

**POLI 1055.02 – Governments and Democracy**  
**Arts Centre 406 - Tuesday / Thursday 10:05-11:25**  
**Winter 2016 - Dalhousie University**

**Instructor:** Marcella Firmini — Henry Hicks Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor (Office 356)

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1-2:30 (or by appointment)

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**Course Synopsis:** What do governments do? How is democratic government distinct and valuable? In this course, we study how the institutions of government – legislatures, constitutions, federalism, judiciary, electoral systems – operate. A unit on political violence and democratization includes material on international development and globalization.

The course objectives are as follows:

- Study and understand concepts related to the study of political science including the most important theoretical paradigms and “practical” outcomes pivotal to the study and analysis of politics.
- Development of students’ critical thinking skills. The goal is to enhance the ability to critically understand and assess reading materials, and
- Refine writing skills by learning how to substantiate an argument and articulate clearly the content of it.

**Required Text:** *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics* (Edited by J. Brodie, S. Rein, and M. Smith) Pearson Education, 5<sup>th</sup> edition).

**Required Readings:** Posted to BBL/OWL when possible, otherwise on reserve at the Killiam Library. Students are expected to have all readings read and critically assessed before each class.

**Evaluation Opportunities:** As follows:

1. Test One: 20% (February 2)
2. Midterm: 30% (March 3)
3. In-Class Writing Assignment – 20% (March 29)
4. Final Exam: 30% (Registrar’s Timetable)

Test one, the midterm, and the final exam will consist of a possible combination of multiple choice, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and/or essay questions.

The in-class writing assignment tests your critical thinking skills. A topic will be presented and you’ll have the length of the class to write a short critical analysis or opinion piece of it.

Attendance is taken throughout the term including on ‘literature review days’ where participation is expected.

**Grading scheme**

As per the Dalhousie University academic calendar.

There will be **no alternative test or exam dates** without documented and verifiable justification.

### **Student Accessibility and Accommodation**

Students may request accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams. Requests should be made to the *Office of Student Accessibility & Accommodation* (OSAA) prior to or at the outset of each academic term. Please see [www.studentaccessibility.dal.ca](http://www.studentaccessibility.dal.ca) for more information. Note takers may be available as well and there is an honorarium. If you are interested, please contact OSAA for more information.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism ([academicintegrity.dal.ca](http://academicintegrity.dal.ca)). ***Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations.*** Plagiarism is considered a **very serious academic offence** which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the ***Policy on Intellectual Honesty*** contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website.

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## **WELCOME BACK!**

### **January:**

#### **5: Course Introduction & Expectations**

- Syllabus review
- Expectations and General Introductions

#### **7-12: Constitutions & Liberal Democratic Structures of Government**

- *Constitutions and Institutions* (Chapter 8). In *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics* (J. Brodie & S. Rein, eds, 2014).
- *Unitary and Federal Systems* (Chapter 21). In *An Introduction to Government & Politics: A Conceptual Approach* (M.O. Dickerson, T. Flanagan & B. O'Neill (2014)

#### **14-19: Political Executive, the legislative, and the judiciary: How do they cooperate?**

- *Legislatures & Legislators* (Chapter 9). In *Introduction to Politics*, R. Garner, P. Ferdinand, S. Lawson, D.B. MacDonald (2013).

#### **21-26: Westminster Parliamentary and Presidential System Compared**

- **Canadian Westminster Parliamentary System:**  
[http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/OurCountryOurParliament/html\\_booklet/business-parliament-e.html](http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/Education/OurCountryOurParliament/html_booklet/business-parliament-e.html)
- **American Congressional Republican Presidential System:**  
<http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/federal.shtml>

## **28: Roundtable discussions: literature review & Exam prep**

### **February**

#### **2-Test One**

#### **4-9-11: Representation**

- *Representation* (Chapter 9). In *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics* (J. Brodie & S. Rein, eds, 2014).
- *Political Parties: Imperfect but Essential* (Chapter 12). In *Studying Politics: An Introduction to Political Science*, Rand Dyck (ed, 2012).
- *Elections* (Chapter 4). In *Rules of the Game: An Introduction to Canadian Politics*, Hamish Telford, (2015)

#### **😊 STUDY BREAK 😊**

#### **23-25: Politics and the Media**

- *Media* (Chapter 11). In *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics* (J. Brodie & S. Rein, eds, 2014).
- *Political Culture and the Media* (Chapter 8). In *Politics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed) by Andrew Heywood, Palgrave Macmillan (2013).

### **March**

#### **1: Roundtable discussions: literature review & Exam Prep**

#### **3- MIDTERM**

#### **8-10: International relations**

- *International Relations and the Global* (Chapter 13). In *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics* (J. Brodie & S. Rein, eds, 2014).

#### **15-17: International Security:**

- *International Security* (Chapter 12). In *Politics: an introduction* (Maclean & Wood, 2014)

#### **22: Child Soldiers Presentation**

#### **24-29: Political Violence, Globalization & Beyond**

- *What's Left Out? Power, Violence, and War* (Chapter 12). In *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics* (J. Brodie & S. Rein, eds, 2014).

#### **29: In-class writing assignment due**

**31: Roundtable discussions: literature review & What have we learned?**

April

**5 – Review and Exam prep**

**EXAM PERIOD**