

Political Science 2530F Section 650
The University of Western Ontario
Foundations of Canadian Politics
Course Outline

Type: Distance Studies 6 weeks – first half of Distance period (Essay) May 4 to June 12 (exams week after June 12 TBA)

Place: Online/Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Robert F. Jonasson

E-mail address: rjonasso@uwo.ca (please e-mail anytime)

Office Hours: no formal hours but phone calls may be set up on request (within limits); e-mail anytime (more on this below)

Prerequisite: Pol. Sci. 1020E (former 020E); **Antirequisite:** Pol. Sci. 2223F/G; 2221F/G

Required Reading: (hopefully available at U.W.O. bookstore)

Stephen Brooks. Canadian Democracy. 10th Edition. (Oxford, Don Mills, Ont.: 2026.). NOTE: the 10th edition may not be available in time. The 9th Edition will then have to be used instead.

https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=N2026&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/POL2530F

Objectives: Political Science 2530F is an examination of the Canadian state and its major branches and institutions. Students will become familiar with the Canadian constitution and its historical development. Both horizontal and vertical checks and balances in the Canadian governmental system will be explored including the executive, legislative, judiciary and federalism. Political parties will also be examined closely as a key institution of the Canadian liberal democratic regime. By the end of this course, students will be able to identify the key components of the Canadian regime. Students will have an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Canadian institutions of liberal democracy - both in the past and today

Delivery: The course is asynchronous, which means no formal class times (i.e. no in person or Zoom classes). Materials will be posted to OWL Brightspace that you will need. There are still strict due dates on certain items, but the point is to learn the material at the rate that suits you. The weekly breakdown of topics, lectures and readings below is only suggested – you may wish to go faster or slower through the materials. Please note that asynchronous learning may not be ideal for everyone. Please respect the fact that 650 Distance level online courses are meant to offer maximum flexibility for learning, especially for those in different parts of the world or who have jobs etc. during certain hours of the day.

OWL: This course uses Western OWL Brightspace as a learning tool on a regular basis.

Topics: Readings from the Brooks textbook (10th ed.) are given below (the different chapters are noted for the 9th Ed.). I would suggest to also watch the corresponding lecture files in OWL Brightspace by weekly topics but this is up to you, of course.

Week 1: starting May 4

Course outline and on-line information

How to write an essay (see Essay Guideline sheet on OWL); Major events in Canadian history (Ch.1)

Week 2: starting May 11

The Constitution (Chs.6,7)

Week 3: starting May 19 (May 18 is a holiday)
Friday, May 22- **Essay due**

The Executive (Ch.9); The Legislative (Ch.9)

Week 4: starting May 25

The Judiciary: (Ch.9); The Bureaucracy (Ch. 9- Ch.10 for 9th Ed.)

Week 5: starting June 1

Federalism (Ch.8);

Week 6: starting June 8

Political Parties (Ch.10- Ch.11 for 9th Ed.); Elections and Electoral System (Ch.10 - Ch.11 for 9th Ed.)

Final Exam: during June 15-19 period (TBA)
- essay format: *online, take home, open book 24 hours*

Grade Breakdown:

Final Exam: 50% (TBA)

Essay: 50% (8-10 pages, double-spaced; due Friday, May 22/26 online submission by 11.59pm)

NOTE: All page requirements in the outline use the Times New Roman 12 standard.

Late Penalty for Essay: 2% per working day (not including weekends); after 2 weeks late (including weekends), the paper gets a zero; late penalty goes by e-file submission time; computer breakdown is not an excuse; you must keep a backup copy of your paper (e-file);

POL.SCI. 2530F ESSAY

Length: 8-10 pages double-spaced minimum

Due date: Friday, May 22/26 11.59pm – to be put into OWL – Brightspace Assessments - Essay(do not wait until the last minute – lates will be strictly enforced: if you submit the wrong file, you must e-mail me the correct one before the deadline)

Files: the e-files must be in Word or PDF format and must have your last name as the start of the file name

Lost Assignments: It is your responsibility to have other copies of your paper.

Bibliography: You must include a bibliography.

Citations and other items: See Essay Guidelines document on OWL Brightspace Content.

Essay questions/ thesis statements

Choose one as the core argument of your paper (you may take the reverse of each).

1/ Recent Canadian Prime Ministers, of both major parties, have tended to be authoritarian in relation to their party members in the House of Commons.

2/ Canada should adopt a different electoral system at the federal level.

3/ Canadian federalism is too decentralized and needs a stronger federal government to defend the interests of Canadians.

4/ Section 33 of the Constitution Act 1982 should be abolished to protect the rights of Canadians.

5/ The Canadian Senate does not adequately carry out its functions and should be abolished.

6/ The New Democratic Party needs to move to the political center to win a federal election in Canada.

NOTE: You may do your own thesis statement/topic with permission.

IMPORTANT: SEE ESSAY GUIDELINES DOCUMENT ON OWL FOR MORE INFO

COURSE PROCEDURES

1/ **E-Mail:** You may e-mail me at rjonasso@uwo.ca anytime. I will check e-mail several times a day Monday to Saturday (not including any holidays) – from 10am to 6pm. I will endeavour to answer your e-mails within several hours during the above period (from 6pm to 10am, you may e-mail, but I will take longer to respond). There may be some exceptions to the above, but I will try to stick to this schedule. Please always be courteous.

