University of Toronto
Department of Political Science
Fall 2021

POL 2100: Issues and Foundations in Canadian Government
PhD Core Course

Syllabus

Class Time:
Wednesdays 12pm to 3pm
Class Location:
SS 3130 / Online (links via Quercus)

Instructors: Alison Smith and Robert Schertzer
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Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This course relies on close readings of leading scholarship to prepare students to assess and carry out research in Canadian political science. By the end of the semester, students are expected to understand the leading debates and approaches in the field, and be able to rigorously evaluate their own and other scholars’ research. As such, the core course serves an essential preparation to the major field examination (MFE) in Canadian politics. The course is divided into two sections: 1) Identity and Politics, and 2) Governance and Institutions.

Format

The format of core courses consists of three-hour seminars inviting a continued involvement of PhD students in a critical discussion of weekly readings. At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned the task of leading the discussion for two specific weeks. The course also features two workshops on reading and writing academic research, one scheduled early in the semester on reading, and a second in the middle of the semester on writing.
Readings

Core courses feature a heavy load in terms of reading requirements, and students will need to plan sufficient time outside of class for preparing adequately. To facilitate organization, each week is associated with **required readings** that students are expected to have done before the seminar. The workload for a typical week consists of one book plus two articles or chapters. The **recommended (MFE) readings** represent seminal books or articles on the same topic that students are expected to gain familiarity with at the time of writing the MFE in Canadian politics.

Assessment

The quality of seminars depends on contributions from everybody. The seminar lead for each week will open the class with a 15-minute presentation. It is expected that they will share a one-page list of discussion questions on the readings and topic the night before class. All students are expected to have completed the required readings, and to be able to provide insightful comments during class discussion.

Students will also produce a term paper on a topic of their choosing, and will present their papers to the class.

The final exam will be a timed, take-home exam designed to serve as a useful practice for the MFE.

- Participation 10%
- Seminar Leads (2 x 10%) 20%
- Paper Presentation 10% (in week 8)
- Paper (15 pages) 30% (due week 10)
- Take Home-Exam 30% (during December exam period)

Abbreviations

**UTP:** University of Toronto Press  
**MQUP:** McGill-Queen’s University Press  
**CUP:** Cambridge University Press  
**OUP:** Oxford University Press  
**CJPS:** Canadian Journal of Political Science
Schedule

Week 1. Studying Canadian Politics
September 15

Course Introduction, Reading Workshop

- Note: we will be reading Thompson (2008) together, in class, as part of this exercise; but if you would like to read the article in advance, please feel free to do so.

Recommended readings:

- Tolley, Erin. 2017. “Into the Mainstream or Still at the Margins? 50 Years of Gender Research in the CPSA” CJPS 50(1)

PART A: IDENTITY AND POLITICS

Week 2. Identity and Canadian Politics
September 22

Required readings:


MFE readings:

• Asch, Michael, John Borrows and James Tully. 2018. Resurgence and Reconciliation. Toronto: UTP (chapters by Asch, Tully, and Regan)
• Bannerji, Himani. 2000. The Dark Side of the Nation. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. (Ch 4.)

Week 3. Federalism and the Provinces
September 29

Required readings:


MFE readings:
Week 4. **Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition**  
October 6

**Required readings:**


**MFE readings:**

• Alcantara, Chris and Jennifer Nelles. 2016. *A Quiet Evolution*. Toronto: UTP.

**Week 5. Cities and Urban Politics**
October 13

**Required:**


**MFE readings:**


**Week 6. Gender, Race, and Intersectionality**
October 20

**Required readings:**


**MFE readings:**
• Shachar, A. *Multicultural Jurisdictions: Cultural Differences and Women’s Rights* (New York: CUP) (Ch. 2).

**PART B: GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS**

**Week 7. Responsible Government**
October 27

**Writing Workshop**

- *Note: for this workshop, students will be asked to come with a short, one/two-page outline of their proposed paper topic/argument/points.*

**Required readings:**

- Savoie, Donald. 1999. *Governing From the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*. Toronto: UTP. (Introduction and Ch. 3)

**MFE readings:**

Week 8. Paper Presentations
November 3 – paper presentations

Reading Week
November 10

Week 9. Parliament
November 17

Required readings:


MFE readings:


Week 10. The Welfare State and Social Policy
November 24
Term Paper Due

Required readings:

**MFE readings:**

• Banting and Myles. *Inequality and the Fading of Redistributive Politics*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
• Rodney Haddow. 2015. *Comparing Ontario and Quebec: Political Economy and Public Policy at the Turn of the Millennium*. Toronto: UTP.

**Week 11. Courts, Judicial Review, and the Charter**

December 1

**Required readings:**


MFE readings:
• Voth, Daniel. 2016. “Her Majesty’s Justice Be Done” CJPS. 49(2).
• Borrows, John. 2016. Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism. Toronto: UTP. (Ch. 1-3)
• Schertzer, R. 2016. The Judicial Role in a Diverse Federation: Lessons from the Supreme Court of Canada (Toronto: UTP)
• Cairns, A. 1971. “The Judicial Committee and its Critics” CJPS 4(3)
• Radmilovic, V. 2010. “Strategic Legitimacy Cultivation at the Supreme Court of Canada: Quebec Secession Reference and Beyond” CJPS 43(4)
• Songer, D., Johnson, S., Ostberg, C. and Wetstein, M. 2012. Law, Ideology and Collegiality: Judicial Behaviour in the Supreme Court of Canada (Kingston: MQUP) (Chs 5 and 7).

Week 12. Elections and Party Systems
December 8

Required readings:
• Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, Andre Blais, Joanna Everitt and Patrick Fournier. 2012. Dominance and Decline: Making Sense of Recent Canadian Elections. Toronto: UTP. (Ch. 2)

MFE readings: