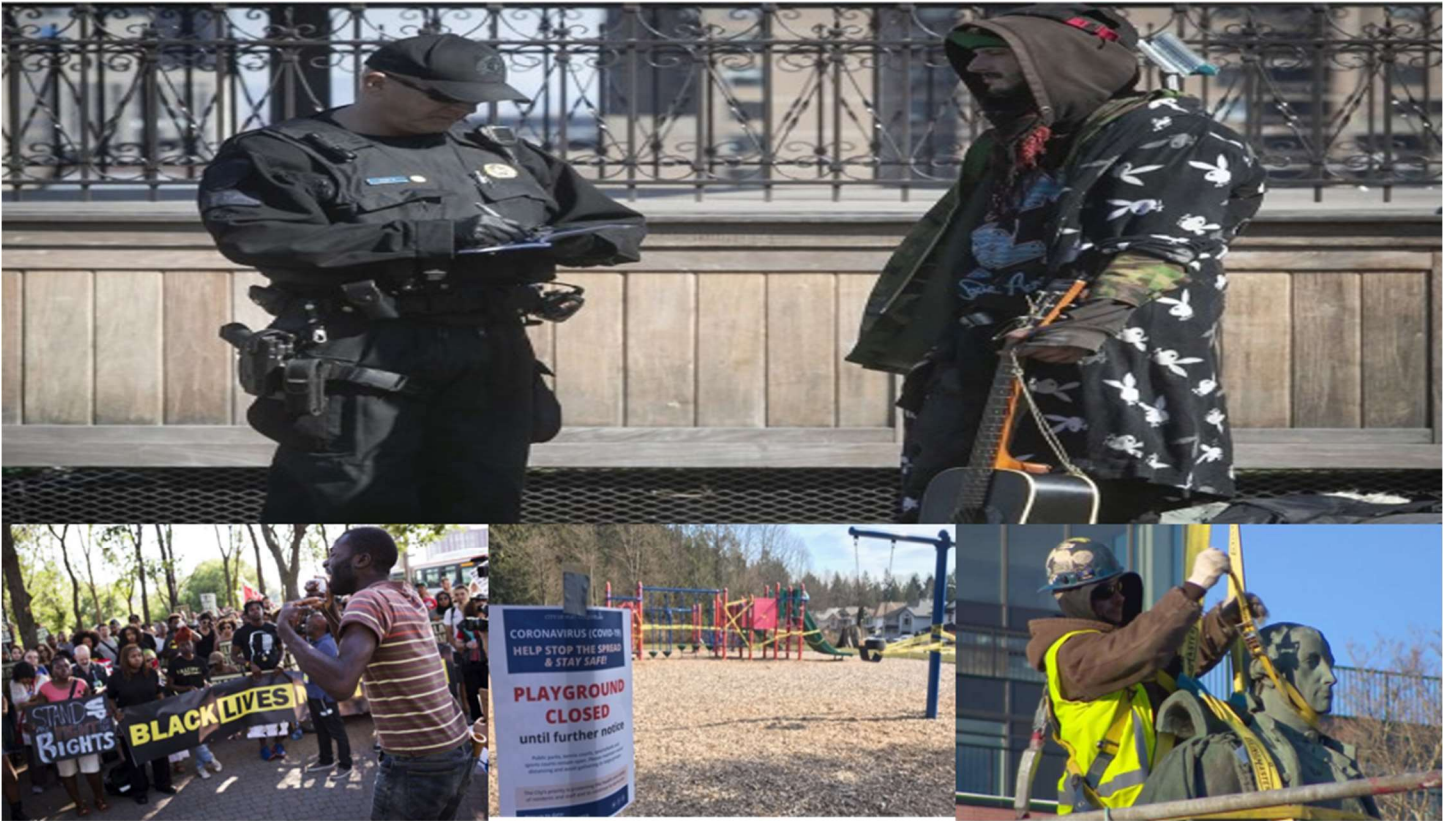


POLI 2230: Municipal Law and Politics in Canada

Instructor: **Kristin Good**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
Cross-appointed to Law, Justice and Society Program



PIERRE OBENDRAUF / Montreal Gazette; The Star; Global News

Municipalities are often called “creatures of the provinces,” an odd term that emphasizes their lack of independent constitutional status since they are a legislative responsibility of provinces in the Constitution Act, 1867 and created in provincial law. The notion of “creatures of the provinces” downplays municipalities’ importance as democratic governments and the political nature of their decision-making. In this course we critically examine this doctrine by exploring ideas that recognize municipalities’ constitutionality. We also challenge it by examining cases that show the political importance of and power relations underlying municipal laws and their enforcement.

The course is divided into two sections: the first examines the fundamental concepts underlying provincial laws that “create” municipalities and municipal systems. This section also explores the unique nature of municipal institutions (including, for instance, the generally nonpartisan nature of municipal politics; the institutional weakness of mayors; and the legal flexibility of adapting municipal institutions to changing settlement patterns). The second section critically examines municipal laws defined as bylaws, rules and their enforcement, uncovering the cultural norms that underpin them and exploring cultural, class and “racial” bias. In this section, we cover laws related to urban planning; “racial” bias in policing and other municipal decisions; look at how municipalities could contribute to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and decolonisation; and explore municipalities “new” role in immigration policymaking.

Please note: Although the calendar states that a first-year political science course is recommended, there are **NO PREREQUISITES FOR THE COURSE**. This course is also a **Law, Justice and Society Course**.