2/ **Questions:** Ask questions intelligently. Do not ask questions for the sake of asking them (i.e. to show ‘interest’, to ‘stick out’ etc.). Please ask specific questions about the topics; questions like ‘can you explain this topic to me?’ are too broad. I cannot tutor each student obviously. Questions about course material can usually be answered in this course outline or on other documents. Of course, ask away! I’m especially glad to answer thoughtful questions.

3/ **Lecture Notes:** These are on OWL in Brightspace. They are now the most detailed ever. They are crucial to what I want you to know. The textbook is excellent but use it to illuminate the material in the notes (you must read it though!). Material in the textbook not covered in the notes will not be tested (even if I still hope you will read it!). If the notes and text disagree, go with me. Professor Brooks is not teaching this course. I have placed all the notes together by topics (in order). How you go about learning them is up to you, but the outline is suggesting a certain weekly breakdown.

4/ **Lecture files:** These will be posted in OWL –Brightspace by weekly breakdown and are like my usual in class lectures. How you go about learning them is up to you, but the outline is suggesting a certain weekly breakdown. They help explain the lecture notes.

5/ **Grading:** All grade values in the course outline are ‘set in stone’. There will be no re-weighting or bell-curve. No extra assignments will be given. No items will be omitted from the final grade.

The University of Western Ontario Senate has adopted a set of grade descriptors which explain the meaning of grades assigned in all university courses:

- A+ 90-100% One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
- A 80-89% Superior work which is clearly above average
- B 70-79% Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C 60-69% Competent work, meeting requirements
- D 50-59% Fair work, minimally acceptable
- F below 50% Fail

6/ **Appeals:** You may ask me to revisit your grades, but be aware that I mark carefully! YOU MUST PUT ALL CONCERNS IN WRITING. I will only change a grade if you prove to me that I am in error about certain pieces of factual information in your assignment, paper or exam. Please remember that I do not give grades according to your personality - try not to be personally offended by what you consider a poor grade (indeed, it is difficult to get to know students in an on-line course in any case). An appeal must go to me first. Your grade may

go up, stay the same or go down (I would give then you an average of the old grade and the new grade). You may go down if I discover critical things I missed the first time.

NOTE: Do not assume your past (eg. past grades, experience level, age) is the key to your future performance. Profs assume everyone wishes high grades. Please do not indicate to the prof that you need or expect a certain grade in the course.

7/ **Due dates:** All due dates (eg. essays, assignments, tests, exams) in the course outline are ‘set in stone’, unless they are moved to a later date by the instructor. Under no condition will due dates be made *earlier* than the dates indicated in the course outline.

8/ **Extensions:** As indicated in the policy of the dept., there are some legitimate excuses which may allow students to get limited extensions for essays, tests and exams. **ALL EXCUSES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFICIAL NOTE** (eg. doctor’s note) which is shown/sent to **Academic Advising**. Dates must be present to indicate the time period the student was affected. The Instructor must be notified by **Academic Advising** within 2 weeks of the missed essay or test. **I must have the clear approval of Academic Advising for any extension which requires this office.** The permission must be produced immediately in the case of the final exam. If an extension is warranted, the prof and the student will negotiate a time frame for submission. This time frame cannot be just what the student wants.

9/ **Problems with OWL/Internet:** If OWL is officially down for all students generally for a period of more than 12 hours on the day something is due, I will permit an extension to all students – generally, the next day. However, short problems cannot justify this, even to the deadline itself. My advice is do not wait to submit work to 11.59pm on due days! *Personal computer/internet/OWL issues are not valid grounds for an excuse.*

10/ If you are a student with a serious concern, whether valid or not, and you are unable to keep up with the course for a long period of time, the prof strongly advises that you drop the course. Students who get too far behind generally do not finish in any case or receive an uncharacteristically low grade. Sometimes unfortunate events occur in our lives; try to persevere, but if you cannot, it is no shame to reduce your course load in certain situations.

11/ Please do not ask the instructor for final grades (or final exam grades). These must be released by the Registrar’s Office first.

12/ NOTE: the following updated policy has been in effect for all reference requests since August 1, 2021 for past or current students

I will give students basic references (for jobs, student exchange programs etc.) if their grade is above 75% in a class in which I have taught them (final grade). **For all post-graduate references (law school, grad school, teachers’ college etc.) and scholarships, students must have completed at least 3 courses (half or full) with me beyond 1020E and have a grade of 85% or better (as an average in the courses). If students took 1020E with me, they may or may not factor the grade in this class into their average, but they will need 2 more classes**

(half or full). However, good character is an important consideration for promotion as well. I do not promote opportunists (eg. those who ask for higher grades without merit) or those with ‘entitlement’ attitudes. Make sure you give me at least 3 weeks notice for any deadlines and always give me all forms and postage. **I will do a maximum of 4 paper/online references for a student in a term.**

