

**The University of Western Ontario
Department of Political Science
Political Science 2103F
Current Issues in Canadian Politics
Fall 2020**

Instructor: Cameron D. Anderson

Virtual Office Hours: Thursday 10am-11:30am (see below for details)

Email: cander54@uwo.ca

Course Description:

This lecture course will critically assess salient contemporary issues within Canadian politics. The course addresses many of the main aspects of Canadian politics but will do so in a question-oriented manner that is designed to elicit a critical evaluation of the topic. Topics will include the major institutions of Canadian government (including federalism and Parliament), aspects of citizen participation in politics (including political parties, voting in elections, the electoral system and the role of third parties), and important political, social and economic issues (including language, gender, Aboriginal, region) that characterize the current Canadian experience. Where possible, each topic will be considered in light of the influence of and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course students will:

- Be able to demonstrate understanding the main aspects of some Canadian political institutions and processes
- Be able to demonstrate understanding of diverse theories of and approaches to the study of Canadian politics
- Be able to critically understand and assess the functioning of democratic politics in Canada

Course Readings:

Brooks, Stephen. 2020. Canadian Democracy. (9th edition) Toronto: Oxford University Press.

This book is available in the UWO bookstore and, alternatively, online as an e-book (<https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/canadian-democracy-9e-stephen-brooks-v9780199032549?term=9780199032549>).

Additional Readings available through course page on OWL or online through the Western Library's website.

Course Requirements:

Midterm Exam 40%

Final Exam 60%

Important Course Policies

1.) Exams: Both of these exams will be multiple choice-only. They will be conducted through the OWL course page. They will be timed - meaning that you will have a limited amount of time to complete the exam. The exam will also be linear – meaning that once you have answered a question you will not be able to go back to review prior answers and will only be able to proceed forward through the exam. The first exam will be scheduled during the week of October 26-30. The second exam will be scheduled during the final exam period.

2.) Lectures: Given the current pandemic situation, public health directives and the decisions of the University of Western Ontario for on campus meetings, the delivery of content for this course will be entirely online. Lectures will be recorded with attendant power point slides and posted each week of the course. Lectures will be in smaller 20-25 minute segments and you should expect between 2-4 lecture segments per week. All lecture segments should be posted by Monday evening for that week's topic.

3.) Student engagement: An important part of any university course is the ability to interact with the professor to ask questions, clarify material and further engage with the course topics. To ensure that there is the opportunity for such interaction, I will be engaging in three initiatives. The first is simply to respond to emails as they are sent by students in the class. The second is to set up a Chat room on OWL to allow students to post and respond to questions arising from the textbook, lecture or the application of this material to current events ongoing. I will periodically check in on the Chat room through the term and respond to questions posted there. The last means of engaging with me will be through virtual office hours. I will set up a zoom meeting link and make myself available for individual consultation once a week. This will occur on Thursday mornings from 10am-11:30am. To attend these office hours, please log in to zoom and join the waiting room. I will meet with students in the order that they entered the waiting room. This office hour meeting link will be posted in OWL at the beginning of the course.

4.) Changes to syllabus: Please note that I will do everything I can to stick with the plan for the course laid out in this syllabus. This said, I reserve the right to make minor and reasonable alterations to the topics, readings and exam dates should unforeseen circumstances arise.

Course Topics and Readings:

I. Introducing Canadian Politics (and its various issues):

Week 1 (September 9-18) Introduction and Overview

Brooks Chapter 1

II. Some Institutions of Canadian Government and their issues:

Week 2 (September 21-25) Federalism – What is federalism and does it help Canada function?

Brooks Chapter 8

Béland, D., Lecours, A., Paquet, M., & Tombe, T. (2020). A Critical Juncture in Fiscal Federalism? Canada's Response to COVID-19. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-5. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000323.

Hanniman, K. (2020). COVID-19, Fiscal Federalism and Provincial Debt: Have We Reached a Critical Juncture? *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-7. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000621

Week 3 (September 28-October 2) Parliament – Just how dysfunctional is it?

Brooks Chapter 9

Malloy, J. (2020). The Adaptation of Parliament's Multiple Roles to COVID-19. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-5. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000426

Rayment, E., & VandenBeukel, J. (2020). Pandemic Parliaments: Canadian Legislatures in a Time of Crisis. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-6. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000499

III. Participation Issues

Week 4 (October 5-9) i. Political Parties – Are parties serving Canadian Democracy or just self-serving?

