

**POL 1030A:  
A Beginner's Guide to Canada  
Fall 2024**

**Draft Date : 5 July 2024.**

**The Final version of the syllabus will be posted on OWL by September 7, 2024.**

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Christopher Alcantara  
**Office:** Contact Instructor  
**Course Questions:** Please post your questions on the OWL Discussions page first.  
**Email:** For questions specific to your situation, contact [calcanta@uwo.ca](mailto:calcanta@uwo.ca)

**Course Venue/Time:** Online – Asynchronous on OWL Brightspace

**Course Structure:**

- Students must complete the assigned readings BEFORE watching the recorded lectures on OWL.
- Each week's lectures will be released on Sunday at 6am, starting on Sunday Sept. 8 for week 1, Sunday Sept. 15 for week 2, etc. Please view the lectures sometime during that week before the next set of lectures is released.
- Students will complete two one-hour tests on OWL over the course of the term, with the first one occurring on Week 4 (Friday Oct. 4). The test can be completed anytime between 6am and 10pm on that day. See the schedule below. You are expected to complete the test with **no aids**, human, AI or otherwise.
- To pass this course, **students must complete ALL tests and the final exam** and achieve the minimum course grade to pass, as per university regulations. Failure to meet these requirements will result in an automatic failure in the course.
- Each Thursday from 10am to 10:30am, the instructor will host a live zoom meeting where students can ask questions. Students can also ask questions using the Discussions tool in OWL. The zoom invite for will be available on OWL.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides international students, recent immigrants, and others with a comprehensive overview of Canada. Its purpose is to help mainly newcomers gain a better understanding of what it means to live, study, and work in Canada, with a focus on describing Canada's political and legal system, its key policy debates, and its social and economic bases. Specific topics may include Indigenous rights and decolonization, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, capitalism, climate change, education policy, federalism, foreign policy, health care policy, housing policy, the legal system, immigration, Quebec, multiculturalism, and value change. Students will learn about the key characteristics of Canada through lectures, guest speakers, readings, videos, and other materials.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the term, students should be able to:

- Describe the nature and evolution of Canada's political, economic and legal systems;
- Explain the historical and on-going importance of Quebec and Indigenous peoples to Canada and Canadian identity;
- Assess the relationship between Canadian policies and the unique and complex makeup of Canadian society;
- Synthesize information on Canada from a variety of sources.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS:

- Donald Wright, 2020. *Canada: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
  - [https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2024A&courses%5B0%5D=650\\_UW/POL\\_1030A](https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2024A&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/POL_1030A)
- Other readings are available through OWL, in the library, and/or online.

## LIST OF ASSIGNMENTS

<p><b>1) Two Tests on the Readings and the Lectures on OWL Brightspace: 50%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Week 4, Friday Oct. 4, anytime between 6am and 10pm: 25%</li><li>• Week 7, Friday Oct. 25, anytime between 6am and 10pm: 25%</li></ul> <p><b>2) Final Exam on OWL Brightspace: 50%</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be scheduled by the Registrar's Office.</li></ul> <p><b>Total: 100% of Course Grade</b></p>
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## ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

### 1) Two One-Hour Tests 50%

Students will write a test on OWL on the Fridays of Weeks 4 and 7 (Oct. 4 and Oct. 25). Each test will be based on all course materials (e.g. lectures and readings) since the beginning of the term (for Test 1) or the last test written (for Test 2). The tests are NOT cumulative. Students will have ONE hour to complete the test and may access the test at any time between 6am and 10pm on the day that the test is scheduled to occur. The test is **linear**, which means you cannot go back to a question once you have answered it.

Students are expected to complete the tests alone and with **no aids**, human, AI (e.g. ChatGPT) or otherwise.

Once you submit your test, you will not be able to view the questions and your answers again nor will you receive any feedback at the end of each test beyond your grade. This is to discourage cheating and the sharing of information about the tests.

## 2) Final Exam

50%

Students will write a final exam on OWL during the exam period as scheduled by the Registrar's Office. It will assess students' knowledge of ALL course materials (e.g. the final exam IS cumulative), but with a very strong emphasis on course materials from the last test onwards. The final exam is **linear** which means you cannot go back once you answer a question.

