

POLSCI 1AA3: GOVERNMENT, POLITICS AND POWER

Spring 2019

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This syllabus is adapted from Dr Todd Alway's Political Science 1AA3

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Course Description

What forces shape the political process? Towards what ends? In whose interests? This course will investigate these questions by focusing on the ideas, institutions, and structures that have shaped the contemporary political landscape.

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. 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. This course will begin with an exploration of this broader sense of politics by exploring many of the key ideas and institutions that govern our lives. We will scrutinize concepts like liberty, democracy, and equality. What do these terms actually imply? How does one organize a society based on these ideas?

Course Objectives

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

- Identify and develop a theoretical and historical understanding of the topics covered
- Develop arguments and pose questions that demonstrate critical thinking
- Effectively contribute to and present in group discussions
- Write a theory paper and reading responses that demonstrate critical thinking

Required Materials and Texts

- Readings that refer to Political Ideologies are from the required text: Geoghegan, Vincent, and Rick Wilford (eds). 2014. Political Ideologies: An Introduction, Fourth Edition. Abingdon: Routledge. Available in electronic format (at no cost) through McMaster University Library. Please download a copy as soon as possible.
- You are also required to obtain a copy of On Liberty by John Stuart Mill. Any edition is acceptable and the book is available in the Book Store. Your Theory Paper is based on this book.
- Readings that refer to [Canada Guide](#) can be found online.
- Academic Journal Articles are available online through McMaster's Libraries and will be posted in Avenue to Learn.

Class Format

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

Course Evaluation – Overview

Evaluation in this course will be based on participation, understanding and analysis of assigned material, group work, a theory paper, and an exam. Students will be evaluated as follows:

- Participation – 10%
- Reading Responses, due in class – 40%
- Theory Paper – *On Liberty*, due May 21 – 25%
- Take Home Exam, due June 19 – 25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Students are expected to come well prepared for class by completing the assigned weekly readings and submitting 8 hard copy Reading Responses over the term, contributing to class discussions, and participating in groups.

Participation (10%)

Groups offer an opportunity to engage in a discussion of some of the key political issues confronting Canadian society. To facilitate this, you will be presented with two hypothetical, realistic, and open ended problem scenarios. Your task as a group will be to gather information, construct a solution, and present and justify your recommendations to the class. The overall objective of this exercise is to train you to ask sound political questions and provide thoughtful answers to complex political problems.

Groups will be presented with problem-based scenarios two times during the term. Each group will prepare and submit a written report for each scenario which will also be presented in class. As part of the evaluation, students will have the opportunity to peer review the contribution of each member of their group.

Reading Responses (40%), 8 submissions

Over the course of the term, students will submit in class a hard copy of their answer to the Reading Response question. Each Reading Response assignment is worth 5% each. Each response must: be at least 1 double-spaced page in length; directly answer the question posed; reference the readings; avoid summarizing the readings. Each response must be submitted during the class in which the Reading Response question is posed. Reading Responses will not be accepted after the corresponding class unless they are accompanied with documentation.

***On Liberty* Paper (25%), due May 21**

Students will submit a 5-page (double-spaced) paper that addresses the following:

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill argues: “If 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” (II, 1).

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? Recollect the episode of TVO’s *The Agenda* shown in class. How would Mill respond to the speech issue in this case? Do you agree with his likely response?

The only resources needed to complete this assignment is *On Liberty* and the episode of *The Agenda*, therefore, no other resources should be used. The main goal here is to test your ability to read through, summarize, and interpret a work of serious political theory. The paper is due May 21 submitted to Avenue to Learn Assignments (Turnitin).

Take Home Exam (25%), due June 19

The Take Home Exam covering course material for the term will be assigned on June 17 and due on June 19 at 1159, submitted to Avenue to Learn (Turnitin). Late exams will not be accepted, unless they are accompanied with documentation.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (May 6 – May 8, 2019)

May 6 – Introduction – What is Political Science? What makes something ‘political’?

May 8 – Democracy

Readings:

Held, David. 1992. “Democracy: From city states to a cosmopolitan order?”
Political Studies XL Special Issue: 10-39.

