10 January -- Parties and party systems

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?


17 January -- Elections and political behaviour
Analytic paper due on 17 January. Full details on fall term course outline.

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
24 January – 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?


Donald J. Savoie, Breaking the Bargain: Public Servants, Ministers and Parliament (Toronto: UTP, 2003), chapters 1, 6, 7.


Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo, “Conclusion: Taking Stock of Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up,” in Gidengil and Bastedo, eds., Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 253-71. (available as e-book)

31 January – 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).


**7 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](#))

Kelly Blidook, *Constituency Influence in Parliament: Countering the Centre.* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), ch 1. ([available as e-book](#))

14 February – 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)


Donald Savoie, Power: Where Is It? (Montreal and Kingston: MQUP, 2010), chaps. 6, 10. (available as e-book)


21 February – Reading week, no class meeting.

28 February -- 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?


**PART FIVE/CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES**

**7 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?


14 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?


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21 March – Urban politics
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?


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


28 March – Media and politics

Short paper topics (select one) a. Is the literature on media and politics in Canada well-integrated conceptually with the rest of Canadian politics scholarship? b. Are the most popular methodologies used in the media and politics literature necessarily the most empirically promising?


**4 April – no class meeting**

*Take home exam will be distributed electronically at 4 pm on 4 April for submission via email within 72 hours.*