

University of Toronto  
Department of Political Science  
POL101  
The Real World of Politics  
Summer 2023

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

Welcome to POL 101, The Real World of Politics! This course introduces students to the field of political science through the major issues and problems of contemporary politics. Students will engage the concepts and debates that anchor the study of political science through lectures and discussions that directly address contemporary political problems and issues such as climate change, race and racism, elections and electoral systems, Indigenous rights and politics, liberalism, democracy, social movements, political participation, and political hope. Students will also learn important academic skills in this course, including how to take notes, how to read and think critically, and how to write. This is a terrific course to take in your first year because our TAs are specially trained to teach writing, and the course assignments are also designed to teach critical thinking and writing.

Learning Objectives:

Through this course, students will:

- Deepen their understanding of the political events, ideas, and debates that are shaping the world
- Become comfortable reading and extracting information from a variety of sources, including academic articles and books, media articles, reports, and podcasts
- Critically evaluate a variety of sources, analyzing the substance and merits of their arguments
- Develop their ability to make persuasive written and verbal arguments about politics

## Overview

This class will be conducted online. Because it is a summer course, we will be working on a compressed schedule. Each week, two lectures will be uploaded to Quercus. Each Thursday, you will attend an online tutorial.

Generally speaking, lectures are designed to help you understand the weekly readings and/or to complete your assignments. Tutorials are opportunities to put your learning into practice, by discussing big ideas with your peers.

## Your Responsibilities:

Each week, students will 1) watch two lectures, 2) complete the assigned readings (or 'listens') 3) submit a notes or writing assignment, when due, and 4) participate in tutorial.

Students should plan to do the reading and watch the lecture before their tutorial meets each week.

## Readings:

All the readings for the course are available online or posted on Quercus. The reading load for this course is not heavy, but some of it will be written in a style that is not familiar, and require slow, careful attention.

## Tutorials:

Students are divided into online tutorial groups. Tutorials will involve a combination of group discussions, small group work, and opportunities to practice and get feedback on important writing-related skills. If you have not yet signed up for a tutorial, please do so now.

Each tutorial group is assigned a TA, who will lead your discussions and be available to you for office hours (in person or online) and by email. Your TA should be your primary point of contact for any questions about this course.

## GRADING SCHEME

Assignments	Percentage
Two notes assignments	10% (5% each)
Two writing assignments	40% (20% each)
Tutorial participation	10%
Final exam	40%

Notes assignments - (5% x 2 = 10%)

There will be two notes assignments over the course of the term.

The purpose of notes assignments is to teach you how to take notes, to ensure your accountability to the course, and to help you prepare for tutorials.

Notes will be due at 10PM Wednesday (ie. before the first tutorial). They are intended partly to ensure that everyone arrives in tutorial ready for discussion.

No feedback will be given on notes assignments.

Notes assignments will be graded according to the following scale.

5	Excellent (Demonstrates deep understanding and thoughtful engagement with the lecture and reading: goes above and beyond)
4	Complete (Clear evidence of engagement with course materials; writing is generally clear)
2	Partially complete (Notes demonstrate a failure to read, listen to lecture or engage with course materials; answers are unclearly written)
0	Incomplete (Notes not submitted or too brief to demonstrate evidence of familiarity with course materials)

Writing assignments (20%x2=40%)

There will be two writing assignments. Detailed instructions and a rubric for each will be posted on quercus. You will receive feedback from your TAs on your writing assignments.

#### Introduction and thesis statement - 20%

You will write a 150-200 word introduction, including a thesis statement, responding to an essay prompt.

#### Persuasive argument and supporting evidence - 20%

Write a 250-300 word paragraph that answers a question with a persuasive argument and supporting evidence.

#### Participation - 10%

Your participation in tutorial will be evaluated by your TA. They will communicate their expectations to you. If they don't, ask.

#### Final exam - 40%

The final exam will take place during the final exam period for this semester. The exam format will be two essay questions.

#### Assignment Deadlines at a glance

Week	Notes assignment (Due Wednesday at 10PM)	Writing Assignment (Due Friday at 5PM)
Week 1 (introduction, democracy)		
Week 2 (elections, political participation)	May 17	
Week 3 (race, social movements)		May 26: Introduction with thesis statement

Week 4 (reconciliation, Ukraine invasion)		
Week 5 (liberalism, individual responsibility)	June 7	
Week 6 (climate change, political hope)		June 16: Persuasive argument with supporting evidence

Course Outline. Required readings, podcasts, and videos/documentaries will be posted in weekly "modules" on Quercus.

**May 8**

### **Lecture 1: Introduction**

No reading

### **Lecture 2: Democracy**

Read: Robert Kaplan, "Was Democracy Just a Moment?" The Atlantic Monthly, December 1997

Watch: "Francis Fukuyama and The End of History,"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YM6p-15fjBg>

Skim: "How democracy is under threat across the globe,"  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/19/world/democracy-threat.html?searchResultPosition=3>

**May 15**

### **Lecture 3: Elections and electoral systems**

Read: Pippa Norris, "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems" International Political Science Review Vol. 18, No. 3

## **Lecture 4: Political Participation**

Read: Schlozman, Verba, and Brady, "Participation is not a Paradox: The View from American Activists" British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 25, No.1 (Jan., 1995) pp1-36

**May 22**

## **Lecture 5: Race**

Read: Anthony Marx, "Race-making and the nation-state," World Politics, Vol 48, Issue 2, 1996, 180-208

Read: Erin Tolley "Lack of council diversity puts municipalities at risk," Policy Options, October 2018

Read: Terry Glavin, "There are more crucial issues than the colour of Vancouver's council" National Post, October 31, 2018

## **Lecture 6: Social movements**

Read: [Deva Woodly, "Reckoning: Black Lives Matter and the Democratic Necessity of Social Movements," Chapter one \[Pages 3-\] \[2023-01-31\].pdf](#)

Read: Jelani Ince, Zackery Dunivin, "Black Lives Matter protests are shaping how people understand racial inequality," The Conversation, March 30, 2022.

