

**POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE CANADIAN STATE**  
**POLSCI 760**  
**Winter 2023, Term 2**

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**Seminar:** Tuesday, 11:30-2:20  
**Room:** KTH 709

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**Contents**

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	3
Required Materials and Texts .....	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview.....	4
Course Evaluation – Details.....	4
Participation (25%) .....	4
Seminar Leadership (15%).....	4
Research Proposal (10%), due February 7 .....	4
Research Paper (50%), due April 11 .....	5
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings .....	5
Week 1 (January 10) .....	5
Week 2 (January 17) .....	5
Week 3 (January 24) .....	5
Week 4 (January 31) .....	6
Week 5 (February 7).....	6
Week 6 (February 14).....	6
Week 7 (February 21) – Winter Mid-Term Recess, NO CLASS .....	7
Week 8 (February 28).....	7
Week 9 (March 7) .....	7
Week 10 (March 14) .....	7
Week 11 (March 21) .....	8
Week 12 (March 28) .....	8
Week 13 (April 4).....	8
Week 14 (April 11).....	9

Course Policies .....	9
Submission of Assignments.....	9
Grades.....	9
Late Assignments .....	9
Absences, Missed Work, Illness .....	9
Courses With An On-Line Element.....	9
Online Proctoring.....	10
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection .....	10
Copyright and Recording .....	10
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO) .....	10
Academic Integrity Statement.....	11
Conduct Expectations.....	11
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	11
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy .....	12
Course Modification.....	12
Extreme Circumstances.....	12

## **Course Description**

The primary purpose of this course is to familiarize students with core texts and debates within the literature on political institutions within the study of Canadian politics. Readings have been selected to emphasize a more historical approach to the study of institutions. Engaging closely with these authors and their ideas will advance our understanding of the state of knowledge in this field. This will help students to conceptualize relevant research questions and identify models for carrying out that research. This course is also intended to help students to begin preparing for the comprehensive exam in Canadian politics.

## **Course Objectives**

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

- Analyze the conditions and variables that led to the creation of Canadian political institutions.
- Evaluate leading arguments about how Canadian political institutions produce particular outcomes.
- Engage with arguments about how certain institutional features reflect the influence of specific political actors or ideologies.
- Approach the comprehensive exam in Canadian politics with a strong foundation of knowledge.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- All course materials are available on Avenue to Learn.
- Note that readings marked with a \* are drawn from the Study Guide for the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination in Canadian Politics.

## **Class Format**

This class is scheduled for one three-hour seminar each week. We will usually take a 15-20 minute break about half-way through.

The first several seminars will be led by the instructor. Our objective will be to identify the main arguments advanced in the assigned readings and to critically evaluate these arguments based on the evidence provided and our broader understanding of the field of Canadian and comparative politics. We will also relate the readings to questions about how institutions develop and change, and how they influence a range of social, economic, and political outcomes.

It is essential to the quality of the seminar that students arrive prepared for this conversation. Effective preparation includes reading all assigned readings, taking notes on these readings, and identifying core concepts, arguments, points of analysis, and any other observations. If all students do not arrive at the seminar prepared for an

active discussion, it will limit our collective learning. It is also helpful to arrive at the seminar with questions about the readings, including aspects you did not understand. Your contributions to the seminar will be just as valuable when you are asking good questions as when you are making insightful observations.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Participation – 25%
2. Seminar Leadership – 15%
3. Research Proposal – 10%
4. Research Paper – 50%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Participation (25%)**

This quality of this seminar depends in significant part on the participation of every student. I will not be grading the quantity of your contributions to discussion, as it is expected that every student will actively contribute. However, each student will be graded at the end of the course according to the quality of contributions over the entire course. I regard high quality contributions to be regular, timely, concise, on topic, and oriented towards promoting collective understanding of the course content. (Almost) needless to say, attendance is necessary to participate effectively.

