

Political Science 1AA3 Government, Politics, and Power - Online

Fall 2021

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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) in 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 – 30%
2. Module Quizzes – 5%
3. Mid-term test – 25%: Wednesday October 20, 5:00-8:00pm
4. Final Exam – 40%: Available on Avenue Wednesday December 8, 12:00pm; Due on Monday December 13, 12:00pm.

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation – 30%

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:

Option 1). You can choose to join a synchronous (live) tutorial (every student selected a tutorial day/time when they registered for this course on Mosaic). If you choose this option, you will be meeting in real-time (on Zoom) with approximately 25 other students and a Teaching Assistant every week. Each tutorial (approximately 25 students) will be further divided into smaller groups of approximately 5 students each. You will be assigned to one of these groups. The smaller student groups will **collectively** work on solutions to the assigned political problems. Group solutions will be presented to the rest of the tutorial on the designated due dates.

Please note: While each group will submit a **collective** solution for each Assignment, your grade on each Assignment will be adjusted according to your **individual** contribution to the group effort. Your TA will make the individual adjustment based upon a self/peer assessment that you will submit for **each** Assignment.

Option 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 develop an **individual** response to each assigned tutorial problem. Your response (in the form of a 3-minute video presentation) will be uploaded to the Discussion Forum on Avenue to Learn. For your video, you can either record yourself speaking, or record your voice over a PowerPoint.

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 Friday September 17 at 4:00pm.

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 first inform your Teaching Assistant.

Each of the 4 tutorial assignments is worth 7.5% of the total course grade (30% in total).

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

Assignment Due Dates:

A). Option 1 students

Assignment 1 is due at the beginning of your tutorial scheduled the week of October 4-8.

Assignment 2 is due at the beginning of your tutorial scheduled the week of October 25-29.

Assignment 3 is due at the beginning of your tutorial scheduled the week of November 8-12.

Assignment 4 is due at the beginning of your tutorial scheduled the week of November 22-26.

B). Option 2 students

Assignment 1 is due no later than Monday October 4 at 11:30pm.

Assignment 2 is due no later than Monday October 25 at 11:30pm.

Assignment 3 is due no later than Monday November 8 at 11:30pm.

Assignment 4 is due no later than Monday November 22 at 11:30pm.

Assignments can also be submitted **prior** to the due date if desired.

Module Quizzes – 5%

This course has 12 modules. At the end of each module, you will find a multiple-choice quiz. Each quiz has 10 questions and a 20-minute time limit. Each quiz is worth 0.5% - however, I will only include your top 10 quiz scores in your final grade (i.e. your lowest 2 quiz scores will be dropped).

A quiz will only become available **after** you have watched the relevant lecture 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 start date (by 11:30pm.). For example, Module 2 has a scheduled start date of September 13. Therefore, the Module 2 quiz must be **completed** by September 20 at 11:30pm.

Mid-term test - 25%, Wednesday October 20, 2021

The mid-term test will be available in Avenue on Wednesday October 20, from 5:00pm – 8:00pm. 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 8:00pm.

Take Home Exam – 40%, available Wednesday December 8; due Monday December 13

The exam will be available in Avenue beginning Wednesday December 8 at 12:00pm (i.e. noon). Your exam answer must be uploaded to the Assignment Drop box **no later** than Monday December 13 at 12:00pm (i.e. noon). Since this is an exam, this is a firm deadline – MSAFs will not apply.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Module 1 (September 7, 2021)

Introduction to Political Science

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

Module 2 (September 13, 2021)

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 20, 2021)

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 27, 2021)

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 4, 2021)

Conservatism

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

Readings:

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

Mid-term recess (October 11-15, 2021) – No classes or tutorials

Mid-Term Test (Wednesday October 20, 2021)

The mid-term test will be available in Avenue on **Wednesday October 20**, from 5:00pm – 8:00pm. 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 8:00pm.

Module 6 (October 18, 2021)

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 25, 2021)

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*, July 26, 2019

Module 8 (November 1, 2021)

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

Burke, Ashley, "[Payette stepping down as governor general after blistering report on Rideau Hall work environment](#)," *CBC*, Jan 21, 2021

Module 9 (November 8, 2021)

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

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

Module 10 (November 15, 2021)

Democracy in Canada III

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

Readings:

MacFarlane, Emmett, *Constitutional Pariah: Reference re Senate Reform and the Future of Parliament*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021, pp99-108, 114-136

Module 11 (November 22, 2021)

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, "[Quebec Superior Court upholds most of religious symbols ban, but English-language schools exempt](#)," *CBC*, April 20, 2021

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

Module 12 (November 29, 2021)

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

Tasker, John Paul, "[Supreme Court rules Ottawa's carbon tax is constitutional](#)," *CBC*, March 25, 2021

Questions (December 6, 2021)

We will not be covering new content during this week. Instead, I will be in my Zoom office on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 1:30-3:30 to answer any exam-related questions.

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 drop 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 assignments may be subject to a one letter grade per day grade deduction (including weekends). For example, an A- level assignment will be reduced to a B+ if it is received one day late, B if two days late, etc.

Please note: Tests, Quizzes, and the 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, the assignment will be due four 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 27**. The test will be available from 5:00pm to 8:00pm. 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 8:00pm.

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

In order to fully participate in live tutorials, students require access to [Zoom](#). Students should register for a free account (and download the relevant software) through [McMaster's zoom website](#). All tutorial participants must access Zoom through their McMaster Zoom account - even if they have previously created a non-McMaster-specific Zoom account.

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+

MARK	GRADE
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

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.