Read: Canadian Civil Liberties Union "The Right to Protest and Gather"

**May 29**

## **Lecture 7: The politics of reconciliation**

Read: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. "Legacy," pp. 135-183

Read: Jung, Courtney. 2018. "Reconciliation: Six Reasons to Worry." Journal of Global Ethics 14 (2): 252-65.

## **Lecture 8: The Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

Read: John Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: the Liberal delusions that provoked Putin," Foreign Affairs, Sep-Oct 2014

**June 5**

**Lecture 9: Liberalism**

Read: Ryan, Alan. 1993. "Liberalism." in A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy, edited by Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit, 291-311. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub.

**Lecture 10: The politics of individual responsibility**

Read: Wiedemann, Andreas and Wise, Tess, "The Dog-Whistle Politics of Personal Responsibility, Credit, and the American Welfare State," (July 17, 2020).

Listen: "Reasons to be cheerful podcast: The winner takes it all" with Michael Sandel

**June 12**

**Lecture 11: Climate change**

Read: Steven Bernstein and Matthew Hoffman, "Why action on climate change gets stuck and what to do about it," (<https://theconversation.com/why-action-on-climate-change-gets-stuck-and-what-to-do-about-it-128287>)

**Lecture 12: Political Hope**

No reading

**Class and university policies and resources:**

**Late policy:** Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 1% per day.

**Corrupted files policy:** It is virtually impossible for a file to become corrupted through submission to Quercus. Therefore "corrupted files" will be penalized as late submissions. If you are concerned about your file being corrupted, please copy and

paste the text of your assignment into the text box of an email and send it to the TA at the time of your submission. This way, if anything happens to your file, you can show that it was completed on time.

**Extension policy:** If you require an extension, you should speak to your TA *before* the assignment is due. Extensions will be granted for valid medical or family-related reasons. Extensions will be no more than one week (7 days).

In keeping with best practices in accessible pedagogy, this course has been designed to accommodate many schedules and learning styles. You will have one week to complete each assignment. The assignments are designed to be cumulative, so you will build your skills over the course of the semester. It is your responsibility to manage your workload throughout the semester so that you are able to submit your work on time.

**Grade Appeals:** Grade appeals must be raised within seven (7) days of the assignment being returned to you.

If you believe an error has been made in one of your assignment grades, you should send an email or private Quercus message to your TA explaining the error, with clear reference to the rubric for the assignment. It is your responsibility to demonstrate that your work merits a higher grade. If you appeal, your TA will regrade your assignment. Remember that your grade may go up or down on appeal.

If you believe an error has been made with your participation grade, you may appeal to your Tutorial TA. Tutorial TAs have total discretion over participation grades; you may not appeal to the Head TA or Professor to overturn a TA's decision regarding participation.

**Plagiarism policy:** Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offences. University policy requires that course instructors refer suspected plagiarism cases to the Office of Academic Integrity for resolution. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>



The use of generative artificial intelligence tools and apps is strictly prohibited in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course. This includes ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants. Use of generative AI in this course may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of plagiarism or cheating. Be aware that there is also software that detects the use of AI. Faculty and TAs in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences are on high alert as we explore how this new technology affects university pedagogy. Please do not use artificial intelligence to complete, inspire, or enhance the work you hand in this semester.

### **Resources**

**Accessibility Services:** The university is fully committed to providing students with fair access to their courses. Students with special needs or disabilities are strongly encouraged to register with Accessibility Services to arrange for needed accommodations.

**Writing Support:** Students can attend workshops and arrange one-on-one appointments for feedback on their written work. Students can visit [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca) for information and advice on all aspects of academic writing. Students are encouraged to make use of the college writing centers for individualized consultations on their written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments with the writing centers early, as they fill up fast. Information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. Students can also take advantage of the Library's free "Writing Plus" academic skills workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>. International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL), which includes practice opportunities for improving oral communication and critical reading skills, at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

**Registrar Support:** Students are encouraged to contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodations.

**Health and Wellness:** Students can access a wide range of

programs and services to support their health and wellbeing.  
Many of these programs are listed at:  
<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/health-wellness/> 6

**Crisis Support:** Students in distress can access a range of free crisis lines available from the University of Toronto and the City of Toronto, as listed below:

- University of Toronto:  
<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>
- City of Toronto:  
<https://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/kb/docs/articles/311-toronto/information-and-business-development/crisis-lines-suicide-depression-telephone-support-lines-non-crisis-mental-health-services.html>

Most of these crisis lines are available 24 hours a day and some address specific problems that students may be experiencing. Immediate assistance is available as follows:

- • My SSP for University of Toronto Students: 1-844-451-9700.
- • Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454
- • Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200
- • Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357)
- • The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)

You are not alone: please get help if you're experiencing difficulties or are in distress.