COURSE SYLLABUS

POL 2811Y1 Y
M.A. Research Seminar II
Political Development and Canadian Democracy

Instructor: Dr. Julian Campisi
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-12pm
Seminar: Tuesdays, 13-15h (1-3pm)
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Course Overview & Objectives:

This course is intended for M.A. students to meet the research requirements of the program. The primary purpose of the seminar is to provide an opportunity for students to design and conduct an independent research project on a topic of their choice. Topics chosen may fit within the major themes of the course in the broader fields of Comparative Politics, Canadian Politics or Public Policy, but equally students are encouraged to define their own topics outside of the course topics. Students should discuss their research interests with the instructor, their peers, and other professors in the department.

A key objective of this course is thus quite practical: to assist students to produce a Masters Research Paper by the end of the year. This will include a proposal which identifies what research question you want to tackle in your major paper; lays out the reason for taking on that topic, and it outlines a plan for tackling it over the span of a few months. Accordingly, this course is designed to assist students with their choice of a research topic, with framing the MRP appropriately in terms of conceptualization and research design, and in identifying useful methodologies and appropriate resources and research materials.

Format:

The seminar format will provide a collegial setting within which students can read and critically analyse key aspects of diverse literature; present and discuss their research; hone their presentational skills, gain useful feedback from peers and instructors; and develop a variety of writing and communication skills useful in their future academic or professional lives.

The format will vary during the year. The Fall semester will involve a number of standard colloquium-style sessions dealing with elements of research, practicalities and varieties of project types, topic selection, and more. In doing so, we will use and refer to literature across sub-fields in political science not only on research methodology and conceptualization, but most weeks this will be supplemented with illustrative cases drawn from, intermittently, literature in Canadian politics, public policy, and comparative politics and development. In the Winter term, we meet every other week or so, focusing on proposal drafting and peer review, with students
presenting their work in progress as it evolves. We will also aim to have guest speakers and workshop leaders join us where possible in both semesters. Final submission of the MRP will follow later in Spring and Summer, with individual meetings upon request.

**Evaluation & Requirements:**

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<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>Participation &amp; Class Discussion (15%)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal &amp; Presentation + Peer review (15%)</td>
<td>Winter 2024</td>
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<td>Peer Review Session March 15 and 22 (Friday)</td>
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<td>Final MRP (70%)</td>
<td>April-August 2024</td>
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In the Department of Political Science at the Graduate Level, marks are always recorded as letter grades* (A, A-, B+, B, etc).

**Participation (15%) Ongoing**

Since the class is organized as a seminar, a portion of the marking scheme is reserved for presence and active participation during weekly classes as much as possible. Students will be expected to lead the discussion of a particular reading at least once during specific weeks. We will schedule the reading leads during the first week or two. Students will be asked, for their specific reading, to lead the class with a critical analysis (5 mins) and set of discussion questions for us to take up together. This will be conducted in a collegial manner and no formal presentation is necessary.

**MRP Proposal (15%) Winter 2024**

Each student is required to:

1. **2MT (2 minute topic)** Produce a half-page preliminary statement of research interest/initial topic ideas and present a 2MT informal presentation to class (due end of November).

   The statement/2MT should briefly describe your research interests and ideally address the following questions:
   What is the preliminary problem you wish to investigate, explain or understand?
   What are you curious about? If you have an idea, what is your research question? How did you come up with it? Is there an article that accomplishes something similar to what you want to do in your MRP/ how will it differ?

2. Develop and circulate a 5 page MRP proposal. **Deadline: March 3rd**

   The proposal should i) outline your formalized research question, ii) situate that question in the broader literature, including why your question responds to a puzzle, debate or gap in the literature (lit review), and iii) depending on the stage of your research, identify preliminary answers your question (i.e., your argument, propositions, and/or hypotheses) and propose a research design or brief methodology you plan to utilize; iv) outline the main sections of your
MRP. We will also hold proposal writing seminars put on by experts from CTL in January and February before it is due, in order to help you develop the proposal.

2b. Peer Review *Friday March 15 and March 22 (in the third floor SS seminar room). These two weeks we will meet on Friday afternoon from 12-2pm in the main departmental seminar room to present our proposals and peer review for other students from the 1st MRP seminar section, and from the Munk MGA Program. More details on the Peer Review Activity TBD.

2c) 3MT (3 min thesis) Based on the peer review and instructor feedback, students will edit their work, and later present their main MRP question and argument overview in max 3 minutes to our seminar class (in early April) based on the SSHRC 3MT competition format. i.e. https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/events/3minute-thesis/index.html

Final MRP (70%) Spring/Summer

Final MRP papers (approx. 50 pages, double spaced) based on proposal ideas and feedback will be due from April-August depending on graduation plans. More details TBD.

POLICIES

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Students at this level should already have a thorough understanding of what is meant by the term “plagiarism” and the meaning of “academic integrity” more generally. Students should review the University’s policies and resources on the matter which can be found on its website, and in particular the sheet “How Not to Plagiarize” located at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.

All of the policies and procedures surrounding academic offences are dealt within one policy: The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (the 'Code’). The full text of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters can be found in your Faculty Calendar or online at www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.html...