Brooks Chapter 11 (pp. 292-313)

ii. Third Parties – Do third parties exert too much influence in Canadian Politics?

Brooks Chapter 11 (pp.327-331)

Montpetit, Eric. "Are Interest Groups Useful or Harmful? Take Two" in Bickerton and Gagnon (eds.) *Canadian Politics* (6e) Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Week 5 (October 12-16) Voting and Elections – Are enough people participating in Canadian elections?

Brooks Chapter 11 (pp.320-327)

Kanji, M. and K. Archer. 2002. The Theories of Voting and Their Applicability in Canada. In Everitt and O'Neill (eds.) *Citizen Politics*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Week 6 (October 19-23) Electoral System – Should we change our electoral system?

Brooks Chapter 11 (pp.317-320)

McDougall, B. 2016. Stick with the electoral system we have. *Policy Options*.

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2016/stick-with-the-electoral-system-we-have/>

Thomas, P. G. 2016. Electoral Reform and the pros and cons of compulsory voting.

Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/july-2016/electoral-reform-and-the-pros-and-cons-of-compulsory-voting/>

Week 7 (October 26-30) Public Opinion – (How) does the Canadian public form opinions about issues?

Gidengil, E. 2002. Bringing Politics Back In: Recent Developments in the Study of Public Opinion in Canada. In Everitt and O’Neill (eds.) *Citizen Politics*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Merkley, E., Bridgman, A., Loewen, P., Owen, T., Ruths, D., & Zhilin, O. (2020). A Rare Moment of Cross-Partisan Consensus: Elite and Public Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-8.

doi:10.1017/S000842392000031.

Pickup, M., Stecula, D., & Van der Linden, C. (2020). Novel Coronavirus, Old Partisanship: COVID-19 Attitudes and Behaviours in the United States and Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 53(2), 357-364. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000463

***** Midterm Exam*****

Week of October 26-30 – exact date and time TBD

*****Fall Term Reading Week*****

No class during week of November 2-8

IV. Enduring Issues in Canadian Politics

Week 8 (November 9-13) Linguistic and Regional Issues – How do language, economics and geography divide Canada? Part 1

Brooks Chapter 5 and 14

Week 9 (November 16-20) Linguistic and Regional Issues – How do language, economics and geography divide Canada? Part 2

Brooks Chapter 5 and 14

Chouinard, S., & Normand, M. (2020). Talk COVID to Me: Language Rights and Canadian Government Responses to the Pandemic. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 53(2), 259-264. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000359

Week 10 (November 23-27) Gender – (Does) the gender divide remain(s)?

Brooks Chapter 15

De Silva, N. (2020). A Human Rights Approach to Emergency Response? The Advocacy of Canada's Human Rights Commissions during the COVID-19 Crisis. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-7. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000438

Week 11 (November 30-December 4) Indigenous Politics – Canada’s national shame?

Brooks Chapter 16

De Silva, N. (2020). A Human Rights Approach to Emergency Response? The Advocacy of Canada's Human Rights Commissions during the COVID-19 Crisis. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 1-7. doi:10.1017/S0008423920000438

**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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.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.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

EXAMINATIONS/ATTENDANCE (Sen. Min. Feb.4/49, May 23/58, S.94, S.3538, S.3632, S.04-097) A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations: 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year. 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Medical Policy, Late Assignments, etc.

Students registered in Social Science should refer to

https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html 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.

University Policy on Cheating and Academic Misconduct

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.

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html

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.

*Reprinted by permission of the Department of History

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

- The Registrar's office can be accessed for Student Support Services at www.registrar.uwo.ca
- Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC listed here) can be reached at:
<https://westernusc.ca/your-services/>
- Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://sdc.uwo.ca/>
- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Procedures for Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes: Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;

- For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of

registration in order to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are **not** an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- must communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration **is not** normally intended for students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability. These students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability.

Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). These students should access support through Student Health and Wellness and Learning Skills Services in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Form

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the **online Self-Reported Absence portal**. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities **within 48 hours or less**.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

Students will be allowed:

- a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April;
- a maximum of one self-reported absence between May and August.

Any absences in excess of the number designated above, regardless of duration, will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

- The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;

- The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30 am on the day following the last day of classes each semester regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- Self-reported absences **will not be** allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period;
- Self-reporting **may not be** used for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.
- students must be in touch with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a medical absence not covered by existing Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation, will be required to provide documentation in person to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in the form of a completed, signed Student Medical Certificate (SMC) where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Non-Medical Absence

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence will be required to provide appropriate documentation to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported Absences.