

**CANADIAN DEMOCRACY**  
**POLSCI 2D03**  
**Summer 2022**

**Instructor:** Lev Marder  
**Email:** marderl@mcmaster.ca  
**Lecture:** Tu+Th 6:30-9:30  
**Room:** ABB 270

**Office:** ABB 270  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays 5-6

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## **Course Description**

In this course, we will become familiar with the institutions and practices that define democracy in Canada. We will examine their vibrant roots, current expressions, and challenges to thriving. After the first unit that will look at the roots from different perspectives, three units will focus on how the executive, judiciary, and legislative powers both facilitate and pose challenges for democracy in Canada—the practices and institutions they give rise to and their limitations. The last three units will turn our attention to how Canadian democracy endeavours to manage diversity: from federalism to concerns around national self-determination and treatment of Indigenous peoples.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Describe the historical roots of the main institutions and practices of Canadian democracy
- Distinguish between the roles that the executive, judiciary and the legislative play in Canadian democracy
- Discuss both the sources of conflict and conflict alleviation in the Canadian democratic system
- Analyze the ways in which key players including citizens, national groups, and indigenous peoples can participate in the democratic process and the obstacles to participation
- Demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour through teamwork, and the practice of collaborative and respectful questioning of various perspectives
- Have honed communication skills in multiple settings through weekly class participation, and presentation
- Have developed critical and creative thinking skills through textual analysis, weekly reflections, and the testing of theories and arguments against court cases and concrete legal conundrums in the Canadian contexts

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Will be available through Avenue2Learn

## **Class Format**

This is an in-person course that combines in person lectures/discussions and presentations with interactive learning on A2L. Lectures are a chance to develop and test your understanding of the material and prepare for writing response papers. After the introductory unit, every unit is designed to prepare your group to write your evaluation of a policy proposal or respond to court case or case study (ie. Response paper) addressing an issue raised during that unit. In these units, Thursday lectures/discussions will lead student presentations on Tuesdays.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Forum Discussions (5 times, 5% each) =25%
2. Presentation (due date to be determined during the second class) =15%
3. Response position papers (3 times, 10% each)=30%
4. Vlog (due August 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>) =15%
5. Participation =15%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

**Forum Discussions (5% x5 times=25%):** The first step to understanding practices and institutions associated with Canadian democracy and their limitations, is to examine the assumptions, meanings, and implications from different perspectives. Starting with unit 2, each unit starts on Thursday. By Tuesday at noon, before the unit starts, you are to post your reading responses on the readings on the discussion forum. These responses should be about a half a page. You are to put in writing your understanding of the texts. Is there something you do not understand? Is there something you do not agree with? Is there something that you wanted to read in a text and finally found it articulated in this text? Even if you did not agree with something, briefly summarize the author's position. The reading response is supposed to show that you have read the assigned readings, even if you do not completely understand them. Please cite specific passages or at least page numbers from the texts. In addition to the paragraph/page include 2 questions that either just interest you having read the text or that you would like to be covered in class. This part of the reading response is worth 2.5%. The other 2.5% is for responding twice to the posts of others on the forum by Thursday at noon. These responses should be about a paragraph long, based on the texts as well, and they should be meaningful responses that either answer questions or develop the thoughts further (but certainly not just meaningless agreement with the original post).

**Presentation (15%):** Presentations in groups of 4-5 students will be held on Tuesdays for units 2 through 6 (July 5; July 12; July 19; July 26; Aug 2). You will be tasked with briefly reviewing the unit's topic and more importantly offering a critical engagement with the texts that raises a range of questions or issues that the entire class can then discuss. Ultimately, the purpose of reviewing the topic, and leading discussion for about 45 minutes is to propose and defend a policy or program solution to a Canadian issue discussed in that unit. It should be formulated in response to the unit's readings and main issues raised in that unit. You are expected to be using secondary sources for this presentation as well. By Monday morning at the latest (before the Tuesday presentation), your group is to meet with me on Zoom to present your plan, notes, and materials, so we can be sure you have an excellent presentation. *Without the Zoom meeting, your group cannot do presentation, and forfeits the entire presentation grade (15%).*

You are very much encouraged to be creative with your seminar presentations to stimulate participation and student understanding of the material. At the beginning of the seminar you can summarize pertinent court cases for example and put students into

smaller groups to work on a particular task, set up a debate or create a contest. Unless there is a significant discrepancy in contributions/effort, the entire leadership team receives the same grade.

**Response Position Paper (30%):** On Tuesday of each unit starting with unit 2, the presenting group will propose a policy/program/solution. By Saturday of that week (July 9; July 16; July 23; July 30; Aug 6), your group's task is to use that unit's texts, theories, concepts, and examples to formulate your response to the policy. The debate position paper should be around 5-7 pages. You are responding to the proposal during units when you are not presenting and you may not respond twice, hence in total your group is submitting three response position papers each worth 10% for total of 30%.

**Vlog (15%) (due Aug 4-6):** Detailed instructions will be released on the second week of class.

**Participation (15%):** Excellent participation involves consistently coming to class, demonstrably having read the material, staying for the entire class, paying full attention to what others in the class are contributing, and making valuable contributions to the discussion. Further details will be available during the first class.

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

### **June 21-23 Introduction and historical roots of Canadian democracy**

- Readings:*
1. Russell, Peter. 2017. "Introduction." In *Canada's Odyssey: A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests*. Toronto UTP. 1-19.
  2. Peter J. Smith "The Ideological Origins of Canadian Confederation." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), pp. 3-29.
  3. Gad Horowitz "The Deep Culture of Canadian Politics." *Inroad Journal* (2017): 40.

