

Political Science 1AA3

Government, Politics, and Power

Fall 2020

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1:30-3:30 p.m. Or by appointment

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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? Many of us are familiar with the politics that happens during elections: 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 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:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of:
 - The key **ideas** that have influenced the development of the Canadian state
 - Ideas that are common to/differentiate the major political parties in Canada
 - The key political **institutions** of the Canadian state
 - The Crown, the Executive, the House of Commons, the Senate, the Courts and the Constitution, the Federal-Provincial division of powers
 - Current political **issues**
- Express ideas both orally and in written (essay) form

Required Materials and Texts

All required readings are available (at no cost) on Avenue to Learn via embedded links in the relevant Modules

Class Format

This course will run on an online platform (Avenue to Learn). All course lectures and readings will be available for viewing on the first day of class. There are two options for course participation: Asynchronous (no live tutorials) or synchronous (live tutorials). In the case of synchronous participation, tutorials will be held in-person over Zoom.

The key to doing well in this course is keeping up with the assigned work – including the lectures and the tutorials.

Please note that many of the concepts covered in lecture will not be covered in the required readings. Watching course lectures is key to your success.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation – 25%
2. Module Quizzes – 10%
3. Mid-term test – 15%: Wednesday October 21, 2020
4. Essay – 20%: Monday November 30, 2020
5. Take Home Exam – 30%: Available on Avenue Wednesday December 9, 2020 at 11:00a.m.; Due on Wednesday December 16, 2020 at 11:00a.m.

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation – 25%

Your voice matters!

This course provides you with the opportunity to discuss some of the key political issues confronting modern Canadian society. You will be responsible for solving 4 political scenarios/problems this term. Your solution to these problems (i.e. your course participation) can occur in one of two ways:

1). You can choose to join a synchronous (live) tutorial (every student selected a tutorial when they registered for this course on Mosaic). If you choose this option, you will be meeting in real-time (on Zoom) with approximately 14 other students and a Teaching Assistant **every other week**. You will also be meeting with a smaller (4-5 person) student group (without the Teaching Assistant) in the gap week. The smaller student group will **collectively** work on a solution to the assigned political problems. Group solutions will be presented to the rest of the tutorial in the next live session.

2). You can also choose to participate asynchronously (no live tutorials). If you choose this option, you still belong to a tutorial, have a corresponding Teaching Assistant, and will work on the same tutorial assignments as Option 1 students. However, your participation **will not** involve live tutorial conversations. Instead, you will complete two tasks individually:

- A). You will develop an **individual** response to each assigned tutorial problem. Your response (in the form of a 3-minute video presentation and 2-page (double spaced) summary) will be submitted to your Teaching Assistant. Your Teaching Assistant (but not the rest of the tutorial) will view your solution.
- B). You will also contribute to a text-based Discussion Forum every week. Your contribution will include posting a link to one high quality article (briefly summarized in your own words) that is relevant to the week's assigned tutorial project (week 1). You will also (week 2) read and respond to at least one other student's posted article - where the response will involve assessing the arguments made in the other student's article.

For administrative reasons, Option 1 is the default option (i.e. you are automatically enrolled into Option 1). If you would like to select Option 2, you must send an email to your Teaching Assistant by September 18 at 4:00p.m.

Note: Because Option 1 involves group work, you cannot switch between Option 1 and Option 2 in the midst of a tutorial assignment. However, if you would like to switch between Option 1 and Option 2 at the beginning of a new tutorial assignment you are welcome to do so - as long as you inform your Teaching Assistant first.

Each of the 4 tutorial assignments is worth 5% of the total course grade (20% in total), with an additional 5% of the course grade assigned to a student's broader contribution to the 15-student tutorial conversation (Option 1 students), or a student's contributions to the Discussion Forum (Option 2 students).

A detailed week-by-week overview of the assignments is contained in the Course Guide posted on Avenue.

Module Quizzes – 10%

This course has 12 modules. At the end of each module you will find a multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank quiz. Each quiz will have 10 questions and a 20-minute time limit. Each quiz is worth 1% - however, we will only include your top 10 quiz scores in your final grade (i.e. the lowest 2 quiz scores will be dropped).

