POL 490F/2102F: Topics in Canadian Politics

Change and Continuity in Canadian Electoral Politics

Long term trends in Canadian electoral politics will be examined from the perspective of the core theoretical concepts in the study of voting behaviour and elections. Utilizing data from the Canadian election studies and other surveys, we will assess the effects of social and economic forces in establishing continuities in Canadian electoral politics. We will also consider the ability of shorter term factors such as election campaigns, social media, economic performance, or new issues and problems to disrupt or alter these. Following an analysis of elements that have shaped the contours of Canadian federal elections in recent years, particularly those of 2011 and 2015, we will consider the implications of the 2019 federal election campaign and election outcome for future electoral alignments in Canada.

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Lawrence LeDuc, 109 Carr Hall (SMC)
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TEXTS:

[Available in print from the UT bookstore or as an ebook from University of Toronto Press]


OTHER SOURCES:

There is a vast theoretical and empirical literature on elections and voting. The following books will be available on reserve at the Robarts Library. Several of the books listed below contain an extensive bibliography of the comparative literature. See especially Elections and Voters (pp. 265-291), Comparing Democracies 4 (pp. 205-235), or Citizen Politics (pp.305-326). A more substantial listing of Canadian references may be found in Absent Mandate (pp. 185-197), Dominance and Decline (pp. 203-220) or The Canadian Election Studies (pp. 222-258).

Cameron D. Anderson and Laura B. Stephenson (eds.) Voting Behaviour in Canada. UBC Press, 2010


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

POL490F

Essays (2). The first essay (25%) will examine the potential explanatory power in Canadian voting behaviour of any independent variable (broadly defined) chosen from a list of possibilities provided by the instructor. Your analysis should be based on the Canadian election studies or other surveys that contain sufficient data. SPSS versions of the 2015 and 2011 Canadian Election Studies are available on Quercus for your use, and/or you may utilize other data sources. Please consult the specific instructions for this pre-election essay as soon as possible, and inform the instructor of your plans within the first two weeks of the class. Your essay should be approximately ten pages in length (including tables, references, etc). The pre-election essay is due on election day (October 21st) no later than 5 PM. Students will be expected to make a brief class presentation based on their work for the pre-election essay as part of the discussion in one of the three October class sessions prior to the election. The second essay (35%) will deal with
the outcome and interpretation of the 2019 federal election and its implications for governance and/or the future of Canadian politics. This paper (the post-election essay) should be approximately 12-15 pages in length. You are free to build upon your analysis of data from your first paper, or from other sources, in developing your interpretation of the election outcome. Students will be expected to discuss their interpretation(s) of the election based on preliminary work for the essay in one of the four classes beginning on November 12th. The due date for the post election essay is December 3rd.

Participation/seminar (20%). Each student will be expected to contribute to and participate in all class discussions, and to make two specific contributions based on individual research as described above.

Final oral exam (20%). An oral exam based on the required readings, class discussions, and written work will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time during the first or second week of December.

POL2102F

Students in POL2102F may opt to follow the requirements for POL490F as outlined above or may choose to submit a single larger essay (50%) on a mutually agreeable topic dealing either with a significant theoretical issue, data analysis, or the election outcome. Students who choose this option should submit a proposed topic and a short outline of the essay by October 1st and should also expect to make a short presentation in an appropriate class both before and after the election. For students choosing this option, the other two components of the grade will each count an additional 5% The larger essay, if chosen, should be approximately 25 pages in length (including tables, bibliography, etc.), and is due on December 3rd.

COURSE SYLLABUS: * denotes required reading for all students;

September 10th Introduction: Studying Elections and Voting Behaviour


* Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc and Jon H. Pammett. Canada at the Polls 2019: A New Mandate? [blog, available on Quercus]

Elisabeth Gidengil et al. Dominance and Decline, chapter 1

Cees van der Eijk and Mark N. Franklin. Elections and Voters, chapter 2
**September 17th  The Strategic Configuration of Elections in Canada**

* **Absent Mandate**, chapter 1


**September 24th  Parties and Partisanship**

* **Absent Mandate**, chapter 2


Russell Dalton. *Citizen Politics*, chapter 9

* **Elections and Voters**, chapter 3

* **Dominance and Decline**, chapter 4


**October 1st  The Canadian Electorate**

* **Absent Mandate**, chapter 3

* Allison Harrell and Tania Gosselin, “The Youth Vote in the 2015 Election” in *Canadian Election Analysis*, pp. 118-119

* Susan Delacourt. “Shopping for Votes: a Sequel?” in *Canadian Election Analysis*, pp. 72-73

* **Dominance and Decline**, chapter 8
Citizen Politics, chapter 4

Elections and Voters, chapter 4

Lawrence LeDuc and Jon H. Pammett. “Voter Turnout” in Heather MacIvor, Election, pp. 251–67

October 8th Issues and Issue Voting

* Absent Mandate, chapter 4

* LeDuc and Pammett. Dynasties and Interludes, chapter 1


Dominance and Decline, chapters 5, 6

Citizen Politics, chapter 6


Stuart Soroka and Christopher Wlezien. Degrees of Democracy, chapters 1, 2

October 15th Leaders and Campaigns

* Absent Mandate, chapter 5


* Mark Burgess. “The Permanent Campaign Meets the 78-Day Campaign, and Falls Apart” in Canadian Election Analysis, pp. 25-26


October 21st   Election Day   [First essay due]

October 22nd   Election Retrospective

October 29th   Analyzing and Explaining the Outcome

*Absent Mandate,* chapter 6


“Election 2015: Reflections on this Project and on the Campaign” in *Canadian Election Analysis,* part 1

“The Players and their Strategies” in *Canadian Election Analysis,* part 3


November 5th   Fall break, no class

November 12th   A New Mandate? Policy Implications of the Election (1)

*Absent Mandate,* chapters 7, 8

*Elections and Voters,* chapter 5


Degrees of Democracy, chapters 6-9

November 19th  Policy Implications of the Election (2)

November 26th  Change and Continuity: Long Term Implications of the 2019 Election (1)


Elections and Voters, chapter 5

Dominance and Decline, chapters 10, 11

Dynasties and Interludes, chapter 13, 14


December 3rd  Change and Continuity (2)  [Second essay due]

December 4th – 13th  Final oral exams (as scheduled)