### **June 28 Responsible government and political executive**

- Readings:*
1. Paul Thomas, "Governing From the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics"
  2. Paul Romney, "From Constitutionalism to Legalism: Trial by Jury, Responsible Government, and the Rule of Law in the Canadian Political Culture" (selections)  
Recommended: Herman Bakvis, "Prime Minister and the Cabinet in Canada: An Utocracy in Need of Reform?"

### **June 30-July 5 The Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

*Readings:*

1. Peter H. Russell, "The Political Purposes of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," *The Canadian Bar Review*. (1983) 61: 30-54.
2. Rainer Knopff: "How Democratic Is The Charter? And Does It Matter?"
3. Grant A. Huscroft, "'Thank God We're Here': Judicial Exclusivity in Charter Interpretation and Its Consequences," *Supreme Court Law Review* (2004) 25: 241-67.

### **July 7-12 Electoral institutions and Parliament**

*Readings:*

1. Hicks and Blaise "Restructuring the Canadian Senate through Elections"
2. Spitzer, Aaron John. "Reconciling Shared Rule: Liberal Theory, Electoral-Districting Law and "National Group" Representation in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 51.2 (2018): 447-466.
3. Bird, Karen. 2010. "Patterns of Substantive Representation Among Visible Minority MPs: Evidence from Canada's House of Commons." In Bird, K., T. Saalfeld and A.M. Wüst, Eds., *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities*. New York: Routledge, pp. 207-229.
4. Michael Murphy, "Representing Indigenous Self-Determination"

### **July 14-19 The Challenge of federalism**

*Readings:*

1. Robinson, I., Simeon, R. (2009). The dynamics of Canadian federalism. In James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds). *Canadian Politics* (5th edition)
2. Kiera Ladner, "Up the Creek: Fishing for a New Constitutional Order," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38:4 (2005): 923-953
3. Kathy L. Brock. *Accords and Discord: The politics of Asymmetrical federalism and intergovernmental relations*. Asymmetrical Series 2005 (16).
4. Laforest and Dubois, "Justin Trudeau and "reconciliatory federalism""

### **July 21-26 The Challenge of national self-determination**

- Readings:*
1. Kymlicka, Will "Three Forms of Group-Differentiated Citizenship in Canada." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib, Princeton: Princeton University Press (1996): 153-170.
  2. Montserrat Guibernau: "Nations Without States: Political Communities in the Global Age"
  3. Stephen Clarkson, "Canada's Secret Constitution: NAFTA, WTO and the End of Sovereignty?"

### **July 28-Aug2 The Challenge of Indigenous "reconciliation"**

- Readings:* 1. Jennifer E. Dalton, "Aboriginal Self-Determination in Canada:

- Protections Afforded by the Judiciary and Government” (2006) 21 Canadian Journal of Law and Society: 11-37.
2. James (Sa’ke’j) Youngblood Henderson, “Constitutional Vision and Judicial Commitment: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada,” Australian Indigenous Law Review. (2010) 14(2): 24-48.
  3. Chadwick Cowie, “Quebec Sovereignty and Indigenous Nationhoods: Critiquing the Quebec Secessionist Movement from ‘an Indigenous’ Lens”

## **Aug 4 Vlog Presentations and Discussion**

### **Course Policies**

#### **Submission of Assignments and Late Assignments**

Written assignments aside from reading responses are due at 11:59pm in the dropbox online on the day indicated in the syllabus.

Late assignments, without proper documentation and prior agreement with your instructor when possible, will receive a 10% daily deduction including weekends. Online forum contributions cannot and will not be accepted late, because they are time-sensitive.

If you know that you will have a few assignments due in several classes on the same day, come talk to your instructor about it early (at least two weeks before the deadline) and a short extension may be granted. Extensions are official only in written form, when confirmed through email.

#### **Reading, Email, Office Hour and Other Rules:**

Every student is responsible for all required readings. Some of the texts are more difficult than others. Students are expected to come to every class online having read the reading assigned for that class.

I will be happy to meet with you through zoom, please reach out, let me know what times work for you, and I’ll be happy to chat. Come, sit, relax in the virtual office and if you want to talk about the university in general or the course in particular, I’ll be glad to see you. My rule for both email communication and office hours is that you meet me half way. (For example, just asking what does Rawls think of equality doesn’t give me anything to work with in order to help you out). Be prepared to tell me what you know and what you understand so that we can build on that basis to enrich your understanding and experience.

I will reply to emails within 24 hours (and usually much much much much quicker), so if you do not get a reply from me within 24 hours, the wires must have crossed somewhere and you should email me again to make sure your email gets through. Please don’t hesitate to resend emails in those cases, as quick communication under these circumstances

## 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-
0-49	F

## Absences, Missed Work, Illness

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): 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”.

## Courses with An On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be

expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**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 details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **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 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.

### **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. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

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.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms

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

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **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.

If the instructor or a teaching assistant is not able to pass the daily COVID screening, they cannot provide an in-class meeting. In the case that the instructor cannot attend the lecture, this will be announced on Avenue to Learn by 3pm on the day of the lecture. The lecture will be replaced by either an on-line lecture (which will be audio-recorded and posted to Avenue) or asynchronous lecture(s) posted to Avenue.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.