A quiz will only become available after you have watched the relevant class videos in the Module.

You can complete the quizzes as early in the course as you choose. However, a quiz must be completed **no later** than one week (7 days) after the scheduled module date (by 11:30p.m.). For example, Module 1 has a scheduled date of September 8. Therefore, the Module 1 quiz must be completed by September 15 at 11:30p.m.

Mid-term test - 15%, Wednesday October 21, 2020

The mid-term test will be available in Avenue on Wednesday October 21, from 6:00p.m. – 9:00p.m. You can start the test at any time during this three-hour window. However, your test answer must be uploaded to the Assignment Drop box by 9:00p.m. The expectation is that it will take approximately one hour to complete the test.

Essay – 20%, Monday November 30, 2020

Each student will prepare and submit a 6-8 page essay that answers the following question:

What is the proper role for the state when it comes to regulating speech? In 2018, the Ontario Provincial government announced a new “free speech” [requirement](#) for the province’s Colleges and Universities. All provincially funded post-secondary institutions were directed to “develop, implement, and comply with a free-speech policy that meets

a minimum standard prescribed by the government” by January 1, 2019. Colleges and Universities that fail to meet the aforementioned [minimum standard](#) face potential reductions in their provincially-provided operating grant. According to Premier Doug Ford, “Our government made a commitment to the people of Ontario to protect free speech on campuses. Promise made, promise kept.”

The above policy has not been universally supported. Outline the debate surrounding this issue. Do you agree with the Policy? Why or why not?

Your paper should reference at least 5 sources. The sources you use do not need to be academic peer-reviewed articles. However, your sources do need to be credible.

More details about this assignment (including a grading rubric and helpful research and writing resources) can be found in the Course Guide posted on Avenue.

You can submit your essay as early in the course as you choose. However, the essay should be submitted (to the Assignments section of Avenue) no later than November 30 at 11:30p.m. Essays submitted after November 30 may be subject to a late penalty of 2% per day.

Take Home Exam – 30%

The Take Home Exam will cover material from *both* the lectures and the required readings. The exam will be available in Avenue beginning Wednesday December 9, 2020 at 11:00a.m. It will be due **no later** than Wednesday December 16, 2020 at 11:00a.m.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Module 1 (September 8, 2020)

Introduction to Political Science

What is Political Science? What makes something ‘political’? Is government necessary for the public good?

Module 2 (September 14, 2020)

Democracy

What is democracy? What is the history of democracy? What are the limits to modern democracy in theory and in practice?

Readings:

Held, David, “Democracy: From city states to a cosmopolitan order?” *Political Studies*, XL, Special Issue, 1992, pp10-39

Module 3 (September 21, 2020)

Liberty

Is protecting and promoting individual freedom the ideal guiding principle for government? Should the state put any restrictions on “free speech”? Should the state put any restrictions on the “free market”?

Readings:

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

Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty*, Chapter 2

Module 4 (September 28, 2020)

Equality

What causes inequality? Are wealth and political power connected? Can we have true equality in complex modern societies?

Readings:

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

Module 5 (October 5, 2020)

Conservatism

Is there political value in using the past to guide the present?

Readings:

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

Reading Week (October 12-18, 2020)

No Class: Mid-term recess

Module 6 (October 19, 2020)

Patriarchy

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

Readings:

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

Module 7 (October 26, 2020)

Democracy in practice

What difference does an electoral system make? Are some electoral systems more 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

Wherry, Aaron, "[Why Trudeau's broken electoral reform promise could rebound on him](#)," CBC News, July 26, 2019

Module 8 (November 2, 2020)

Democracy in Canada I

Starting from the top? What are the powers and limits of the Crown and Prime Minister?

Readings:

Savoie, Donald J., "Power at the Apex: Executive Dominance," in Bickerton, James, and Gagnon, Alain-G., *Canadian Politics*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014

Scherer Steve: "[Canada's Trudeau expels two ex-ministers from ruling party in bid to end scandal](#)," Reuters, April 3, 2019

Module 9 (November 9, 2020)

Democracy in Canada II

The House of Commons: How much power do elected MPs have in practice?

