

Political Science 1AA3 Government, Politics, and Power

Fall 2018

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Course Description

This course explores the political process in Canada. It starts by asking a question: what does politics in Canada actually look like? Most of us are familiar with politics as it occurs at election time: Political Parties competing for our votes with the promise that they and only they have the solution for whatever problems ail society. This *is* politics. But politics *is not* limited to Election Day or to political parties and their campaign promises. Politics is everywhere: it saturates our daily lives, it crisscrosses our economic and social interactions, it is embedded in the formal and informal rules under which we all live. We will explore this broader sense of politics - investigating many of the key ideas and institutions that structure and govern our lives in Canada. We will scrutinize concepts like democracy, liberty, and equality. How does one organize a society based on these ideas? We will examine how these (and other) ideas have influenced the Canadian political landscape – from the platforms of the major Political Parties to the institutions of the Canadian state.

Course Objectives

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

- Understand current political issues in the light of larger social, political, and historical forces
- Explore political problems both individually and as a member of a group
- Express ideas both orally and in written (essay) form
- Develop research, writing, and presentation skills

Required Materials and Texts

- Geoghegan, Vincent, and Wilford, Rick, eds., *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, 4th edition, Abingdon: Routledge, 2014
 - This book is available in an electronic form (at no cost) through the McMaster University library catalogue. Please download a copy as soon as possible.
- Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty* – any edition is acceptable
 - Your first paper will be based on this book
- I have included several articles (see the weekly schedule below) that are accessible on-line. Some of the articles will have a hypertext link that will bring you to the article directly, while those listed as “available on-line” can be obtained for free via the library catalogue or through Google scholar.
- Several book chapters have been posted on Avenue to learn.

Class Format

The key to doing well in this course is to attend all lectures and tutorials. *Please note that many of the concepts covered in lecture will not be covered in the required readings and vice versa.*

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Tutorial Participation – 25%
2. Paper I – 20%, due in tutorial the week of October 1-5, 2018
3. Paper II – 20%, due in tutorial the week of November 5-9, 2018
4. Exam – 35%, to be held in the official examination period in December

Course Evaluation – Details

Tutorial Participation – 25%

Your tutorials will offer you an opportunity to engage in a spirited discussion of some of the key political issues confronting modern Canadian society (see the tutorial guide posted on Avenue). You will be presented with a series of political problems: Your task will be to gather information, construct a solution, and present and justify that solution to your tutorial group. The overall objective of the tutorials is to illustrate the complexity of real world political problems, while concurrently developing your research, writing, and presentation skills.

Participation in tutorial groups will account for 25% of your grade. Remember, participation is not synonymous with attendance. A successful grade is dependent upon your ability to actively, regularly and intelligently contribute to discussion.

Paper I – 20%, due in tutorial the week of October 1-5, 2018

Each student will prepare and submit a 5 page minimum paper that answers the following question:

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill argues that “[i]f all mankind minus one were of one opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.” What is Mill’s justification for this argument? In Mill’s opinion, what limitations, if any, should there be on this right to free speech? What assumptions does Mill’s argument depend upon? Do you agree with Mill’s point of view?

The main goal of this assignment is to test your ability to independently read through, summarize, and interpret a work of serious political theory. The only resource needed to complete this assignment is *On Liberty*. In this light, secondary sources (such as SparkNotes) should not be used.

Paper II – 20%, due in tutorial the week of November 5-9, 2018

Each student will prepare and submit a 6 page minimum paper that answers the following question:

Recollect the episode of TVO's *The Agenda* shown in class on October 22 – a debate where there is strong disagreement about whether or not a speech act has gone too far. Apply Mill's model to this case. According to Mill's model, should the government intervene in this situation (or not) and why? Do you agree with Mill's likely position on this case? In *your* opinion, is government intervention legitimate in this case? Why or why not? In developing your answer, be certain to reflect upon the legislation currently governing speech in Canada. Do we have an unfettered right to free speech in Canada? Should we have an unfettered right to free speech in Canada?

The main goal of this assignment is to test your ability to apply political theory to an on-the-ground policy issue. Be certain to explore both sides of the debate.

Exam – 35%, to be held in the official examination period in December

The December exam will cover material from *both* the lectures and the required readings.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Topic 1 (September 6-10, 2018)

Introduction

What is Political Science? What makes something 'political'? Is government necessary?

Topic 2 (September 13-17, 2018)

Democracy

What is democracy? What is the history of democracy? What are the limits to modern democracy? Can and should democracy be extended to the international system?

Readings:

Held, David, "Democracy: From city states to a cosmopolitan order?" *Political Studies*, XL, Special Issue, 1992, pp10-39 – available on-line

Topic 3 (September 20-24, 2018)

Liberty

Should individual freedom be the paramount principle upon which society is constructed? Should there be limitations to free speech? Should there be limitations on the "free market"?