Discussion: Can and should democracy be extended to the international system?

Week 2 (May 13 – May 15, 2019)

May 13 – Socialism & Conservatism

Readings:

Political Ideologies: Chapter 4 (Socialism): 71-98 & Chapter 3 (Conservatism):
47-70

Reading Response: Can we have true equality in a complex modern society?

May 15 – Liberty

Readings:

Political Ideologies: Chapter 2 (Liberalism): 19-46

Notes: By this point you should also have read: J.S. Mill's On Liberty
We will be watching an episode of The Agenda that deals with the question in the Canadian context.

Week 3 (May 20 – May 22, 2019)

May 20 – Victoria Day – No Class

Notes: **On Liberty PAPER DUE 21MAY2019 – submitted to Avenue to Learn**

May 22 – Feminism

Readings:

Chap 8 (Feminism): 179-212

Reading Response: Are rights, rewards, and representation skewed against women?

Week 4 (May 27 – May 29, 2019)

May 27 –Starting from the top. The political executive in Canada.

Readings:

Canada Guide: The Monarchy in Canada; The Governor General

Malloy, Jonathan. 2004. "The Executive and Parliament in Canada." The Journal of Legislative Studies. 10, 2/3: 206-217.

Reading Response: Does the Prime Minister have too much power?

May 29– The House of Commons and The Senate

Readings:

Canada Guide: The House of Commons; The Senate

Thomas, Paul G. 2019. "[Moving Toward a New and Improved Senate.](#)" IRPP Study No. 19.

Reading Response: How should the Senate be reformed?

Week 5 (June 3 – June 5, 2019)

June 3 – Federalism and Public Administration

Readings:

Canada Guide: Provincial & Local Governments: Bureaucracy in Canada

Ng, Eddy S. and Greg J. Sears. 2015. "Toward Representative Bureaucracy: Predicting Public Service Attraction Among Underrepresented Groups in Canada." *Review of Public Personnel Administration*. 35(4): 367-385.

Reading Response: Should the Public Service be representative of all Canadians?

June 5 – Political Parties and Elections Review

Readings:

Canada Guide: Political Parties: Elections in Canada

Week 6 (June 10 – June 12, 2019)

June 10 – Quebec Nationalism

Readings:

Allen, April. 2012. "Buying Votes, Building Identities: Federal Social Policy Responses to Sub-State Nationalism in Quebec." *American Review of Canadian Studies*. 42(2): 210-235.

Reading Response: Can Quebec be a sovereign state?

June 12 – Indigenous Peoples

Readings:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. 2015. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*: 237-275.

Schaefli, Lauren et al. 2018. "What Do First-Year University Students in Ontario, Canada, Know about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and Topics?" 41(3): 688-725.

Reading Response: What did the TRC inform us about Indigenous Peoples in Canada?

Week 7 (June 17 – June 19, 2019)

June 17 – The Canadian Constitution and the Judiciary

Readings:

Canada Guide: The Constitution of Canada; The Canadian Judicial System

Snow, Dave, and Harding, Mark S. 2015. "From Normative Debates to Comparative Methodology: The Three Waves of Post Charter Supreme Court Scholarship in Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 45(4): 451-466.

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

June 19 – Final Take Home Exam Due – Submitted to Avenue to Learn

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

A hard copy of each response must be submitted during the class in which the Reading Response question is posed.

Please submit the On Liberty assignment and the Final Exam to Avenue to Learn Assignments (Turnitin).

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

On Liberty Paper is due on May 21 at 23:55, submitted to Avenue to Learn Assignments (and Turnitin). Late Papers will be penalized at 2% per day. Therefore, if you submitted a paper five days past the deadline, the maximum mark you could receive would be 90%. The final deadline for papers is May 28. Papers will not be accepted after May 28 unless they have documentation.

The Take Home Exam deadline is June 19 at 23:55. The exam will not be accepted after June 19 unless it is accompanied with documentation.

A hard copy of the Reading Response must be submitted during the class in which the Reading Response question is posed. Reading Responses will not be accepted after the corresponding class unless they are accompanied with documentation.

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 (supported with documentation), 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.

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. 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.