

Because it is a broad field of inquiry,
the study of politics is divided into several sub-fields:

- Canadian Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory
- Comparative Politics
- Local Government
- Public Policy & Public Administration

Canadian politics examines political behavior and institutions in Canada.

International relations investigates relations among nations and the activities of international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and NATO as well as international actors such as terrorists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multi-national corporations (MNCs).

Political theory analyzes fundamental political concepts such as power and democracy and fundamental questions such as, "Why should I obey the law?".

Comparative politics analyzes and compares political systems within and across different geographic regions.

Local Government studies the basic concepts, structures, and processes of local government and politics (e.g., bylaws, municipal taxes).

Public policy examines the process by which governments make policies while *Public administration* studies the ways that these policies are implemented.

As well, a smaller sub-field, *Political methodology*, deals with the ways that political scientists ask and investigate these questions.

In all of these specialized sub-fields, your studies will have relevance to today's issues and tomorrow's developments. Whether you wish to study the theoretical or the practical side of politics, whether you want to master the details of public policy making in Canada or to learn about the implications of globalization, whether you seek to focus your attention on current issues or on the historical background to them, the Department of Political Science has much to offer you.

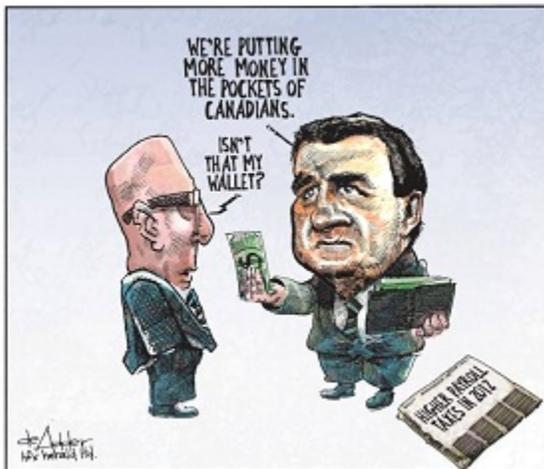
Canadian Politics

Canada is part of a complex and shifting world of issues, forces, and institutions that combine to make up our political process. Events and activities around the world have had a profound effect on Canadians.

Examples include national sovereignty, reforms in banking, gun control, climate control, and aboriginal rights.



Our department offers a wide range of courses that investigate different dimensions of Canada's system of government and its ability to deal with such issues.

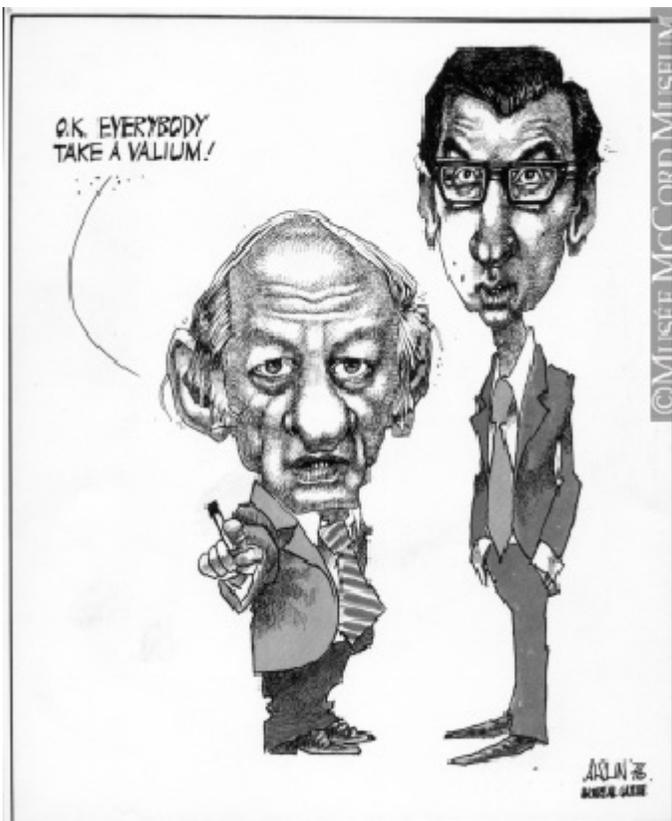


Topics include the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadian foreign policy, Canadian-American relations, federal-provincial relations, the political effects of globalization, provincial politics, concentrated economic power, the nature of Canadian political parties and interest groups, public opinion, elections and voting behaviour, Canadian economy and the ideology of a federal government.

