

# ISSUES IN CANADIAN POLITICS

## *Canadian Elections*

Term Fall 2019

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**Lecture:** Wednesday 2:30-5:20  
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**Office Hours:** Thursday 3:30-4:30

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## **Course Description**

This course will cover three areas. First, we will examine long term trends in Canadian electoral politics from the perspective of the core theoretical concepts in the study of voting behaviour and elections. Second, we will investigate the influence of other dynamics such as campaigns, polling and social media, or attitudes towards personal finances and economic performance. We will then place those theories and dynamics in context to appreciate what has shaped Canadian federal elections in recent years, and what will shape the 2019 federal election campaign, and, in turn, how this election outcome will shape future electoral alignments in Canada.

## **Course Objectives**

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

- Predict and explain election outcomes, using both classic theory and contextual circumstances; and apply that thinking in both essay and PowerPoint form.
- Students will also hone their discussion and presentation abilities in the weekly seminars.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc and Jon H. Pammett. *Absent Mandate: Strategies and Choices in Canadian Elections*. University of Toronto Press, 2019. (Available in print from the bookstore or as an ebook from University of Toronto Press.)
- Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Joanna Everitt and Patrick Fournier. *Dominance and Decline: Making Sense of Recent Canadian Elections*. University of Toronto Press, 2012
- Cameron D. Anderson and Laura B. Stephenson (eds.) *Voting Behaviour in Canada*. UBC Press, 2010

## **Class Format**

The course will involve a weekly seminar, with guest lectures and student presentations.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Weekly one-page summary and analysis of readings - 5% per week, total of 25%
2. Election prediction – 5%
3. Class attendance and participation – 10%
4. Leading class discussion on reading – 20%
5. Research essay – 30%
6. Presentation of your Essay – 10%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Weekly one page readings summary and analysis memo, 5% per week, total of 25%**

- **beginning week 4**
- summarize the class readings for the week on half the page
- analyze the readings for the following; key take-away and what it brings to the course
- single spaced; due at the beginning of the scheduled class
- no summary required during the weeks of your presentation
- no late summaries will be accepted
- Any 5 in total

### **Election prediction, 5%**

- One page summary of what you think the election outcome will be including popular vote & seat projection, as well theoretical explanation of what you think will be the key drivers of the outcome

### **Class attendance and participation, 10%**

- Students should attend all seminars and be prepared to thoughtfully engage in discussion

### **Leading class discussion on reading, 20%**

- In groups of two or on your own, prepare a 10 minute presentation on one or more (depending on the group size) of the assigned readings (sign up will occur during the second week of class)
- Presentations should also include **at least** two additional readings & address key questions, as well as provide additional questions designed to provoke and encourage discussion
- Sign up first week of class

### **Research Essay, 30%**

- 10-12 page double spaced research essay arguing one of the following;
  - How a major theoretical concept is responsible for shaping Canadian politics
  - How an election dynamic is responsible for impacting theoretical outcomes in Canadian politics
  - How the something in this particular election, or the past elections in Canada will continue to shape the future of elections

- Special attention will be paid to the thoroughness of the research effort and the quality of the argument
- Only hard copies will be accepted in class
- Students will also be required to submit the paper to Turnitin.com before the due date, unless other arrangements have been made with the professor.
- Late penalties of 2% per day, (including weekends) will be applied to all papers not handed in at the beginning of class on **November 20<sup>th</sup>**.

### **Final Presentations and Handout, 10%**

- 8 minute in-class presentation of your research essay
- Handout which outlines your presentation (i.e., copy of PowerPoint presentation)
- Presentations will take place the last two weeks of class

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

### **Week 1 - September 4<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Course Introduction**

Guest Lecture: Canadian Darrell Bricker, CEO, Public Affairs, Ipsos

Readings: no readings this week

### **Week 2 - September 11<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Explaining Vote Choice and Values and Beliefs**

Readings:

- *Dominance and Decline*, chapters 1 & 3

### **Week 3 - September 18<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Unpacking the Polls**

Guest Lecture: Poll Aggregation in Elections Eric Grenier, Senior Writer and Polls Analyst, CBC

Readings:

- Mark Pickup. "Election Campaign Polls and Democracy in Canada", in *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, pp. 242-278.
- Please also review [CBC's poll tracker](#)

**Week 4 - September 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Strategic Configuration of Elections in Canada**

Readings:

- *Absent Mandate*, chapter 1
- Cameron D. Anderson and Laura B. Stephenson, "The Puzzle of Elections and Voting in Canada" in Anderson and Stephenson, *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, pp. 1-39

**Week 5 - October 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Parties and Partisanship**

Readings:

- *Absent Mandate*, chapter 2
- *Dominance and Decline*, chapters 2 & 4

**Week 6 - October 9<sup>th</sup>**

**The Canadian Electorate**

Readings:

- *Absent Mandate*, chapter 3
- *Dominance and Decline*, chapter 8

**Week 7 - October 16<sup>th</sup> Reading Week**

**No Class**

**Week 8 - October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**An Election Retrospective**

Guest Lecture: Dr. Lawrence LeDuc, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

Readings:

- *Absent Mandate*, chapter 6

**Week 9 - October 30<sup>th</sup>**

**The Digital Campaign**

Guest Lecture: Oliver Paré, Digital Strategist, NDP Federal Campaign

Readings: No readings

**Week 10 - November 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Leaders and Campaigns**

Readings:

- *Absent Mandate*, chapter 4
- *Dominance and Decline*, chapters 5, 6

**Week 11 - November 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Leaders and Campaigns**

Readings:

- *Absent Mandate*, chapter 5
- Amanda Bittner. "Personality Matters: the Evaluation of Party Leaders in Canadian Elections" in *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, pp. 183-207
- *Dominance and Decline*, chapter 7

**Week 12 - November 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Essay Presentations begin**

Readings: No readings

Note: Essays Due in Class

**Week 13 - November 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Essay Presentations**

Readings: No readings

**Week 14 - December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Essay Presentations**

Readings: No readings

**Course Policies**

**Submission of Assignments**

Paper copies of all assignments will be submitted to the professor at the beginning of class—in class.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
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**

Late penalties of 2% per day (including weekends) will be applied to all papers not handed in at the beginning of class. Late papers must be submitted to the Department of Political Studies.

### **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, 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.