are very difficult to schedule. Accordingly, any requests to miss the final exam will be denied without very good and very documented reasons that will be followed up with phone calls to confirm.
- Make-up exams will occur either in-person in January. If you miss the main exam without an accommodation, you will receive a grade of zero.
- We cannot schedule multiple make-up exams. The new Faculty of Social Science policy is that only one make-up exam will be scheduled and, if students miss this exam, they will receive a grade of zero.
- The format for the make-up exam is exactly the same as for the main exam and it will cover the exact same material as the main exam and no more.
- Under no circumstances will you be allowed to miss the final exam and have your other grades reweighted.

Redoing Exams or the Essay and Final Grade Rounding

Redoing exams or the essay, or completing a substitute assignment, due to a poor grade is not possible. Whenever profs do either, other students view it as unfair and we get a large number asking to rewrite exams or assignments, even when they've done well but just want a higher grade. If you need strong grades for Ivey, law school, grad school, scholarships, or other reasons, start your studying and assignments early as do-overs and bumping up of grades are not possible. Also, the Department of Political Science has a policy that undergraduate final course grades will only be rounded to the next whole grade if they end at 0.5 or higher; otherwise, they will be rounded down.

Appeals

All grade appeals must go through the TAs first by email and NOT in-person. You must email your TA a list of the reasons why you believe your assignment deserves a better grade (not why you need a better grade). No appeals will be considered more than 3 weeks after the assignment grades were released. If the student is not satisfied with the TA's explanation of the grade/new grade, they can ask for it to be marked by a second reader (generally another TA). If this option is approved, and the second reader assigns a grade that is only 3% higher or lower than the original grade, the original grade will stand. If the second marker assigns a mark that is more than 3% higher or lower than the original grade, then the final grade will be the average of the two grades, whether or not this is higher or lower.

Lecture Notes and PPT Slides

Lecture notes and PowerPoint slides will NOT be posted. If you miss class, you will need to get notes from other students. For students with accommodations, and accessibility accommodations, notes will be available from a volunteer notetaker.

Notice on Pre/Anti-requisites

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have NOT taken an anti-requisite course (i.e. POLS 2211E Business and

Government). Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis for appeal. If a student is found to be ineligible for a course, they may be removed from it at any time and they will receive no adjustment to their fees.

Turnitin.com

Electronic copies of all assignments submitted on OWL are automatically processed by the plagiarism detection service turnitin.com. Please be advised that: 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.

Support Services

If you are experiencing or have experienced gender based and sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts on the Wellness and Wellbeing website <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/index.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. <https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

- Sept. 14 Lecture (3:30-5:20): Course Introduction and The Politics of Economics**
The first part of the class will be used to introduce the general subject matter of the course and to outline the course structure, readings, and requirements. The remainder will introduce the politics of economics including the relationship between economic ideas and interests and some of the key conservative and progressive actors in the Canadian economy.
- Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Discussion of Debate Assignment and Research Skills***
This tutorial will be run by the course instructor with all students remaining in the main lecture room. It will cover the requirements for the student debates and some tips on conducting research for them.
- Sept. 21 Lecture (3:30-5:20): The Free Market Approach**
This week examines the key assumptions, intellectuals, and arguments of the free market approach to economic policy.
- Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Discussion of Essay Assignment and Writing Skills***

This tutorial will be run by the course instructor with all students remaining in the main lecture room. It will cover the essay instructions and some tips of writing and citations.

Sept. 28 Lecture (3:30-5:20): The Interventionist Approach

This week examines the key assumptions, intellectuals, and arguments of the interventionist approach to economic policy.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

This tutorial will be the first debates. Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Oct. 5 Lecture (3:30-5:20): Economic History and the Future of Globalization

This week examines the macro history of the international economy and what lessons it offers for the current state of economic globalization.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Oct. 12 Thanksgiving/Reading Week – No Class

Oct. 19 Lecture (3:30-5:20): The Debate Over Free Trade

This week examines ongoing debates over free trade and economic globalization including the competing views of libertarians, liberals, progressives, and conservative nationalists.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Oct. 26 Lecture (3:30-5:20): Trump, Tariffs, and Economic Nationalism

This week examines the return of economic nationalism under Donald Trump, his current policies on tariffs, and how other countries including Canada have and can respond.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Nov. 2 MIDTERM EXAM DURING CLASS TIME (4:00-5:00 pm)

Exam starts at 4 pm

Students in Tutorial 002 write in SSC 2028 (our lecture room)

Students in Tutorial 003 write in SSC 2024 (next to our lecture room)

Nov. 9 Lecture (3:30-5:20): Domestic and International Macroeconomics

This week examines some of the key concepts and relationships related to the politics of domestic and international macroeconomics. This includes: supply, demand and price signals; inflation, unemployment, interest rates, and the business cycle; and exchange rates, investment flows, and the ‘impossible trinity’ of international economics.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Essay Grading

TAs will discuss how the essays will be graded, citations, and other requirements.

They will also discuss essay research and writing tips. Attendance will be taken.

Nov. 13 (Friday) Midterm Make-up

Nov. 16 Lecture (3:30-5:20): Taxes and Fiscal Policy

This week examines different types of taxes and spending as well as government deficits, debts, and surpluses.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Nov. 20 FRIDAY – ESSAYS DUE ON COURSE WEBSITE BY 11:59 PM

Nov. 23 Lecture (3:30-5:20): Corporations and Corporate Governance

This week examines key concepts related to corporations and corporate governance including the growing role and politics of institutional investors and the way that governments regulate corporations through competition policy.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Nov. 30

Lecture (3:30-5:20): Gender, Race, and Diversity in the Canadian Economy

This week examines issues of diversity in the Canadian economy including: different forms and examples of bias (e.g. algorithmic bias) as well as free market and interventionist approaches to discrimination and diversity policies.

Tutorial (5:30-6:20): Debate

Students assigned to Tutorial 002 will remain in the main lecture room. Students assigned to Tutorial 003 will move to their tutorial room. Attendance will be taken.

Dec. 7

Lecture (3:30-5:20): Unions and Labour Policy

This final week examines the structure of trade unions in Canada as well as the practices and policies related to union certification, collective bargaining, and strikes.

Last Class, No Tutorial

Last day to submit late essays – by 11:59 pm.

Email tutorial absences and documentation to TAs by Wednesday 9 December