### **Seminar Leadership (15%)**

Each student will assume the responsibility of leading one seminar during the term. As seminar leader, you will primarily be a facilitator of conversation. This means that you need to arrive in class with a mastery of the week's readings and a plan for stimulating the kind of conversation that will deepen our understanding of the topic. Effective strategies for doing this include: providing an overview of some of the main arguments and debates featured in the readings (stay away from summarizing, focus on conveying ideas in your own words and with your own analysis), asking open-ended questions, picking up on key ideas, using the whiteboard/chalkboard to synthesize arguments and insights, probing the relationship between the week's readings to each other and to other course readings. You are welcome to use visual aids or case studies where they are pertinent but avoid games and informational quizzes. You will be graded based on your demonstrated ability to convey and draw out core ideas of the week's readings and your capacity to stimulate a conversation that advances our collective understanding.

### **Research Proposal (10%), due February 7**

Your research proposal is intended to inform the writing of your research paper for this course. As such, it will focus on a question pertaining to the development or influence of a Canadian political institution. Your proposal will be two pages long. The first page will be written in paragraph form and it will state your research question, describe why it is interesting or relevant, and discuss how you will go about answering the question. The

second page will include a very briefly annotated bibliography of 8-10 sources you have consulted for the paper. Each source needs only a sentence or two to note how it is relevant to your paper. Several of the sources should be cited in your proposal.

### **Research Paper (50%), due April 11**

Your research paper will answer the question you developed in your research proposal, and potentially refined in response to feedback. It should be 5000-6000 words in length. There is no minimum citation requirement, but the quality of your paper will be improved by considering a broad range of sources.

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

### **Week 1 (January 10)**

#### **January 10 – Introduction and General Discussion**

- What is a political institution?
- What are some approaches to studying political institutions?

### **Week 2 (January 17)**

#### **January 17 – Studying Canadian Politics**

Readings:

Rob Vipond. 2008. "Introduction: The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science". In Linda White, Richard Simeon, Robert Vipond and Jennifer Wallner. Eds. *The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science*: pp. 3-17.

Jack Lucas and Robert Vipond. 2017. "Back to the Future: Historical Political Science and the Promise of Canadian Political Development" *CJPS* 50(1)

André Lecours. 2000. "Theorizing Cultural Identities: Historical Institutionalism as a Challenge to the Culturalists" *CJPS* 33(3): 499-522.

### **Week 3 (January 24)**

#### **January 24 – Treaties**

Readings:

John Borrows, "Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self-Government," in Michael Asch, ed., *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997, pp. 155-172.

John Borrows, "Canada's Colonial Constitution," in Michael Coyle and John Borrows (eds.) *The Right Relationship: Reimagining the Implementation of Historical Treaties*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, 208-247.

\*Gina Starblanket, "The Numbered Treaties and the Politics of Incoherency." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 52 (2019), 443-459.

## **Week 4 (January 31)**

### **January 31 – Confederation and the Constitution**

Readings:

\*Peter Russell, *Canada's Odyssey: A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017: 134-172.

Peter Price, *Questions of Order: Confederation and the Making of Modern Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021. Chapter 1.

Elsbeth A. Heaman, *Tax, Order and Good Government: A New Political History of Canada, 1867-1917*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017. Ch. 1.

## **Week 5 (February 7)**

### **February 7 – Federalism**

Readings:

\*Herman Bakvis and Grace Skogstad. "Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy." In *Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy*, edited by Herman Bakvis and Grace Skogstad, Third., 3–30. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020.

\*Jorg Broschek. "Self-Rule vs. Shared Rule: Canada as a Case of Comparative Federalism." In *Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy*, edited by Herman Bakvis and Grace Skogstad, Third., 31–58. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020.

\*André Lecours, "Dynamic De/Centralization in Canada, 1867–2010," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 49:1 (2017) 57-83.

**Notes: Research Proposal Due**

## **Week 6 (February 14)**

### **February 14**

Readings:

\* Marcella Firmini and Jennifer Smith, "The Crown in Canada." In Peter Oliver, Patrick Macklem and Nathalie Desrosiers (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Canadian Constitution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 129-150.

