Instructor: Marcella Firmini — Henry Hicks Building, 3rd Floor (Office 356)
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-2:30pm (or by appointment)
Email: Marcella.Firmini@dal.ca (Please allow a 48 hr response time)

Course Synopsis
This course examines the Canadian Parliamentary system of government. In particular, the course focuses on “theories” of parliament and parliamentary structures, the Constitution, the Crown, the House of Commons, the Senate, the powers – legislative, executive, judicial - political parties, the public service, and officers of parliament. The course will add to students’ understanding of Canada’s parliamentary regime: how it is structured, why it is structured as it is, what each component “does”. The course will have students understand the basic functioning of parliament, and its impact on the daily life of the country and its citizens. The goal, put simply, is to understand how the Canadian federal parliament works and to appreciate its complexity and its relevance.


Required Readings: Posted to BBL/OWL when possible, otherwise on reserve in the Killiam Library.

Evaluation Opportunities: There will be five opportunities to evaluate your progress throughout the course. Percentages as follows:

1. Test One: 20% - January 28
2. Paper Assignments (10% each): February 23 & March 17
3. Midterm: 25% - March 8
4. Final Exam: 35% - per Registrar’s Exam Period

Details for written assignment posted to BBL

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.

Grading scheme
As per the Dalhousie University academic calendar.

“Late” Penalties: There are no penalties because late assignments will not be accepted without documentable/demonstrable justification. If you are encountering difficulties meeting your deadlines, approach the instructor before the submission date.

No alternative exam/test dates will be scheduled 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 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). *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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**Course Outline**

**PART ONE: Constitutional Foundations & the Principles of the Canadian Regime**

**Canadian Parliament in Theory & in Practice**

- What were the Fathers of Confederations up to?
- Parliament (Part one: Theoretical Foundations)
- The Canadian Constitution & The Charter of Rights (Part One: Theoretical Foundations & Evolution)
- Constitution & Constitutional Conventions (Part One)

**January**

5 – WELCOME!

- Introduction and Expectations
- Approach to assigned readings
- Brief reminders of concepts (Power, State, Government, consent, democracy, etc)

7 – 12: Meaning and Goals of Canadian Confederation: The Fathers Explain Parliament

**Readings:**

2. *Considerations on Representative Government* - John Stuart Mill (1861). Link on BBL/OWL.
   - Chapter V: *Of the Proper Functions of Representative Bodies*
   - Chapter IX: *Should there be Two Stages of Election?*
   - Chapter XVII: *Of Federal Representative Governments*


Readings:

   - Chapter 17: *The Canadian Constitution and Constitutional Change*, pp. 401-430.
3. Where our Legal System Comes From – Department of Justice (BBL/OWL).

**Recommended Links:**

a. *The Canadian Constitution* (BBL/OWL)
b. *The Statute of Westminster* (BBL/OWL)

**21-26: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part One)**

   - *Our Constitution*, pp. 8-19 (re-read).

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**January 28 – Test One**

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**PART TWO: Institutions**


- Parliament (Part II)
- The Canadian Crown and its Servants
- The House of Commons
- Responsible Government & Other Constitutional Conventions (Part Two)
- Cabinet and the Prime Minister
- The Senate
- The Judiciary & The Charter (part two)
February

2-4: Federalism

   - Chapter 2: Federalism and Democracy, pp.11-26.
   - A Federal State, pp. 7-8.
   - Powers of the National and Provincial Governments, pp. 20-23.
   - Provinces and Municipalities, pg. 46

9-11: Parliament

   - Parliamentary Democracy, pp. 19-33.

STUDY BREAK: Feb. 15-19

23-25: The Canadian Crown (Writing assignment #1 is due on the 25th)

   - The Constitutional Role of the Governor General – Patrick J. Monahan, pp. 73-75.
3. The Republican Idea in Canada: Past and Present by David E. Smith

March

1-3: House of Commons

Readings:

   - What Goes on in Parliament, pp. 41-45

8: MIDTERM
10: Cabinet and the Prime Minister

4. **TBA**: Additional literature will be added as literature analyzing current Senate reform proposals become available

15-17: The Senate (Writing assignment #2 is due on the 17th)

4. Ajzenstat reading on BBL
5. **TBA**: Additional literature will be added as literature analyzing current Senate reform proposals become available

22: The Judiciary & the Charter (part two)

3. F L Morton, *Dialogue or Monologue?* Policy Options, April 1999:

PART THREE: Democracy, Citizenship, and Participation
- Parties
- Elections
- Bureaucracy
- Officers of Parliament

24 - Parties


29-31 Elections


**TBA:** Additional literature will be added as literature analyzing current electoral reform proposals become available

April

5– Recap and Exam Prep

**EXAM PERIOD**

**Have a great summer!**