Readings:

Docherty, David C., "Parliament: Making the Case for Relevance," in Bickerton, James, and Gagnon, Alain-G., *Canadian Politics*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014

Module 10 (November 16, 2020)

Democracy in Canada III

The Senate: Undemocratic and anachronistic? Or valuable House of Sober Second Thought?

Readings:

MacFarlane, Emmett, "The Renewed Canadian Senate: Organizational Challenges and Relations with the Government," *IRPP Study 71*, Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, May 2019

Module 11 (November 23, 2020)

Democracy in Canada IV

The Constitution and the Courts: The idiosyncrasies of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Readings:

Bazowski, Raymond, "Judicial Politics in the Age of the Charter," in Bickerton, James, and Gagnon, Alain-G., *Canadian Politics*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014

Monpetit, Jonathan, "[As fight over Quebec's religious symbols law shifts to courts, legal experts debate best way to challenge it](#)," *CBC*, July 8, 2019

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

Module 12 (November 30, 2020)

Democracy in Canada V

The Federal-Provincial division of power: Which level of government has the power to do what and when? How united is the Canadian Federation: A case study of Quebec.

Readings:

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

Anderson, Drew: "[The anger is real, but is western separatism](#)," *CBC News*, October 28, 2019

Last week of class (December 9, 2020)

The Take Home Exam will be released to Avenue on Wednesday December 9 at 11:00a.m. It is due on Wednesday December 16 at 11:00a.m.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments and tests

This course will use tests and assignments to assess your comprehension of the course material. All tests and assignments (excluding group tutorial projects) should be answered individually. All tests and assignments (including group tutorial projects) should be answered in your own words. Do not simply “cut and paste” material out of the lectures, lecture summaries, course readings, or other sources: Doing so does not demonstrate **your** understanding of the course content.

Course assignments should be submitted to the appropriate Assignments box in Avenue by the designated due date. Written assignments should be submitted as a Word document or pdf. Video assignments should be submitted as a .mp4, .mov., .avi, or .wmv file. If you are recording your video with an iPhone or android phone, the default file type should meet this requirement. Students looking for alternative recording software might want to consider using the recording functions of [Zoom](#).

If, for any reason, you cannot access the Assignments box before the assignment due date, please email the assignment to your TA in the specified time frame.

Late Assignments

Late essays may be subject to a 2% per day grade deduction (including weekends). For example, an 80% essay will be reduced to 78% if it is received one day late, 76% if two days late, etc.

Please note: Tests, Quizzes, and the Take Home Exam must be submitted in the designated time frame.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

The expectation for this course is that all components (including participation) will be completed.

All requests for extensions (excluding SAS requests) should be submitted through the [MSAF process](#).

In the event of an approved extension for your Essay, the assignment will be due five days from the original due date (inclusive of weekends).

In the event of an approved absence from the mid-term test, the make-up test will be posted to Avenue on Wednesday, October 28. The test will be available from 6:00p.m. to 9:00p.m. You can start the test at any time during this three-hour window. However, your test answer must be uploaded to the Assignment Drop box by 9:00p.m. The expectation is that it will take approximately one hour to complete the test.

Course Software and Technology

This course incorporates and utilizes several technological platforms:

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 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 copy 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](#).

Zoom

The primary platform that we will be using for synchronous (live) tutorials is Zoom. Students can register at the [zoom website](#) for a free account. Please register your account using your actual name so that your Teaching Assistant can easily assign participation grades. Students are also able to use Zoom for non-TA-initiated meetings with each other. Please note that in these cases (free-account-initiated meetings) live discussions are limited to 40 minutes per session.

Students should activate their webcam during tutorial meetings in order to better facilitate communication.

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- |

| MARK | GRADE |
|-------------|--------------|
| 67-69 | C+ |
| 63-66 | C |
| 60-62 | C- |
| 57-59 | D+ |
| 53-56 | D |
| 50-52 | D- |
| 0-49 | F |

University Policies

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 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.

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 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 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.

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.