

Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

POL 224 Y1Y

Canada in Comparative Perspective

Syllabus
Fall 2018 - Winter 2019

Class Time: Mondays, 6PM–8 PM
Class Location: MS 3154 (Medical Sciences Building 3154)

Instructors:

Fall 2018 Semester

Ludovic Rheault

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Winter 2019 Semester

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Course description:

This course introduces students to Canadian politics using a comparative approach. It provides essential knowledge about the variety of political regimes around the world, with concrete examples emphasizing the comparison of Canada with other countries. Topics covered include the evolution of democracies, political institutions, electoral systems, voting, ideology, the role of the state in the economy, as well as contemporary issues.

Section 1 begins with an introduction to key concepts in the study of politics, by emphasizing the attributes of democratic regimes and the problems that electoral systems are designed to solve. We then examine the fundamental actors of democracy: political parties, the media and voters. This section includes discussions of topical issues such as the role of social media during campaigns and phenomena such as echo chambers and false news.

Section 2 examines key institutions and processes of government in developed liberal democracies, with particular attention to the Canadian case. We start with a study of the fundamental principles governing the state – the constitution – and examine a significant trend in modern democracies: the increasing political influence of the courts. The section continues with an examination of the other branches of government and a discussion of federalism.

This course pays particular attention to the importance of political economy for an understanding of politics, i.e., to the relationship between the production and distribution of wealth on the one hand and the exercise of political power on the other. Sections 3 and 4 address these themes most directly, examining how political life both conditions and is shaped by its economic and societal setting, domestic and international. The focus is again on developed societies, with special attention to the Canadian case.

Required text and readings:

Textbook: Cochrane, Christopher, Kelly Blidook and Rand Dyck. 2016. *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches*. 8th Edition. Toronto: Nelson. ISBN-13: 9780176582951.

The textbook for the course is available at the UofT Bookstore. Consultation copies have been placed in the Course Reserve at the Robarts Library and the E.J. Pratt Library (Victoria University). Additional required readings focusing on comparative politics comprise journal articles and book chapters that will be made available online on Quercus, free of charge.

Some additional readings for the second half of the course will be posted in December.

Course format:

The course comprises lectures given in class on Mondays, combined with tutorials supervised by teaching assistants (TAs) roughly every two weeks. Tutorial registration is done at the time of enrollment in the course, using ACORN. The room for each tutorial will appear on students' official schedule. Students can switch to a different tutorial group up to a few weeks into the semester by editing their choice on ACORN.

The allocation of groups to each TA will be announced at the beginning of the semester, and the schedule for tutorial weeks will be posted on Quercus.

Marking scheme:

Short paper (4-5 pages; due on November 12, 2018)	15%
Midterm test (during December exam period)	20%
Research essay (8-10 pages; due on March 11, 2019)	25%
Final examination (during April exam period)	30%
Tutorial participation	10%

Description of evaluations:

At the beginning of the term, students will be invited to choose a topical question in Canadian politics. A list of feasible questions will be made available on Quercus early in the fall. Students are asked to write two research assignments on the subject.

The first assignment (short paper due on November 12) requires students to write a review of the academic literature on their selected topic, and propose a theoretical framework for their final research essay.

For the second assignment (due March 11), students will be asked to submit a research essay of 8 to 10 pages, in which they will evaluate the merit of the chosen theoretical framework to answer their research question. The essay will include an empirical analysis of news articles, governmental sources or similar forms of evidence, in addition to academic literatures.

The midterm test and final exam will comprise essay questions about the course materials. In their answers, students are expected to demonstrate an acquisition of the materials covered in class, in the readings and during tutorials.

Tutorials will involve student participation in debates about current issues in Canadian politics. Attendance and participation during tutorials will count toward 10% of the final grade.

Appealing a mark:

Demands for appeal regarding a mark are to be justified in writing (250 words maximum) and submitted to the TA who marked the work. The policy of the Faculty of Arts and Science reads:

If a TA originally marked the work, the remarking request should go first to the TA and any appeal of that should go to the course instructor.

Such a request entails a remarking of the work. Hence, if a remarking is granted, the student must accept the resulting mark as the new mark, whether it goes up or down or remains the same. Continuing with the remark or the appeal means the student accepts this condition.