Readings:

Chapter 2 (Liberalism) in *Political Ideologies*, pp19-46

By this point you should also have read the book *On Liberty*, by John Stuart Mill

Topic 4 (September 27- October 1, 2018)

Equality

What causes inequality? Are political outcomes determined by unequal economic processes? Can we have true equality in complex modern societies?

Readings:

Chapter 4 (Socialism) in *Political Ideologies*, pp71-98

Topic 5 (October 4, 2018)

Conservatism

Is there an organic wisdom in tradition?

Readings:

Chapter 3 (Conservatism) in *Political Ideologies*, pp47-70

Reading Week (October 8-12, 2018)

No Class: Mid-term recess

Topic 6 (October 15, 2018)

Green Politics

Is the planet facing an environmental crisis? To what extent is the environmental problem a political problem? Will a planetary solution require a planetary government?

Readings:

Chapter 7 (Green Political Theory) in *Political Ideologies*, pp153-178

Topic 7 (October 18, 2018)

Patriarchy

What are the political implications of gender? Are rights, rewards, and representation skewed against women?

Readings:

Chapter 8 (Feminism) in *Political Ideologies*, pp179-212

Topic 8 (October 22, 2018)

What are reasonable limits on speech?

In this class we will be watching an episode of *The Agenda* that deals with this question in the Canadian context.

Topic 9 (October 25, 2018)

Democracy in practice:

Democratic countries rely upon different institutional methods to determine the “will of the people.” Given this, are some countries more genuinely democratic than others? Should Canada reform its electoral system?

Readings:

Gallagher, Michael, “Electoral Institutions and Representation,” in Lawrence LeDuc, et al., eds., *Comparing Democracies 4: Elections and Voting in a Changing World*, London: Sage, 2014, pp11-31 – posted on Avenue to Learn

Stone, Laura, “[Trudeau abandons electoral reform, breaking key campaign promise](#),” *The Globe and Mail*, February 01, 2017

Topic 10 (October 29 - November 1, 2018)

What does democracy in Canada actually look like?

Starting from the top? The political executive in Canada

Readings:

Malloy, Jonathan, “The Executive and Parliament in Canada,” *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 10, 2/3, 2004, pp206-217 – available on-line

Gollom, Mark, “[Justin Trudeau’s ‘freewheeling’ style of cabinet management not without risks](#),” *CBC*, January 4, 2016

Topic 11 (November 5-8, 2018)

The House of Commons and The Senate

Readings:

Docherty, David, "The Canadian Senate: Chamber of Sober Reflection or Looney Cousin Best Not Talked About," *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 8, 3, 2002, pp27-48 – available on-line

MacKinnon, Leslie, "[Senate reform can't be done by Ottawa alone](#)," *CBC*, April 25, 2014

Evelyn, Charelle, and Allen, Samantha Wright, "Independent Senators still most likely to vote with government, but less and less," *Hill Times*, July 25, 2018 – available on-line

Topic 12 (November 12, 2018)

The Bureaucracy

Readings:

Savoie, Donald J., *Breaking the bargain: public servants, ministers, and parliament*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003, Chapter 1, pp3-20 – posted on Avenue to Learn

Beeby, Dean, "[Top bureaucrats met to resist partisanship imposed on public service](#)," *CBC*, November 2, 2015

Petrou, Michael, "[What happens when civil servants get partisan](#)," *Maclean's*, November 11, 2015

Topic 13 (November 15-19, 2018)

The Canadian Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Judiciary

How is the tension between majority rule and individual rights handled in the Canadian context?

Readings:

Snow, Dave, and Harding, Mark S., "From Normative Debates to Comparative Methodology: The Three Waves of Post Charter Supreme Court Scholarship in Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 45, 4, 2015, pp451-466 – available on-line

Zimonjic, Peter, "[Can Trudeau put his stamp on the Supreme Court? That's not how it works here, say experts](#)," *CBC*, June 13, 2017

You should also read the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

Topic 14 (November 22-26, 2018)

The Canadian Federation

How united is Canada? Can the Canadian federal model successfully navigate provincial differences?

Readings:

Rocher, François, "Self-determination and the Use of Referendums: the Case of Quebec," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 27, 1, 2014, pp25-45 – available on-line

Ivison, John, "[Ontario's age of Doug Ford ushers in an era of un-cooperative federalism](#)," *National Post*, June 7, 2018

Topic 15 (November 29 - December 3, 2018)

Review

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Please submit a paper copy of your assignment in tutorial to your Teaching Assistant on the scheduled due date.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
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

Late Assignments

Please note: late papers may be subject to a one letter grade per day deduction. For example, an A- paper received one day late may be reduced to a B+.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

The expectation for this course is that all components (including tutorial participation) will be completed. In the event of an illness or other approved absence, an alternate submission date for written work should be arranged with the course instructor as soon as possible.

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.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior 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 behavior 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:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. 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. 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.