DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

POL2100Y Government and Politics of Canada  
2015-2016

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Office hour: 1-2 pm Tuesday and by appointment

Overview: This course offers PhD students with Canadian politics as their major or minor field an opportunity to explore, discuss and analyze key themes in the field. The syllabus assumes students already possess a good understanding of Canadian politics at both academic and practical levels. Although the course is designed to help prepare students for the major field examination (MFE) in Canadian politics, it does not cover all the literature on which the MFE is based. A more extensive list of readings useful in preparing for the MFE will be made available. Course assignments have been constructed in order to immerse students rapidly in the broad intellectual currents of the area, notably in the research process integral to the preparation of a thesis proposal and dissertation.

Format: The first four weeks focus on conceptual approaches to the study of Canadian politics. The outline then considers various substantive aspects of Canadian politics and the literature on them, from the perspective of these and other conceptual approaches.

Course requirements: As a PhD only seminar, the course is built around student presentations and extensive student participation in weekly course meetings. Beginning October 14, students will act as discussion leaders, framing the assigned readings in short (likely 12-14 minute) presentations and posing questions for discussion. It is expected that each student will offer at least two presentations in fall term and two in spring term.

Seminar presentation schedule will be organized at the beginning of each term. Instructor will email students individually with feedback on each presentation. Presentations should focus on critical questions and integrative points linking the readings, not on descriptive summaries of texts. Responsibility for presentations rests with students; the instructor must be notified at least three hours before the start of class if for any reason you will not be making your presentation on the given materials at a specified class. There is no guarantee that missed seminar presentations will be rescheduled. Students may – but are advised not to – write papers on and choose to lead discussions on the same topic.

Grading scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Analytic paper (due 19 January 2016)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take home exam (distributed 5 April 2016)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four short papers on weekly readings (2 fall, 2 spring; 4 @ 6.25%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar presentations (2 fall, 2 spring; 4 @ 5%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (based on quality of in-class engagement, not attendance)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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**Analytic paper**: This paper, due January 19, should be **no more than 25 pages**, references included. Students will select one core empirical question or puzzle about Canadian politics, defend its conceptual and empirical significance, and describe in general how they’d go about answering it. The paper must include: (a) a brief literature review that situates the question or puzzle in a clear scholarly context and (b) a concise discussion of alternative paths toward responding empirically to that question or puzzle. The objective is not so much to answer the question – though students may offer tentative responses should they wish – but rather to gain experience in linking empirical analysis with conceptual and theoretical approaches to the study of politics. Students who have tentatively identified a thesis topic are strongly encouraged to write their papers on that subject. A portion of one class late in fall term may be devoted to short student presentations that showcase progress on the analytic papers and address challenges with the assignment.

**Take home exam** will be distributed at the final class, for submission within 72 hours via email.

**Short papers**: Each student will submit a total of four short papers, two in the fall term and two in the spring term. Papers are designed as ‘think-pieces’ rather than research essays. To ensure comprehensive knowledge of the course material, students are encouraged to prepare presentations and write papers on different weeks and subjects. Papers must address one of the two questions indicated on the outline below for dates beginning 27 October. Papers should be 5 to 7 double-spaced typed pages in length, and are due at the beginning of class in hard copy. **No late submissions will be accepted**. While essays may consider (and offer full citation of) additional sources beyond the assigned readings for a given week, this is not necessary.

**Seminar participation**: Weekly attendance is crucial to success in the course. Students are encouraged to demonstrate mastery of the assigned readings, an ability to respond constructively to the interventions of others and a grasp of how sub-sets of the academic literature fit with each other. Students are urged to prepare written comments on weekly readings as a basis for discussion, including when they are not scheduled to make a formal presentation.

**Back up your work**: Students are strongly advised to keep electronic versions of all rough and draft work, and to make hard copies of their essays before handing them in to the instructor. These should be retained until the marked assignments have been returned and the grades posted on ROSI.

**Late penalty**: A late penalty of 3 percentage points per day including Saturdays and Sundays will be assessed for the analytic paper and take-home exam.

**Academic Integrity**: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. Offences may entail copying material from another source (e.g. book, journal, website, another student) without acknowledging the source; presenting an argument as your own instead of
acknowledging in explicit terms the source of the idea; having another person assist in writing your essay; or purchasing an essay. Penalties for breaches of academic integrity range from failing the assignment, failing the course, having a notation on your academic transcript, and/or suspension from the university. For further information on the University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, see: http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm. To avoid problems, consult “How Not to Plagiarize” by Margaret Proctor: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.

Readings: Efforts will be made to ensure course readings are on the portal site for POL2100Y. Additional readings may be proposed as the course unfolds. Abbreviations used below:

\[ CJPS \] = Canadian Journal of Political Science
\[ CUP \] = Cambridge University Press
\[ UTP \] = University of Toronto Press
\[ OUP \] = Oxford University Press
\[ MQUP \] = McGill-Queens University Press

15 September -- No class meeting

22 September – Introduction, organization of fall term seminar presentations

**PART ONE/CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO CANADIAN POLITICS**

29 September -- Social approaches


6 October – Economic approaches


**13 October – Institutional approaches**


**20 October — Ideational approaches**


**PART TWO/SOURCES OF CLEAVAGE AND DIVERSITY**

**27 October — Regions, provinces and regionalism/Professor Christopher Cochrane visits**

Short paper topics (select one) a. Assess the tradeoff between conceptual or theoretical richness versus empirical insight in this literature. OR b. Are provinces more suitable units of analysis than regions?