### A NOTE ON MISSED TESTS AND EXTENSIONS

You are expected to write each test on OWL Brightspace on the scheduled dates, Friday Oct. 4 and Friday Oct. 25, anytime between 6am and 10pm. If you require academic consideration in case of illness and/or another circumstance that prevents you from writing on these dates, you may request and will automatically receive an extension for up to 7 days from the scheduled date. For Test 1, you may write the makeup test any time between 6am on Friday Oct. 4 and 10pm on Friday Oct. 11. For Test 2, you may write the makeup test any time between 6am on Friday Oct. 25 and 10pm on Friday Nov. 1. To receive an extension, simply email the professor with your name and the following in the subject line – "I request an extension" and it will be automatically approved. **There is no need to provide any additional information, nor will you need to provide supporting documentation.** No further academic considerations will be made for either test after Oct. 11 and Nov. 1. **In other words, supporting documentation submitted to your Academic Counselling Office to cover the time frame between Oct. 4 and Oct. 11, and Oct. 25 and Nov. 1 will not result in a further extension being granted.** In cases where extenuating circumstances exist, students are advised to contact their Academic Counselling Office to discuss other options. Please be aware that receiving a mark of zero on this course component and/or lost time because of an extended absence in this course will negatively impact the learning outcomes and your ability to be successful in this course.

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## CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE

### Week 1 (Sept. 8): Course Details and an Overview of Canada

READ:

- Wright Introduction.
- Wright Chapter 1: Beginnings.

### Week 2 (Sept. 15): Canadian Values and Value Change

READ:

- Jennifer Ditchburn. 2016. "Our constantly evolving Canadian values." *Policy Options* <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/september-2016/our-constantly-evolving-canadian-values/>

### **Week 3 (Sept. 22): Canada's Political System**

READ:

- Alex Marland and Jared Wesley. 2020. "Chapter 1: Overview of Canadian Politics." *Inside Canadian Politics* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press.

### **Week 4 (Sept. 29): Canadian Political Economy**

READ:

- Heather Whiteside. 2020. "Introduction: Changes, Crises, and Conflicts in Canadian Political Economy." *Canadian Political Economy*. Edited by Heather Whiteside. University of Toronto Press. Read only pp. 3-17.

### **Week 5 (Oct. 6): Indigenous-Settler Relations**

READ:

- Wright Chapter 2: Dispossessions.
- Arthur Manuel. 2017. "In Canada, white supremacy is the law of the land." *Now Toronto*. October 26. Available at: <https://nowtoronto.com/news/in-canada-white-supremacy-is-the-law-of-the-land/>

### **Week 6 (Oct. 13): FALL READING WEEK – NO LECTURES OR READINGS THIS WEEK**

### **Week 7 (Oct. 20): Quebec and the West**

READ:

- Wright Chapter 3: Nationalisms.
- Lisa Young and Loleen Berdahl. 2022. "Standing up to Ottawa: Western alienation shifts into Prairie constitutional challenges." *Policy Options* December 14. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2022/western-alienation-constitutional-challenges/>

### **Week 8 (Oct. 27): Multiculturalism and Immigration**

READ:

- Tina J. Park. 2021. "Tackling racism against Asian-Canadians as multiculturalism turns 50." *Policy Options*. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/tackling-racism-against-asian-canadians-as-multiculturalism-turns-50/>
- Mireille Paquet. "Canada's merit-based immigration system is no magic bullet." *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/canadas-merit-based-immigration-system-is-no-magic-bullet-90923>
- Optional Reading – The Canadian Citizenship guide (which newcomers use to prepare for the [citizenship test](#)): <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada.html>

### **Week 9 (Nov. 3): The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

READ:

- Wright Chapter 4: Rights.
- Jonathan Rudin. 2018. "The (in)justice system and Indigenous people." *Policy Options* <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/april-2018/the-injustice-system-and-indigenous-people/>
- Optional Reading - Peruse this website on the Charter: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccd1/>

### **Week 10 (Nov. 10): Research in Political Science**

READ:

- Complete the module on the OWL page.

### **Week 11 (Nov. 17): Social Movements**

READ:

- Alex Marland and Jared Wesley. 2020. "Chapter 12: Interest Groups and Social Movements." *Inside Canadian Politics* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press.

### **Week 12 (Nov. 24): Public Policy and Racial Inequality**

READ:

- Keith Banting and Debra Thompson. 2021. "The Puzzling Persistence of Racial Inequality in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 54 (4): 870–891. Doi: 10.1017/S0008423921000585.

### **Week 13 (Dec. 1): Canadian Social Policy: The Education and Health Care Systems**

READ:

- Jane Jenson. 2010. "Chapter 23: Continuities and Change in the Design of Canada's Social Architecture." *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*. Oxford University Press: 417-433. Available for free here: <https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/28243/chapter/213350177>

## COURSE POLICIES

### ***Academic Offences and Plagiarism:***

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy about what constitutes a scholastic offence, here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_and\\_ergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_and_ergrad.pdf)

That policy reads:

“Scholastic Offences include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Plagiarism, which may be defined as “The act or an instance of copying or stealing another’s words or ideas and attributing them as one’s own.” Excerpted from Black’s Law Dictionary, West Group, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170. This concept applies with equal force to all assignments, including laboratory reports, diagrams, and computer projects. Students wishing more detailed information should consult their instructor, Department Chair, or Dean’s Office. In addition, they may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available in the University’s libraries. Information about these resources can be found at: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html>
2. Cheating on an examination or falsifying material subject to academic evaluation.
3. Submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials; or falsifying records, transcripts or other academic documents.
4. Submitting a false medical or other such certificate under false pretences.
5. a) Improperly obtaining, through theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, an examination paper prior to the date and time for writing such an examination. b) Unauthorized possession of an examination paper, however obtained, prior to the date and time for writing such an examination, unless the student reports the matter to the instructor, the relevant Department, or the Registrar as soon as possible after receiving the paper in question.
6. Impersonating a candidate at an examination or availing oneself of the results of such an impersonation.
7. Intentionally interfering in any way with any person's scholastic work.
8. Submitting for credit in any course or program of study, without the knowledge and written approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which

credit has been obtained previously or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

9. Aiding or abetting any such offence.”

**Note that point 8 refers to a situation in which a student submits a paper written for a previous or concurrent course. If you do this, you are committing a scholastic offense. Instead, you must produce new work for each class unless you have obtained the written permission of all course instructors involved.**

***Extensions and Academic Consideration for Student Absence:***

Extensions are not generally given. When there are genuine and unavoidable family or medical circumstances, you may seek academic accommodation.

“University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

“If you fail to hand in an assignment, but are pursuing academic accommodation, **please advise your professor immediately.**

***A Note Regarding Computer Problems:***

Students are expected to back up their written work and lecture/tutorial notes. Furthermore, students will be responsible for finding replacement lecture/tutorial notes where they fail to back-up their files.

***Religious Accommodation***

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

### ***Accommodation Policies***

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic\\_Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

### ***Use of Electronic Devices:***

Laptops, iPads, smartphones and related devices are amazing tools, with remarkable capabilities. Among other things, they allow us to download PowerPoint slides, maintain a portable work station, keep neatly typed lecture notes, and stay in touch with friends through social networking sites, texting, and instant messaging. Because activities that provide entertainment for an individual (e.g., movie trailers, party photos, status updates) often prove distracting for others, there is a need to follow basic rules of electronic etiquette in a classroom setting. Whether you are sitting with friends or by yourself, please consider the impact of your electronic activities on those who are attempting to listen to lectures, watch class films, and participate in discussions. **All students are expected to comply with a simple principle: if it might distract someone sitting beside you or near you, don't do it.**

### ***Lecture Copyright:***

*The course instructors claim material and image copyright so please ask for permission if you want to audio record or video record any part of the course.*

### ***Statement on Contact***

If you have questions or concerns, or wish to meet the course instructor in person, you can contact us via email or by attending posted office hours. **Please expect at least a 48 hour delay in receiving a response** to emails, although at our discretion responses may occur sooner.

### ***Statements concerning Online Etiquette***

Some components of this course may involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- please "arrive" to class on time
- please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)



- ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- to minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- [suggested for classes larger than 30 students] In order to give us optimum bandwidth and web quality, please turn off your video camera for the entire class unless you are invited to speak
- [suggested for cases where video is used] please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor's request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- unless invited by your instructor, do **not** share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- if you wish to speak, use the "raise hand" function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking
- self-identify when speaking.
- remember to mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise)

General considerations of "netiquette":

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. "Flaming" is never appropriate.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite the ideas of others appropriately.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

## **Support Services**

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam

conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/academic_counselling/)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html).

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

Learning-skills counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.