Turnitin statement:

Submission of written work to Turnitin can be done using the link provided in the UofT portal (Quercus). The statement of the University regarding the use of Turnitin reads as follows:

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Illnesses and extensions:

Requests about extensions or the writing a missed test require an accepted form of documentation. The Faculty of Arts and Science recognizes the following four (4) types of documentation:

- *The UofT Verification of Illness or Injury Form.*
- *The Student Health or Disability Related Certificate.*
- *The Letter of Accommodation from Accessibility Services.*
- *A letter from the College Registrar.*

Extensions on essays:

There is no need to contact the teaching staff regarding extensions. If you can provide one of the forms of documentation mentioned in the section above and are requesting an extension on an essay, please staple a visible copy of that documentation along with the essay at the time of submission. The medical documentation from UofT is designed to protect your privacy. The person marking the essay will make the necessary adjustment based on the dates indicated on the documentation.

Missed midterm test:

Students who do not write the midterm test should provide one of the forms of documentation indicated above to register for a makeup test, and inform the instructor as early as possible after the missed evaluation.

Missed final exam:

A student who cannot write the final exam must contact their College Registrar directly to enlist for a make-up exam. The College will ask for the usual forms of documentation.

Class Schedule

Fall 2018 Semester

SECTION 1. POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

September 10. Introduction: Concepts and current issues in Canadian politics.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 2.

September 17. Democracies and electoral systems I.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 13; Carter and Farrell 2010 (Quercus).

September 24. Democracies and electoral systems II.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 13; Carter and Farrell 2010 (Quercus).

Tutorial #1: Week of September 24.

Discussion question: Should we reform the electoral system in Canada?

Tutorial Reading: Carter and Farrell 2010.

October 1. Political parties and ideology.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 14; Dalton 2013 (Quercus).

[October 8. Statutory holiday (Thanksgiving): No class.]

October 15. Media and political communication.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 12; Bakshy et al 2015.

Tutorial #2: Week of October 15.

Discussion question: Are “echo chambers” a problem for democracy?

Tutorial Reading: Bakshy et al 2015.

October 22. Electoral campaigns.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 15; Allcott and Gentzkow 2017 (Quercus).

October 29. Voters.

Readings: Bartels 2010; Allcott and Gentzkow 2017 (Quercus).

Tutorial #3: Week of October 29.

Discussion question: Can false news influence the outcome of elections?

Tutorial Reading: Allcott and Gentzkow 2017.

[November 5. Reading week: No class.]

SECTION 2. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

November 12. Constitutions and the courts.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 17; Clark et al. 2013 (Quercus).

Short paper due.

November 19. The Charter and the evolution of judicial review.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 19.

Tutorial #4: Week of November 19.

Discussion question: Who benefits from the Charter in Canada?

Tutorial Reading: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 19.

November 26. Parliamentary and presidential systems.

Readings: Newton and van Deth 2010 (Quercus).

December 3. Legislative process and bicameralism.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 23; Docherty 2002 (Quercus).

Tutorial #5: Week of December 3.

Discussion question: Should we reform (or abolish) the Canadian Senate?

Tutorial Reading: Docherty 2002.

December exam period. Midterm Test.

Date to be determined by the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Winter 2019 Semester

Discussion questions and readings for the winter semester will be posted in December.

January 7. Executive dominance.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 21.

January 14. Federalism in comparative perspective.

Readings: Reading TBA (Quercus).

Tutorial #6. Week of January 14.

January 21. The evolution of Canadian federalism.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 18.

SECTION 3. CIVIL SOCIETY

January 28. State, economy and civil society.

Readings: Reading TBA (Quercus).

Tutorial #7. Week of January 28.

February 4. Political culture and identity.

Readings: Reading TBA (Quercus).

February 11. Canadian political culture.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 11.

Tutorial #8. Week of February 11.

[February 18. Reading week: No class.]

February 25. Interest groups and new social movements.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 16.

SECTION 4. POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CANADA IN THE WORLD

March 4. Varieties of political economy in liberal democracies.

Readings: Reading TBA (Quercus).

Tutorial #9. Week of March 4.

March 11. Canada's Political Economy I.

Readings: Reading TBA (Quercus).

Research essay due.

March 18. Canada's Political Economy II.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 8.

Tutorial #10. Week of March 18.

March 25. Globalization and Liberal Democracies.

Readings: Reading TBA (Quercus).

April 1. Canada and the World.

Readings: Cochrane et al. 2016, Ch. 10.

April Exam Period. Final examination.

Date to be determined by the Faculty of Arts and Science.