\* Graham White, "The 'Centre' of the Democratic Deficit: Power and Influence in Canadian Political Executives" in Patti Tamara Lenard and Richard Simeon (eds.) *Imperfect Democracies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012) pp. 226-247

\* Donald J. Savoie, 2019. *Democracy in Canada: The Disintegration of our Institutions*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press. ch. 10.

## **Week 7 (February 21) – Winter Mid-Term Recess, NO CLASS**

## **Week 8 (February 28)**

### **February 28 – Bureaucracy**

Readings:

\*Donald J. Savoie, *Democracy in Canada: The Disintegration of our Institutions*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019, ch 12-13.

Amanda Clarke, *Opening the Government of Canada: Federal Bureaucracy in the Digital Age*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019, chapter 2.

\*Paul Pross, *Group Politics and Public Policy* 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), Ch.10.

## **Week 9 (March 7)**

### **March 7 – Parliament**

Readings:

\*Peter H. Russell, *Two cheers for minority government: the evolution of Canadian Parliamentary Democracy*, (Emond Montgomery Publications, 2008). Chapters 2, 5.

Andrew Heard, "The Senate: A Late-Blooming Chameleon," in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon, eds., *Canadian Politics*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, ch. 5.

\*David Docherty, "Citizens and Legislators: Different Views on Representation," in Neil Nevitte (editor), *Value Change and Governance in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 165-206.

## **Week 10 (March 14)**

### **March 14 – Parties**

Readings:

\*Alan C. Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921–1965." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1968): 55–80.

\*Kenneth Carty, "Brokerage Parties, Brokerage Politics," in Richard Johnston and Campbell Sharman (eds.) *Parties and Party Systems: Structure and Context*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015)

Richard Johnston, *The Canadian Party System: An Analytic History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), Conclusion.

## **Week 11 (March 21)**

### **March 21 – Elections**

Readings:

\*John C. Courtney, *Elections*, Vancouver: UBC Press, chs.1-2, 6. pp. 3-44, 127-159.

Andrew Potter, Daniel Weinstock, and Peter Loewen, eds. *Should We Change How We Vote?: Evaluating Canada's Electoral System*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, Intro, ch. 1-3, pp.xii-32.

## **Week 12 (March 28)**

### **March 28 – Charter**

Readings:

\*Janet Hiebert. 2018 "The Charter, Policy, and Political Judgment." In Emmett Macfarlane (ed.) *Policy Change, Courts, and the Canadian Constitution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

\*FL Morton and Rainer Knopff, *The Charter Revolution and the Court Party* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), Ch. 3.

Peter H. Russell. 2009. "The Charter and Canadian Democracy" in James B. Kelly and Christopher Manfredi, eds. *Contested Constitutionalism: Reflections on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

## **Week 13 (April 4)**

### **April 4 – Judiciary**

Readings:

\*Ran Hirschl, "The Judicialization of Mega-Politics and the Rise of the Courts" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11 (2008), pp. 93-118.

\*Peter Hogg and Ravi Amarnath, "Understanding Dialogue Theory." In Peter Oliver, Patrick Macklem and Nathalie Desrosiers (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Canadian Constitution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 1053-1074.



\*Emmett Macfarlane, "Dialogue or compliance? Measuring legislatures' policy responses to court rulings on rights" *International Political Science Review*, 34:1 (2013), pp. 39-56.

## **Week 14 (April 11)**

**April 11**

**Notes: Research Paper Due**

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Submit on Avenue to Learn.

### **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-
69-0	F

### **Late Assignments**

Assignments can be submitted three days after the due date without receiving a penalty. After that, you will have 5 points deducted per day late. Extensions will be considered, but they need to be requested in person ahead of time.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Don't miss class. We are a small group, and the absence of even a single person will be noted. If it is unavoidable, please talk to me ahead of time. Unexcused absences will be reflected in your participation mark.

### **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](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), 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.

### **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.