

**Political Science 2103A – Current Issues in Canadian Politics
Course Outline, Fall 2013.**

Course Instructor: Dr. Vuk Radmilovic

Course Meetings: Wednesday 10:30-12:30, SSC 2024

Office: SSC 4162.

Office Hours: Wednesday, 3-4pm (or by appointment).

E-mail: vradmilo@uwo.ca

Contact Information: Professor will do his best to reply to e-mails within 48 hours (**excluding weekends**). Do note that university policy precludes the Professors and T.A.s from responding to email messages that were not sent from a Western email account.

Introduction:

This course will focus on understanding the operation of Canadian parliamentary government with an aim of examining the ways in which it could be reformed to improve its democratic performance. Four specific issues that have attracted a lot of recent interest and controversy will be examined:

1. The operation of responsible government, and the role of constitutional conventions surrounding the exercise of Governor Generals' powers to accept/refuse prime ministerial advice for prorogation and dissolution of Parliament.
2. The role of the Canadian Senate and Senate reform.
3. Concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister.
4. Electoral System Reform.

In approaching these issues the focus will be on understanding the status quo and analyzing proposals for change.

Required Textbook:

Peter Aucoin, Mark D. Jarvis and Lori Turnbull. 2011. *Democratizing the Constitution: Reforming Responsible Government*. Emond Montgomery Publications, Toronto, Canada.

ISBN: 9781552394632

Students will be required to read a number of additional materials which will be available through the UWO library or through the OWL course page.

Evaluation:

- *Participation and Attendance (15%).*
Regular attendance is critical for achieving success in the class and ensuring an overall valuable experience in the course. Students are expected to be prepared for the class and to have completed their required readings before arriving to class. The students will also have an opportunity to engage in discussions of a given week's topic(s). Course lectures and reading materials are designed to complement one another, and regular attendance of classes is essential for a successful completion of the course.
- *Midterm (35%) – HELD OCTOBER 23RD, IN CLASS.*
Midterm will occur in-class and it will last one hour. It will be composed of a number of multiple choice and short-answer questions. Students will be provided guidance on how to prepare for the midterm during lectures.
- *Final Exam (50%).*
Students will be asked to provide short-answer and essay responses to a series of questions. Guidance on how to prepare for the final exam will be provided during the last week of classes.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:

September 11th – Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Readings: None.

September 18th – Week 2: Responsible Government I

- Hogg - Chapter 9, Responsible Government, 9.1 – 9.24.
- Aucoin et al., 2011 – Chapter 1: Introduction: A Fundamental Democratic Problem, pp. 1-27.

September 25th – Week 3: Responsible Government II

- Hogg – Chapter 9, Responsible Government, 9.24 – 9.40.

October 2nd – Week 4: Responsible Government III

- Aucoin et al., 2011, Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 75-110.

October 9th – Week 5: Responsible Government IV

- Tom Flanagan. (2009). "Only Voters Have the Right to Decide on the Coalition," *The Globe and Mail*, January 9, pg. A.13.
- *Anonymous*, (2009). "What happens next if PM loses vote on coming budget?" *Toronto Star*, January 23, pg. AA.6.
- Aucoin et al. 2011, Chapter 5 "Letting the People Decide: When Elections Aren't Enough." pp. 155-201.

October 16th – Week 6: Prime-Ministerial Government

- Aucoin et al, 2011: Chapter 4: The Prime Minister and the House of Commons: The Democracy Deficit.

October 23rd – Week 7: Midterm

- No readings.

October 30th – Week 8: Reforming Responsible Government

- Aucoin et al. 2011, "Chapter 6: Conclusion: Reforming Responsible Government," pp. 203-251.

November 6th – Week 9: Electoral System Reform

- Aucoin et al. 2011, Chapter 5 "Letting the People Decide: When Elections Aren't Enough." (Revisit pages 155-173 only).
- Law Commission of Canada. *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Chapter 2: "Reviewing Electoral Systems and Reform Proposals in Canada." pp. 19-44.
- Wiseman, "Skeptical Reflections on Proportional Representation," *Policy Options*, November 1997, pp. 15-18.

November 13th – Week 10: Senate Reform I

- Stephen Brooks, *Canadian Democracy*, 7th Edition, pp. 196-197 (What is Federalism) and pp. 215-217 (Centre-Periphery Relations).
- Hogg – Chapter 9, Responsible Government. (*Revisit pages 9.17-9.20 only*).
- Ronald L. Watts, "Federal Second Chambers Compared," in *The Democratic Dilemma: Reforming the Canadian Senate*. McGill-Queen's University Press. 2009. pp. 35-48.

November 20th – Week 11: Senate Reform II

- David E. Smith, "The Senate of Canada and the Conundrum of Reform," in *The Democratic Dilemma: Reforming the Canadian Senate*. McGill-Queen's University Press. 2009. pp. 11-26.
- Attorney General of Canada. Factum submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada in the Senate Reference Case. July 31st, 2013.

November 27th – Week 12: Senate Reform III

- Sharman, *Political Legitimacy for an Appointed Senate*, IRPP Choices, September 2008, pp. 1-26.
- Matthew Mendelsohn, *A Viable Path to Senate Reform*, Mowat Centre for Policy Innovation, April 2013, pp. 1-12.

December 4th – Week 13: Overview and Final Exam Preparation.

**APPENDIX TO UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Prerequisite checking - the student's responsibility

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

Essay course requirements

With the exception of 1000-level courses, most courses in the Department of Political Science are essay courses. Total written assignments (excluding examinations) will be at least 3,000 words in Politics 1020E, at least 5,000 words in a full course numbered 2000 or above, and at least 2,500 words in a half course numbered 2000 or above.

Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

"Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning.

Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence,
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence."

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work (refer to current *Western Academic Calendar* (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/>))

"**Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams** - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grade adjustments

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

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>."

Submission of Course Requirements

ESSAYS, ASSIGNMENTS, TAKE-HOME EXAMS **MUST** BE SUBMITTED ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES SPECIFIED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR (I.E., IN CLASS, DURING OFFICE HOURS, TA'S OFFICE HOURS) OR UNDER THE INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR.

THE MAIN OFFICE DOES NOT DATE-STAMP OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE ABOVE.

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

Students registered in Social Science should refer to <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/> <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/havingproblems.asp> for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

Plagiarism

"Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence." (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. 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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: "Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating."

Note: Information excerpted and quoted above are Senate regulations from the Handbook of Scholarship and Academic Policy. <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

PLAGIARISM*

In writing scholarly papers, you must keep firmly in mind the need to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged borrowing of another writer's words or ideas. Different forms of writing require different types of acknowledgement. The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of publication, and page number.

Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writers' ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source, these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases in their suspension from the University.

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Adopted by the council of the Faculty of Social Science, October, 1970; approved by the Dept. of History August 13, 1991

Accessibility at Western: Please contact poliscie@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.