**3 November Quebec/French Canada**

Short paper topics (select one) a. Evaluate the extent to which this literature offers a theoretically informed analysis of Quebec politics. OR b. Is the ‘national question’ in Quebec empirically tractable for contemporary scholars given the province’s variegated social composition?


**10 November – Fall break, no class meeting**

**17 November – Race and multiculturalism/Professor Erin Tolley visits**

Short paper topics (select one) a. Is diversity an analytically useful concept for the study of Canadian politics? OR b. How effectively have concepts of intersectionality been integrated at the empirical level into research on multiculturalism?


Debra Thompson, “Is race political?” *CJPS* 41:3 (2008), 525-47.


24 November -- Aboriginal politics & analytic paper discussion

Short paper topics (select one) a. Is the study of aboriginal politics in Canada best served by a particular conceptual approach? b. How has empirical research informed (or not) public understanding of aboriginal politics in Canada?


1 December -- Gender and Canadian Politics

Short paper topics (select one) a. Assess the choice of conceptual framework or frameworks used by scholars in this field. OR b. What research questions or areas in this field seem most promising for future empirical analysis?


Elisabeth Gidengil and Joanna Everitt, “Conventional Coverage/Unconventional Politicians: Gender and Media Coverage of Canadian Leaders’ Debates,” CJPS 36:3 (July 2003), 559-77.


8 December – no class meeting
PART THREE/CULTURE, PARTIES AND ELECTIONS
12 January -- Political culture
Short paper topics (select one) a. Is the concept of political culture analytically useful for empirical scholarship about Canada? b. Do quantitative, survey-based approaches to political culture reach conclusions reconcilable with those of qualitative, historical studies?


Ailsa Henderson, “Regional Political Cultures in Canada,” CJPS 37:3 (September 2004), 595-615. (review)

Nelson Wiseman, In Search of Canadian Political Culture (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5. (available as e-book)


19 January -- Parties and party systems
Analytic paper due on 19 January. Full details on fall term course outline.
Short paper topics (select one) a. Is the literature on Canadian parties under-theorized? b. What are the major empirical weaknesses in research on Canadian parties and party systems?


26 January -- Elections and political behaviour **Professor Peter Loewen to visit**
Short paper topics (select one) a. What gains could accrue from a deeper theoretical grounding of Canadian electoral research in the comparative literature? b. How significantly has Canadian empirical research in this field advanced since its beginnings?


**PART FOUR/INSTITUTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONS**

**2 February – Evaluating the Canadian state**

Short paper topics (select one) a. Is the phrase ‘the Canadian state’ analytically useful? b. Have empirical studies effectively probed longitudinal change in the structure and operation of the Canadian state?


**9 February – Federalism and multilevel governance**

Short paper topics (select one) a. Is it fair to argue that despite its volume, the Canadian federalism literature is theoretically impoverished? b. What empirically important dimensions of this field are under-researched?

Richard Simeon, *Political Science and Federalism: Seven Decades of Scholarly Engagement* (Kingston: Queen’s University Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 2002).


16 February NO CLASS – READING WEEK

23 February -- Parliament and legislatures

**Short paper topics** (select one) a. Is it accurate to depict this literature as operating in a conceptual straitjacket? b. Has too much attention been directed toward issues of responsible government, and too little toward other important questions about Parliament?

David Docherty. *Mr. Smith Goes to Ottawa: Life in the House of Commons*. (Vancouver: UBCPress, 1997), ch. 1. (review)


Christopher Kam, *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), chapters 1, 3. *(available as e-book)*


1 March – Political executives

Short paper topics (select one) a. Are centralization of power arguments theoretically well grounded? b. What empirical directions has the literature on political executives ignored?


Graham White, *Cabinets and First Ministers* (Vancouver: UBCPress, 2005), chap. 5. *(available as e-book)*


8 March -- Constitutions and the judiciary

Short paper topics (select one) a. Is this literature characterized more by conceptual uniformity or variety? b. What empirical avenues in this field are not well tilled but worth pursuing?


15 March – NO CLASS MEETING

PART FIVE/CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

22 March – Citizen engagement

*Short paper topics (select one) a. Are the tools of mainstream political science analysis well suited to research in this area? b. Do patterns of participation during the 2015 federal election campaign call into question core preoccupations of this literature?*


29 March -- Assessing public policy **Professor Ludovic Rheault to visit**
Short paper topics (select one) a. Can interests, institutions and ideas all be effectively considered in a single study of Canadian public policy? b. Have empirical scholars in this field responded adequately to the concerns raised by Simeon back in 1976?


5 April – Urban politics
Take home exam will be distributed after class for submission via email within 72 hours.
Short paper topics (select one) a. Are institutional approaches relevant to a constitutionally devalued layer of government in Canada? b. What empirical questions need to be prioritized in research on Canadian cities?


Sylvia Bashevkin, “Training a Spotlight on Urban Citizenship: The Case of Women in London


Kristin Good, Municipalities and Multiculturalism: The Politics of Immigration in Toronto and Vancouver (Toronto: UTP, 2009), chapters 1, 2, 8. (available as e-book)