Ignorance of the rules does not excuse cheating or plagiarism.

All instances of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the University for further review and discipline. For more information, please visit the website of the Center for Teaching Support and Innovation at the University of Toronto: Academic Integrity at the University of Toronto. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me. For your benefit, however, here is just one example of an academic offence:
• A student who includes word-for-word a sentence or a part of a sentence from a source, and although they cite the source as a reference at the end of the sentence and in the bibliography, they do not include the relevant passage within quotation marks. This is an example of plagiarism (see The Code) because it claims somebody else’s writing as your own. Changing a few words in a sentence does not solve this problem. If the writing is from a source, and not from you, it belongs in quotation marks (i.e., “ ”).

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Ouriginal 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 database. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq).” See more- https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/smart-strategies/ for ‘smart strategies’, and https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/plagiarism

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

Students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit.

Students may not use artificial intelligence tools for taking tests, writing research papers, creating computer code, or completing major course assignments. However, these tools may be useful when gathering information from across sources and assimilating it for understanding. The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Recording of Classroom Material by Students

Recording or photographing any aspect of a university course - lecture, tutorial, seminar, lab, studio, practice session, field trip etc. – without prior approval of all involved and with written approval from the instructor is not permitted.

Illnesses and late work

The University of Toronto launched a unique and centralized tool to report illnesses and other situations leading to absences, the Absence Declaration. For any situations affecting your ability to complete term work in time (COVID, cold, flu, other illness or injury, family situation), please fill in the Absence Declaration on ACORN. You will be able to save a copy. Attach the copy of your Absence Declaration to your work, and it will be taken into consideration. Please contact the Professor in advance if you are not able to submit on time.
Accessibility & Accommodations

Classes at the University of Toronto are meant to be welcoming environments for students of all abilities. Should you require assistance, please contact the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services at http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as

Students may request reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods, as outlined in University policy. They should advise the Professor at the earliest opportunity, so that appropriate arrangements may be made, and should have documentation to support their requests. Should students require an accommodation because of religious observance reasons, please contact the Professor or Teaching Assistant at the earliest opportunity.

Class Schedule and Readings

* A Note on Readings

**Required Readings** are found in the schedule below, make are taken from a selection of various sections and chapters of books, articles, and other materials (see Quercus modules for pdfs). Some readings may be familiar from methods or other courses. Some will be more relevant for some subfields than others. Their purpose is to provide a wide range of resources and assistance in developing different types of research projects. You should consult with peers and professors to identify the literature most suited to your own project.

*Some readings may be subject to change*

Fall Term

**September 12**  Course Introduction


King, Keohane and Verba, 1994. Designing Social Inquiry Ch. 1

**September 19**  Thinking About the Discipline of Political Science

Bertill Ollman, “What is Political Science? What Should it Be??”


**September 26**  
Practicing Political Science: Comparative, Canadian & Policy

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) Why Nations Fail. (Preface and Ch. 1)


**October 3**  
Research Traditions and Concept Formation

*Research Librarian Presentation with Judith Logan

Jonathan Moses and Torbjorn Knutsen, Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research, Chapter 1


**October 10**  
Puzzles & Research Design


Gustafsson and Hagstrom, “What is the point? Teaching graduate students how to construct political science puzzles,” *European Political Science*, 2018.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) Why Nations Fail. (Ch. 2 & 3)

**October 17**  
Research Questions & Comparisons

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. 2002 ‘The Craft of Research’, 2nd ed. Ch. 3-4 (pp. 35-71)

October 24       Making Arguments about Democracy


D. Della Porta ‘Comparative analysis: case-oriented versus variable-oriented research’, (Chapter 11) in Della Porta and Keating (eds).

October 31      Practical Applications: Canadian Public Policy

*Guest talk with public policy expert from city of Toronto.


November 7      Reading Week: No Class

November 14      Case Selection & Case Studies


Venneson, P. 2008. ‘Case studies and process tracing: theories and practices.’ (Chapter 12) in Della Porta and Keating (eds).

Barbara Geddes, Paradigms and Sandcastles, Chapter 3

November 21      Trying to use evidence: Transitions and Consolidation

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) Why Nations Fail. (Ch. 11, 12, 13)

Nov 28 2MT (2 min topic) Roundtable and discussions


*2 min topic 2MT in class.

X-MAS BREAX...

Schedule: Winter Term (Some Dates TBC, Readings TBD) *we don’t meet each week

January 9 Return and Discuss MRP requirements and topics. Outstanding 2MTs

January 16 Writing an MRP Proposal Part 1: Big Picture Issues (with Dan Newman)

January 30 Progress update on MRP Proposal

February 13 Writing an MRP Proposal Part 2: Completing and Revising a Proposal (with Dan Newman)

February 27 Progress update on MRP Proposals and Explanation of Peer Review Activity

March 3 (Sunday) Proposals due on Quercus (no class this wk)

March 15 (Friday) Peer Review Activity Session #1 (with other MRP class + Munk MGA)

March 22 (Friday) Peer Review Activity Session #2 (with other MRP class + Munk MGA)

April 2 (Tuesday) Last formal class- 3MT presentations.

April – June: Individual MRP meetings upon request (zoom or in person)

MRP due in Summer