



POL214H1S: Canadian Government

Winter 2024: Mondays, 5PM-7PM, Mechanical Engineering Building (MC)

Instructor: Prof. Semra Sevi

Office: Department of Political Science, Sidney Smith 3119

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-1:30 or by appointment

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1. Overview and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the study of Canadian Politics, its historical foundations, institutions, and political processes. We will cover a range of topics, such as the constitutional foundations of Confederation, institutional structures (cabinet, parliament, the judiciary), political culture, and the behavior of elites and citizens. Over the course of the term students will engage with important debates in Canadian politics such as the centralization of power in the Prime Minister's office, federal decentralization, indigenous politics, multiculturalism, and the judicialization of Canadian politics.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the formal and informal features of Canadian politics, including the constitution, the three branches of government, elections and political parties, and Canadian political culture.
- Understand core theoretical concepts of political science, including power, collective action-problems, media effects, group identity, and partisanship, and apply them to phenomena in Canadian politics.
- Evaluate critical questions in Canadian politics and develop and communicate evidence-based arguments through written composition.

2. Course Format

Your attendance at lectures is mandatory. In lecture you will be regularly asked quiz-style and discussion questions that require a response via Top Hat. Your participation in these in-class question-and-answer and structured discussion sessions is the foundation of your class participation.

In this class I will use different online tools to:

- Provide content (readings, lecture slides) – Top Hat
- Participate in class – Top Hat
- Announcements & Syllabus – Quercus

3. Required Texts and Materials:

- Cochrane, Christopher, Kelly Blidook and Rand Dyck. 2020. Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches (Updated 9th Edition). Nelson/Top Hat. E-book.
- Note on the textbook. It is an E-book. In this E-book you will be able to highlight and make notes. You need to purchase the textbook and integrated Top Hat subscription following the instructions in 4.1 below or by following the link provided by the bookstore.
- Readings available electronically. As listed below in the detailed syllabus, required readings for the course are electronically available on Top Hat.
- Course webpage and emails. There is a course webpage on Quercus. I will use this page to post important course documents (such as the syllabus), post announcements and send emails to you throughout the term. Lecture slides will be posted on Top Hat. It is your responsibility to regularly check Quercus and Top Hat for updates.

4. Grading and Assessed Coursework

Assignment	Date/ Due Date	Percentage of Overall Grade
Lecture Participation (Top Hat)	All lectures	10%
Tutorial Participation	All tutorials	20%
Learn by teaching letter	Tutorial 3 & Tutorial 9	40% (20% each)
Final Exam	TBA	30%

4.1 Lecture Participation (10%)

We will be using Top Hat (www.tophat.com) for class participation. A subscription to Top Hat is included with your textbook purchase. In all lectures you will be asked to answer questions using Top Hat. Part of your participation mark will depend on your engagement with these questions.

Your mark does not depend on whether you get the answers right. The questions are exercises to provoke discussion and learning.

However, to get credit for participation at a given lecture, you must be present at the lecture and input responses to all questions using your own device (Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message). If this is logistically a problem, contact me immediately. For instructions on how to create a Top Hat account and enrol in our Top Hat Pro course, please refer to the invitation sent to your school email address or consult Top Hat's [Getting Started Guide](#).

If you already have a Top Hat account, you can go to (<https://app.tophat.com/e/672543>) to be taken directly to our course digital textbook.

If you are new to Top Hat: Go to <https://app.tophat.com/register/student>

Search for our course textbook with the following join code: 672543

For more information about the interactive features in the textbook, click here: <https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Using-Your-Textbook>

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491. Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

4.2 Tutorial Participation (20%)

Tutorials are an essential component to the course and are mandatory. Tutorials will begin in week 3. Your TA will help you understand the material, prepare for the tests, and write well. Note that tutorial participation is marked on a cumulative basis throughout the entire year. You will receive 10% of your grade based on attendance and 10% based on the quality and quantity of your participation. When preparing for the tutorial, you should work on developing strategic reading practices. For example, ask yourself the following questions when you are reading:

- Do I understand the basic terms and concepts used by the author? *Keep a list of difficult concepts and bring it to the tutorial group.*
- What is the central point or argument that the author is trying to make? *Write out in a couple of sentences what you think the main point of the reading was (and keep this to study later).*
- How has the author organized his or her argument? What are the major themes? *Note the logical steps in the author's argument. Do these make sense? Are they supported by persuasive evidence?*
- How does the reading relate to other course material? *Do the authors say anything new or are they just repeating conventional wisdom? Do they help prove or counter points made in another week's readings?*

You should also continually self-reflect on your participation in tutorial. Ask yourself the following questions after each tutorial meeting:

- Did I initiate discussion? Did I provide some information when it was needed?
- Did I give or ask for some positive or negative opinions or reactions?
- Did I disagree with someone I thought was wrong?
- Did I try to restate what someone else had said to ensure I understood?
- Did I give examples or ask for others to provide examples when they were needed?
- Did I try or ask others to synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion?

Your TA will keep a formal attendance record. If you are concerned that the TA has failed to record your name properly, the time to bring this to his/her attention is now, not weeks later or at the end of term. Do not show up at the end of a tutorial and expect the TA to give you credit for attendance.

If you missed a tutorial for what you believe is a legitimate reason (such as a documented medical or family issue), bring this to the attention of the TA as soon as possible. We reserve the right to determine what is a legitimate reason for missing a tutorial. The medical/family excuse policy is

designed to support students who encounter an unexpected problem once the term is underway, which causes them to miss the occasional tutorial.

However, if you have a chronic problem which causes you to miss tutorials consistently, week in and week out, your tutorial mark will suffer. Remember: your tutorial mark is a combination of attendance and participation. If you do not attend, you cannot participate. Students who do not attend are missing their opportunity to improve their participation mark. Please do not come to me weeks after a tutorial was held and claim the TA failed to record you as present. We cannot adjudicate questions about attendance or what may or may not have happened in a tutorial weeks after the event. Please do not come to me at the end of term and request an opportunity to do make-up work to compensate retroactively for missed tutorials. There is no provision for students to do extra work or assignments to make up for missed tutorials or low grades in tutorials. This policy applies to all students.

Students often attempt to switch between tutorial time-slots to accommodate changes in their personal schedule after the term is underway. You do so at your own peril. It is very difficult for the TA to keep track of students who do not stay in the time-slot to which they have been assigned. If you do for some reason wish to switch tutorial time-slots in mid-term, the onus is on you to make sure the TA formally notes this.

4.3 Learn by teaching letter (20% X 2)

You will write two letters during tutorial. The first letter will be to a friend that did not take this class explaining why you are taking this class, what you hope to learn and how this course fits in with other topics you have studied. Your goal is to articulate your point of view clearly and concisely. The second letter will also be to your friend. You will pick a concept that you have learned in class this semester. Your goal is to demonstrate your understanding of the concept that you choose, why the concept is important, and using language that is accessible to a broad public. Each letter will be 2-pages double-spaced. You will write the letters during tutorial. You may bring an outline to tutorial, but you must write the letter during tutorial. Marks will be deducted if you exceed the page limit. You must write in proper paragraph form. Each letter will be 2-pages double spaced maximum.

Letters must be written in-person during tutorial. The letters are due at the end of the tutorial. Late letters will not be accepted without prior accommodation.

4.4 Final Exam (30%)

There is a final exam. This exam will test you on all the material covered in the lectures and readings. The date and time of the final exam are to be set by the Registrar and will be released later in the term.

5. Course Schedule and Readings

Date	Topic	Textbook
January 8	Introduction	Ch. 2 & 16
January 15	Federalism	Ch. 17
January 22	The judiciary & the charter of rights and freedoms Tutorial 1	Ch. 18 & 22
January 29	The executive branch Tutorial 2	Ch. 19
February 5	Parliament Tutorial 3: Learn by teaching letter 1	Ch. 21
February 12	Multiculturalism and diversity Tutorial 4	Ch. 6
February 19	READING WEEK (No Lecture or Tutorials)	
February 26	Regionalism and language Tutorial 5	Ch. 3 & 5
March 4	Indigenous Politics Tutorial 6	Ch. 4
March 11	Canadian Political Parties Tutorial 7	Ch. 13
March 18	Canadian Elections and Voter Behaviour Tutorial 8	Ch. 14
March 25	Interest Groups Tutorial 9: Learn by teaching letter 2	Ch. 15
April 1	Review for final exam (No Lecture or Tutorials)	

6. Course Policies

6.1 Contacting Course Instructor

Your first point of contact for course content is your TA. I strongly recommend asking substantive questions about course content and requirements in their scheduled office hours.