Some interesting issues in Canadian Politics:

- *Should the federal government play a leading role in health care?* The provincial and territorial governments have most of the responsibility for delivering health and other social services. The federal government's role in health care is defined in the Health Act,

which establishes the conditions that provinces and territories must observe in order for them to be entitled to the federal monetary contributions. However, the Health Act is not binding. A provincial law that violates it is thus not invalid or illegal. The sanction is purely political and its repercussions are financial, not legal.



- *Is Recognition of Quebec as a Distinct Nation good or bad for Canada?* This notion has been part of our collective conscience probably since 1760. Will recognition of Quebec's distinct society undermine the "equality" of the provinces ?

International Relations

International Relations is the study of conflict and cooperation in the world of nation states. It considers political relationships and interactions between countries.

World events such as 9/11, the human rights crisis in Darfur, the proliferation of WMDs and the need for arms control, have emphasized the need to develop a critical understanding of international affairs.

Major questions include the origins of war and peace, the formation of foreign policy, and the effects of a global economy on domestic politics.

International relations courses grant you an opportunity to explore current international problems and important issues relevant to the study of global politics. Courses offered in the department will give you the opportunity to analyze the main theoretical approaches and works of well-known International Relations theorists; study various international organizations, such as the United Nations and NATO; analyze the instruments and processes of foreign policy-making, all with a focus on Canada's foreign policy options within the international system.



Some Questions addressed by International Relations Scholars:

What will be the character of the 21st century? Peaceful? War-prone? Orderly? Chaotic?

Inasmuch as democracies almost never fight wars with each other, do existing democracies have a national security interest in seeing democratization spread to China and other authoritarian states? If so, how can that interest be reconciled with the long-standing norm of noninterference in the internal affairs of other sovereign states?

Would IR operate differently if most leaders of states were women? What would the differences be?

The rise of fundamentalism among the world's major religions challenges traditional notions of state sovereignty. How might this trend strengthen, or weaken, the United Nations and other attempts to create supranational authority (which also challenges state sovereignty)?

Suppose that you were the mediator in negotiations between two states, each claiming the same piece of land. What principles could you follow in developing a mutually acceptable plan for ownership of the territory? What means could you use to persuade the two states to accept your plan?



Although international norms concerning human rights are becoming stronger, China and many other states continue to consider human rights an internal affair over which the state has sovereignty within its territory. Are human rights a legitimate subject for one state to raise with another? If so, how are tensions reconciled between state autonomy and universal rights?

Suppose the government of Turkey hired you as a consultant to help it develop a presentation to the EU about why Turkey should be admitted as a member. What arguments would you propose using? What kinds of rebuttals might you expect from the present EU members? How would you recommend responding?

Few effective international agreements have been reached to solve the problem of global warming. What strategies could be used to manage this problem?

Oxfam sometimes confronts corporations, such as the gold mining company in Ghana, but at other times successfully appeals to corporations' enlightened self-interest to use their power for good, as when Starbucks agreed to pay more to Ethiopian coffee growers. Are multinational corporations a force for good or for bad in international development?

Some scholars criticize the IMF (International Monetary Fund) for imposing harsh terms in its conditionality agreements with poor states. Others applaud the IMF for demanding serious reforms before providing financial resources. If you were a leader negotiating with the IMF, what kinds of terms would you be willing to agree to and what terms would you resist? Why?

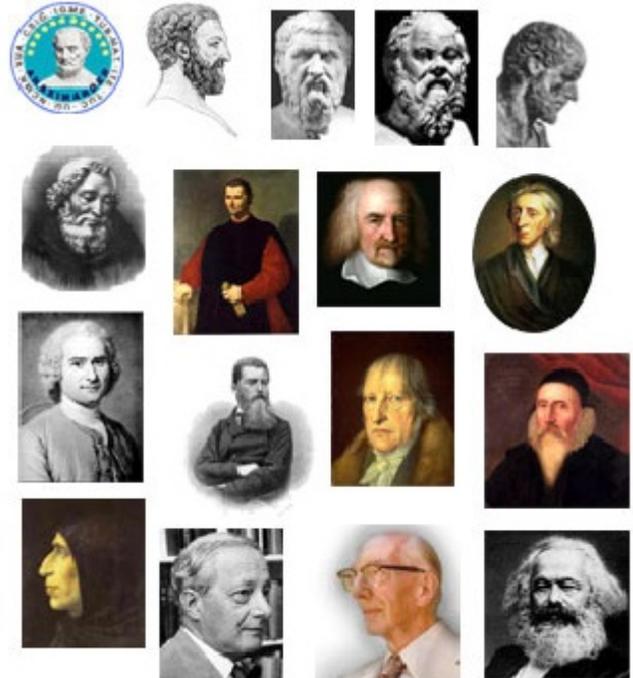
(Adapted from http://wps.ablongman.com/long_goldstein_ir_9/)

Political Theory

Political theory probes questions such as what is the relationship of the individual to society? what is the connection between individual freedom and social and political authority? How should we interpret the value of equality?

When political theorists define democracy, they use a different standard of measurement. Their definitions of democracy reflect their interest in political ideals--for example, liberty, equality, and citizenship--rather than scientific measurement.

Political theory differs from other subfields in political science in that it deals primarily with historical and normative, rather than empirical, analysis. In other words, political theorists are less concerned with the scientific measurement of political phenomena than with understanding how important political ideas develop over time.



Some Questions Addressed by Political Theorists:

What should be the relationship between individuals and society?

What are the limits of freedom?

Is freedom of speech a good idea?

When may government act against the will of a citizen, and when should a citizen act against his or her government?

What is the purpose of government? What characterizes a good government?

The aim of political theory is to illuminate which ethical values are relevant to the context and why, and to give some direction to what we should do. Political theory can explain to us the value and dangers of multiculturalism, the significance of political secularism in religiously diverse societies, the continuing relevance of some socialist ideas and explain why modernity must not be viewed only as a monolithic, homogenizing process.

Comparative Politics



Why are some countries poor and some wealthier? What accounts for regional and cultural differences? Why are the poorer countries more inclined to be governed autocratically while the richer countries are democratic?

Would the United States have invaded Iraq in 2003 if George W. Bush and Dick Cheney had possessed a good knowledge of the political culture in Iraq?

Imagine that you could design the political order (e.g., democracy in the United States, Communist Party dominance in China) for a country of your choosing.

Where would you start? Who would get to rule? What rules for political life would you choose? Could you make rules that would be fair to everyone? If not, whom would these rules favor and whom would they disadvantage? Would they be rules that even those at the “bottom” of the social order, the poorest and least powerful people, would agree to? What would be the rules for changing the rules?

These are difficult questions because to answer them in a meaningful way requires an understanding of why and how different countries of the world are governed differently. With so many choices to make, it is easy to see why the job of designing a constitution would be such a difficult one.

It could, however, be made easier. One might start by evaluating the existing possibilities found in various forms of government in the world.

Adapted from: Kopstein, J. & Lichbach, M. (Eds.) (2005). *Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order* (Second Edition). Cambridge University Press

Local government examines such areas as:

- the extent to which local governments are “creatures of the provinces” and how this limits their scope for action;
- the longstanding complaints of local governments that they have inadequate financing;
- the need for coordination between levels of government;
- the historical evolution of local government structures;
- arguments for the introduction of party politics into the local government arena;
- and the question of “who holds power at the local level?”

Public Policy & Public Administration

Public policy examines the implementation of all types of government policies, particularly those related to macroeconomic policy, social policy, defense, health care, education, economic growth, urban renewal, Aboriginal rights, regional development, and environmental protection.

Public *administration* emphasizes the structure and operation of bureaucracies and organizations, including budgeting, personnel, and formal and informal internal controls.

Public *policy* draws upon a variety of disciplines, such as economics, political science, statistics, and other social sciences. Its central focus is on the environment, substance, and effects of policies. It examines what governments do, why, and what the consequences are for the political, social, and economic fabric of a nation by studying the following:

- forces - political, social, economic, psychological - that shape administrative goals and performance processes
 - by which policies are formulated, implemented and changed
- relationships between groups and organizations
- theory and practice of bureaucratic politics
- evaluation of the effects of policies on society

However, the two are inextricably linked and the public good is best achieved when both are equally considered in achieving government goals and objectives (Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley).

For example, most provincial health care systems in Canada combine public, private non-profit, and private for-profit delivery. Within this context, public policy and administration might examine:

What can be gained from introducing competition among hospital and physician services while maintaining a public

payment system?

What has been learned about competition in health care markets in the context of expanding the role of the private sector?

Is expanding private provision of health care services a panacea for all of the ills of the health care system or is it the first calamitous step toward the end of publicly-financed health care?

