

## **POLSCI 2D03: CANADIAN DEMOCRACY** **Spring 2020**

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**Lecture:** Tues. & Thurs. 6:30-9:30  
reserved time for guest lectures through  
Zoom

**Room:** ONLINE  
**Contact:** 905-320-8320  
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## **Course Description**

This course examines the basic structure and operation of democracy in Canada, thereby bringing democracy to life. Class lectures will focus on the structures underlying Canada's governing system, providing students with a detailed understanding of its rules and institutions. Current events and classic debates will frequently be employed as examples and used as a basis for class and tutorial discussions. Knowing the rules will equip students with the ability to make informed predictions for both political behaviour and future political outcomes. Guest lecturers from practitioners will also shed light on how these rules work in practice.

## **Course Objectives**

Our core objective will be to understand how the governing structures have evolved over time, and why institutions and institutional design are important for explaining the dynamics of political outcomes in Canada.

Student performance in this course is evaluated primarily on the basis of original written work and a final exam.

The assignment focus is designed to develop writing and research skills, but also to engage students with democratic life in Canada.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Stephen Brooks, *Canadian Democracy*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, available on redshelf.com
- Gidengil and Bastedo, eds. **Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up**, UBC Press, 2014, the professor will share the required chapters on Avenue.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

Assignment 1 – 15% due May 19, 2020, 6:30pm

Assignment 2 – 15% due May 26, 2020, 6:30 pm

Assignment 3 – 25% due June 2, 2020, 6:30 pm

Guest Lecture Zoom Attendance - 15%

Final Take-Home Exam - 30%, due June 18, 2020, 6:30 pm

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

Students will not attend lectures, but instead will keep up with assigned readings and PowerPoints which will be posted weekly. They are to complete two short analysis assignments and one essay for this course (to be handed in on Avenue to Learn), as well as attendance at 3 of 4 guest lectures and a course introduction on Zoom.

The analysis assignments are designed to develop the ability to read and analyze academic material. This will involve a half page of summary and a half page of analysis (double spaced, Times New Roman) of independent reading from the Democracy from the Ground Up text. Students will be responsible for two of three readings. Assignment details will follow. There will also be an introductory lecture on Zoom.

For the essay, students will be asked to engage critically with materials covered in class by constructing an argument which is supported by **academic** resources. Details of assignment topics will follow. Your analysis should be summarized in a clear statement in the first paragraph. The reader should be very clear on what you are arguing. While the balance of the response will defend your argument, you should also acknowledge the counterargument and seek to demonstrate that your argument is superior.

The essay should be 8 pages in total (excluding the bibliography and title page), 12 pt Times New Roman font with standard margins. Include a title page with your name, the date, the course number. A minimum of at least **5 academic sources** should be cited, not including course readings, which can also be included in your argument. All essays will be graded using a course rubric which will be provided.

All assignments should be submitted on Avenue to learn and 'Turnitin' by the deadline, unless other arrangements have been made with the professor prior to the due date.

Attendance will be taken for guest lectures in Zoom. The guest lectures will be scheduled during allotted class time, and the final schedule and log in details will follow—tentative schedule is subject to change.

The final exam will cover material from readings and lecture, as well as additional discussion from guest lectures. There will be three short answer questions that require understanding key terms in the course, and two essay questions that require the ability to demonstrate understanding of both sides of the argument. Each key term should be one page, and essays should be two (Times New Roman).

In completing the written assignments, students must cite all facts and figures that are not common knowledge and must cite all ideas that are borrowed from other authors including the text, **including page references**. Students must use a recognized standard format correctly when formatting their bibliographies, references, and footnotes. Failure to do so will result in a substantial penalty in calculating your assignment grade.

Cornell University provides useful online guides to the APA and MLA citation styles: [Cornell University Citation Management](#)

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (May 5, 2020)**

#### **Course Introduction to Political Life in Canada**

Readings:

- Chapter 1, Introduction to Political Life in Canada (CD)

**Guest Lecture: Steve Paikin, Host of The Agenda on TVO, May 5 at 6:30pm**

### **Week 2 (May 12, 2020)**

#### **The Constitution and Rights and Freedoms**

Readings:

- Chapters 6 and 7, “The Constitution” (CD)

### **Week 3 (May 19, 2020)**

#### **The Principle of Responsible Government and The Political Executive**

Readings:

- Chapter 9, “The Machinery of Government” (CD)
- Chapter 10, “Democratic Responsiveness in the House of Commons (CDGU)
- **Analysis Due on May 19<sup>th</sup> by 6:30pm**

**Guest Lecture: Michael Chong, MP for Halton Hills, May 19 at 6:30pm**

### **Week 4 (May 26, 2020)**

#### **Parliament and Lawmaking and the Administrative State**

Readings:

- Chapter 10, “The Administrative State” (CD)
- Chapter 9, “MPs on the Home Front” (CDGU)
- **Analysis Due May 26 by 6:30 pm**

**Guest Lecture: Doly Begum, MPP for Scarborough Southwest, May 26 at 6:30pm**

### **Week 5 (June 2, 2020)**

#### **Parties and Elections**

Readings:

- Chapter 11, “Parties and Elections” (CD)
- Chapter 11, “A Tale of Two Perspectives” (CDGU)

Guest Lecture: Nik Lopez, Research Manager, Maru, June 2 at 6:30pm

- **Analysis Due by June 2 by 6:30 pm**

### **Week 6 (June 9, 2020)**

#### **Federalism in Canada**

Readings:

- Chapter 8, "Federalism" (CD)
- **Essays due by June 9 by 6:30 pm**

### **Week 7 (June 16)**

#### **Media as Gatekeeper**

Readings:

- Chapter 13, "The Media" (CD)
- **Take Home Exam distributed Tuesday June 16 at 9am Due June 18 by 6:30pm**

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments should be submitted online through the Avenue to Learn portal, prior to the beginning of class.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

As students are required to hand in one of three readings analysis assignments, not assignments will accepted after the deadline.

The final take home exam will also not be accepted late.

Extensions for papers must be granted by the professor prior to the date due – no exceptions. Late papers will receive a 5% penalty for every 24-hour period after the due date, including weekends.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](#).

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need

for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.