Email should be reserved strictly for time sensitive questions or quick points of clarification. We will try to respond within 24 hours, but emails received during the weekend will be answered on Monday. If further assistance is needed, then you should attend our scheduled office hours or set an appointment with us through email.

If you are sick, experiencing a personal emergency, or have an administrative question, please contact the Anna Johnson (anna.johnson@mail.utoronto.ca).

Contact information for Teaching Assistants:

- Danielle Bohonos (Teaching/Assignments) danielle.bohonos@mail.utoronto.ca
- Anika Ganness (Teaching/Assignments) a.ganness@mail.utoronto.ca
- Emma Gill-Alderson (Teaching/Assignments) e.gill.alderson@mail.utoronto.ca
- Stephanie Hayes (Teaching/Assignments) st.hayes@mail.utoronto.ca
- Anna Johnson (Contact) (anna.johnson@mail.utoronto.ca)

6.2 Possible Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the course syllabus depending on evolving COVID-19 policies set by the University of Toronto. I will give notice to students in the event of any changes, and amended syllabi will be posted on Quercus.

6.3 Re-grading

If you'd like anything re-graded, you must wait 48 hours after the release of your grade and submit to me and Anna Johnson (anna.johnson@mail.utoronto.ca) a single-page memo outlining your case for re-grading. The memo needs to be serious and specific. We will then re-examine a particular item. We will not consider any re-grade requests without proper justification. Know, however, that a given grade can either increase or decrease. We will only accept re-grade requests up to 10 days after the release of a grade.

6.4 Missing Class and Late Assignments

Attendance and participation is required at all class sessions due to the intensive nature of this course. Letters are written in-person during tutorials. Late letters will not be accepted, except in the event of a documented serious illness or serious personal emergency (see section on Accommodation below). Missing the final exam is not handled by us at the course level. For information on missing final exams, please refer to the Faculty of Arts and Science: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/faculty-registrar/petitions/deferred-exams>

6.5 Accommodation for Emergency Situations

Students who need additional time for an assignment or will miss a lecture, tutorial, or exam for a medical or serious personal reason must contact Anna Johnson (anna.johnson@mail.utoronto.ca) before the due date or exam/lecture/tutorial date and as soon as the problem arises. All requests for accommodation must be made to Anna Johnson (anna.johnson@mail.utoronto.ca) directly via email.

We will require some documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool

for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Requests for accommodation made on or after an assignment's due date, or after the missed lecture will not be considered. Due date extensions will not usually be granted for work lost due to computer crashes or the loss of a computer file. There are simple and free ways of regularly and automatically backing up your work. Students are strongly advised to backup copies of their essays and assignments before submitting them. These backups should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned.

6.6 Other Accommodations

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services office.

The University provides reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holidays other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching staff in a timely fashion to upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences and instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations or other compulsory activities at these times. Please reach out to me as early as possible to communicate any anticipated absences related to religious observances, and to discuss any possible related implications for course work.

6.7 Equity and Harassment

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

6.8 Academic Integrity and Responsibility

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that

constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor in all relevant courses
- Making up sources or facts
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test
- Misrepresenting your identity

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources (for example, the University of Toronto website on Academic Integrity).

6.9 Plagiarism Detection

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>)

6.10 Usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative artificial intelligence (e.g., chatGPT) is not entirely prohibited at the University of Toronto if used carefully. However, generative AI is not considered a legitimate source of

information for the purposes of assignments in this class. Further, failing to cite this source when its output is used in assignments constitutes academic dishonesty. Generative artificial intelligence platforms also typically produce fake citations in their output. Using fake citations in an assignment also constitutes academic dishonesty. If we find evidence that generative AI was used in such a manner, we will consider it an academic offense (see 6.8).