

Canadian Parties in Comparative Perspective
POLI 4221/5221
Winter 2024
Wednesday 11:35am-2:25pm
MCCAIN 2102

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On weekdays, I will generally respond to your emails within 24 hours. Substantive questions are best discussed in person during office hours (in person or virtually). Feel free to email me or to drop by during office hours to see me with any questions you may have or simply to chat about your progress in the course. This time is for you so I hope that you will use it. If these times do not work for you (or you'd rather speak online), please get in touch and we can arrange an alternative time to meet virtually.

Course Description

“Political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties.”
--E.E. Schattschneider

This is an advanced undergraduate/graduate seminar that explores the organization, role, functions, and decline(?) of political parties in modern democracies. Although we will spend considerable time exploring the Canadian case, debates surrounding Canadian parties will be situated in a broader comparative context. In doing so we will consider the extent to which Canadian parties are ‘unique’. Throughout the course we will consider whether and how the institutional features of the Canadian state (e.g., federalism) and the makeup of Canadian society (e.g., regionalism, multinationalism, etc.) affect the organization, character, and functions of our parties. The topics to be covered include party organization, party membership, personnel recruitment, and election campaigning.

Learning Objectives

- Provide students with an understanding of internal party politics and organization – specifically focusing on the distribution of power to various groups and actors within the party.
- Provide a comparative context for studying Canadian political parties and party politics. After the course students will be able to situate Canada in the world and have a greater appreciation for the unique aspects of our party politics.
- Assist students in rooting their arguments in the relevant literature (Canadian and comparative) and expose them to the major debates in the field.
- Help students develop their critical reading and writing skills.

Required Reading

There is no textbook for this course. All course readings will be available on Brightspace. Book chapters will be uploaded as a pdf whereas articles will be linked for students to access. See Brightspace for a complete reading list.

Course Requirements

Requirement/Assessment	Date	Weighting
Seminar presentation	Ongoing	20%
Participation	Ongoing	15%
Response papers	Ongoing	35%
Essay	April 5	30%

Seminar Presentation (10% x 2 = 20%)

An important component of this course will be student-centered presentations. After brief introductory remarks from the instructor, one or two students (depending on enrolment) will be responsible for leading the discussion each class. This involves not only summarizing the main findings/arguments of the assigned readings but also considering major agreements/disagreements among the various readings, paying close attention to methodological differences, and distilling key themes that are consistent across multiple readings. Students will also be expected to place Canadian parties within the broader comparative context and explore questions of ‘Canadian exceptionalism’. Students will be expected to lead the class on two different occasions throughout the semester. Seminar presentations will begin during Week 2 (and a signup sheet will be available week 1).

Class Participation and Attendance (15%)

Each student is expected to be an active participant in the seminar (regardless of whether it is ‘your’ week to present). This means that students should come to class prepared – having done the readings (in full) and having carefully considered the course material. Evidence of this preparation and consideration should be made evident through active participation in class discussion.

Response Papers (7% x 5 = 35%)

On five weeks where you are not responsible for presenting, you will complete a short written response of the assigned readings. The written response should follow the same format as the presentation (just written), addressing the following: summarizing the main findings/arguments of the assigned readings, considering major agreements/disagreements among the various readings, and distilling key themes that are consistent across multiple readings. Students will also be expected to place Canadian parties within the broader comparative context and explore questions of ‘Canadian exceptionalism’. Undergraduate students (POLI 4221) will be required to submit responses that are 2 pages in length whereas graduate students (POLI 5221) will be required to submit responses that are 3 pages in length. Response papers for a particular week **must** be submitted **before** class begins on that given week (i.e., before 11:30am on Wednesday). All submissions will be done via Brightspace.

Essay (30%)

The primary written assignment for the course is a final research essay. While the assignment is broad enough to encourage students to take ownership over the essay, there are two key requirements that must be followed. First, the primary focus of the essay must be related to a key topic or theme of the course (party systems, personnel selection, campaigning, regulation, etc.). Second, the essay must adopt a comparative approach where Canada is compared to another country. Undergraduate students (POLI 4221) will be required to submit an essay in the 12-15 page range whereas graduate students (POLI 5221) will be required to submit an essay in the 15-20 page range. Students will be evaluated on their ability to make an original argument supported by the relevant academic literature, to situate Canadian parties in the broader comparative context, and to be clear, accurate, and persuasive in their writing.

Class Schedule

Week 1: What is a 'Political Party?'

January 10

Week 2: Why Parties?

January 17

Week 3: Party Types (Cadre, Mass, Catch-all and Beyond!)

January 24

Week 4: Canadian Parties

January 31

Week 5: Party Systems

February 7

Week 6: Parties as Membership Organizations

February 14

****NO CLASS FEB 22 – WINTER BREAK**

Week 7: Candidate Selection

February 28

Week 8: Leadership Selection

March 6

Week 9: Diversity in Canadian Parties

March 13

Week 10: Institutional Context and Considerations

March 20

Week 11: The Campaign

March 27

Week 12: Party Failure

April 3

University Grading Policy (Undergraduate)

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Definition	
A+ A A-	4.30 4.00 3.70	90-100 85-89 80-84	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
B+ B B-	3.30 3.00 2.70	77-79 73-76 70-72	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
C+ C C-	2.30 2.00 1.70	65-69 60-64 55-59	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
D	1.00	50-54		Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of 'C' is required).
FM	0.00		Marginal Failure	Available only for Engineering, Health Professions and Commerce.
F	0.00	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.
INC	0.00		Incomplete	
W	Neutral and no credit obtained		Withdrew after deadline	
ILL	Neutral and no credit obtained		Compassionate reasons, illness	
P	Neutral		Pass	
TR	Neutral		Transfer credit on admission	
Pending	Neutral		Grade not Neutral and no credit obtained reported	

University Grading Policy (Graduate)

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Definition
A+	4.30	90-100	
A	4.00	85-89	
A-	3.70	80-84	
B+	3.30	77-79	
B	3.00	73-76	
B-	2.70	70-72	
F	0.00	0-69	
INC	0.00		Incomplete
W	Neutral and no credit obtained		Withdrew after deadline
ILL	Neutral and no credit obtained		Compassionate reasons, illness
P	Neutral		Pass
TR	Neutral		Transfer credit on admission
Pending	Neutral		Grade not reported

SECTION B: UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS
Territorial Acknowledgement:

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

Internationalization

At Dalhousie, "[thinking and acting globally](#)" enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is "interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders."

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of [academic integrity](#): honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact:

- the [Student Accessibility Centre](#) (for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro)

Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

Diversity and Inclusion – [Culture of Respect](#)

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2).

Code of Student Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

Fair Dealing policy

The Dalhousie University [Fair Dealing Policy](#) provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie.

Originality Checking Software

The course instructor may use Dalhousie's approved originality checking software and Google to check the originality of any work submitted for credit, in accordance with the [Student Submission of Assignments and Use of Originality Checking Software Policy](#). Students are free, without penalty of grade, to choose an alternative method of attesting to the authenticity of their work, and must inform the instructor no later than the last day to add/drop classes of their intent to choose an alternate method.

Student Use of Course Materials

These course materials are designed for use as part of the Course Code at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under

an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

SECTION C: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

Dalhousie courses are governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [Academic Calendar](#) and the [Senate](#).

Important student information, services and resources are available as follows:

University Policies and Programs

- [Important Dates in the Academic Year](#) (including add/drop dates)
- [Classroom Recording Protocol](#)
- [Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy](#)
- [Grade Appeal Process](#)
- [Sexualized Violence Policy](#)
- [Scent-Free Program](#)

Learning and Support Resources

- Academic Support - Advising [Halifax](#), [Truro](#)
- [Student Health & Wellness Centre](#)
- [On Track](#) (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond)
- [Indigenous Student Centre](#). See also: [Indigenous Connection](#).
- Elders-in-Residence: The [Elders in Residence program](#) provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the [Indigenous Student Centre](#) or contact the program at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803.
- [Black Student Advising Centre](#)
- [International Centre](#)
- [South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre](#)
- [LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative](#)
- [Dalhousie Libraries](#)
- [Copyright Office](#)
- [Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service \(DSAS\)](#)
- [Dalhousie Ombudsperson](#)
- [Human Rights & Equity Services](#)
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [Study Skills/Tutoring](#)