

POLI 2220.01
Structures of Canadian Parliamentary Government
Department of Political Science
Dalhousie University
Summer 2017

Instructor: Michelle Coffin
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Class Time: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 9:05 – 11:55
Location: Mona Campbell Building Rm 1107
Format: In-class Lecture, 3 credit hours
Office Hours: by appointment only

Course description

The objective of the course is to introduce students to the institutions and political actors in Canadian Parliamentary democracy. In doing so we will contemplate these questions and many more:

- Who has power in the House of Commons?
- Who should have power in the House of Commons?
- Does the Prime Minister really make most of the decisions?
- Why did the Parliamentary Budget Officer sue the federal government?
- Why a bill is not a law until the Queen's representative gives it Royal Assent?
- Should tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars be spent to advertise government decisions?
- Should Canada abolish the Senate? Should Canadians elect Senators? Who should decide?
- Should judges have the power to strike down legislation passed by democratically elected MPs?

The course spends considerable time covering the major debates and contestation present in contemporary Canadian politics. Our discussions will focus on both the theoretical understandings and the practical issues that confront and challenge our system of governance.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students should be able to:

- articulate the dominating theories influencing the practice and decision-making of parliamentary government in Canada
- identify and describe the institutions that are important in parliamentary systems and their functions within the Canadian context
- identify and describe the various influences and actors present in the practice and decision-making of parliamentary government in Canada
- make independent and informed determinations on the dominating theories, institutional roles and practices of Canadian parliamentary government
- identify and describe the relationships between elected officials and the public, the media, the public service and organized interests.

Rationale for Course

POLI 2220 is a core course for students majoring in the Canadian stream of Political Science.

Course Prerequisites

A 1000-level course in Political Science or Kings FYP is recommended.

Required reading

There is no required text for the course. However, the course does rely heavily on a few sources that are available locally and online at a reasonable cost.

Course evaluation

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| In-class group discussions: | 25 per cent (5 at 5 points each) |
| Group presentation: | 25 per cent |
| Group formal paper: | 25 per cent |
| Take home exam: | 25 per cent |

Grades will be determined as per the Dalhousie University Grade Scale and Definitions found on page 84 of the *2016/17 Dalhousie University Undergraduate Calendar*.

Assignments

- In-Class Group Discussions

The course has considerable group work. During five classes you will organize yourselves into predetermined groups where you will discuss a question provided. To guide your discussions and evaluate your work a template will be provided. The group is expected to answer the questions and submit its work at the end of class. Each group will have a spokesperson who will articulate the group's response during the last 30-40 minutes of each class. Attendance and active participation are expected and will be noted— by me and your group members. A high degree of student collaboration is required for group discussions.

Assessments are determined via peer evaluations, self-evaluations and instructor evaluations. Peer and self-evaluations will compose 25% of the total points allocated for this assignment. Instructor evaluation will compose 75% of the points allocated for this assignment.

Failure to attend a group discussion will result in a mark of 0/5 for each missed discussion.

- Group Formal Paper

A formal paper must be submitted the same day that the group presents its work. Topics must be approved in advance and must address a theme discussed during the course. Groups will be determined based on student interest in the various themes presented throughout the course. Papers

should be approximately 14 double-spaced pages in length, excluding graphics. A high degree of student collaboration is required for the group paper.

Assessments are determined via peer evaluations, self-evaluations and instructor evaluations. Individual group members will be responsible for pre-determined sections of the research and the writing of the final paper. Group members will be evaluated on their individual performance (75%) and collectively (25%) for the overall final product. Peer and self-evaluations will compose 25% of the total points allocated for this assignment. Instructor evaluation will compose 75% of the total points allocated for this assignment. Plagiarism detection software might be used by the instructor when evaluating formal papers.

Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day, including weekends.

- **Group Presentation**

The last two classes will be dedicated to group presentations. The purpose of the presentations is to highlight the major findings outlined in the formal paper. A high degree of student collaboration is required for a successful group presentation.

Assessments are determined via peer evaluations, self-evaluations and instructor evaluations. Peer and self-evaluations will compose 25% of the total points allocated for this assignment. Instructor evaluation will compose 75% of the points allocated for this assignment. Plagiarism detection software might be used by the instructor when evaluating group presentations.

Failure to attend the group presentation will result in a mark of 0/25 for the assignment.

- **Take Home Exam**

On dates agreed to via class consensus, students will complete a take home exam. The exam will be delivered electronically by the instructor to students and will outline detailed instructions for its completion. Students will have 48 hours to complete the exam and return it electronically to the instructor.

Late take home exams will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day, including weekends.

Technology in the Classroom

It is acknowledged by the instructor that students use various forms of technology to aid in their learning and academic success. Therefore, technology is tolerated during class time; however there is an expectation that students' use of technology will be used exclusively for this purpose.

Recorded Lectures

Lectures are to be recorded only with the advance permission of the instructor. If permission is given, recorded lectures are to be used for the sole purpose of aiding in student success.

University Policies, Statements, Guidelines and Resources for Support

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [University Calendar](#) and the Senate.

- University Statements

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 (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). 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. Click [here](#) to read more.

Accessibility

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). Click [here](#) to read more.

Student Code of 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. Click [here](#) to read more.

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). Click [here](#) to read more.

Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

- University Policies and Programs
 - Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)
http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html
 - University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures
https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html
 - Scent-Free Program
<https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>
- Learning and Support Resources
 - General Academic Support - Academic Advising: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html
 - Copyright and Fair Dealing: <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/fair-dealing/fair-dealing-guidelines.html>
 - Libraries: <http://libraries.dal.ca>
 - Student Health Services: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/health-services.html
 - Counselling and Psychological Services: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/counselling.html
 - Black Student Advising: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html
 - Aboriginal Student Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/native.html
 - ELearning Website: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html>
 - Student Advocacy Services: <https://www.dsu.ca/services/community-student-services/student-advocacy-service>
 - Dalhousie Ombudsperson: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html
 - Writing Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html
 - Studying for Success program and tutoring: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html

Course Calendar

| Date | Topic and Readings |
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| June 1 | <p>Introduction to the course and course administration</p> <p>Parliament – The Fundamentals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eric Mintz et. al. (2014), <i>Canada's Politics, Second Edition</i>, Toronto: Pearson. Chapter 16 "Parliament" |
| June 5 | <p>Constitutional Conventions and the Westminster Parliamentary Tradition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Aucoin et.al. (2011), <i>Democratizing the Constitution: Reforming Responsible Government</i>, Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 2 "Responsible Government: Theory and Practice" Chapter 3 "When Conventions Fail" Brian Slattery (2009), "Why the Governor General Matters," in Peter Russell and Lorne Sossin (eds.), <i>Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis</i>, Toronto: UTP. Lorne Sossin and Adam Dodek (2009), "When Silence Isn't Golden: Constitutional Conventions, Constitutional Culture and the Governor General" in Peter Russell and Lorne Sossin (eds.), <i>Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis</i>, Toronto: UTP. |
| June 6 | <p>The Executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eric Mintz et. al. (2013), <i>Canada's Politics, Second Edition</i>, Toronto: Pearson. Chapter 15 "The Executive" Peter Aucoin et.al. (2011), <i>Democratizing the Constitution: Reforming Responsible Government</i>, Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, Chapter 4 "The Prime Minister and the House of Commons: The Democratic Deficit" Donald J Savoie (1999), "The Rise of Court Government in Canada," <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i>, 32 (4). <p>GROUP DISCUSSION 1</p> |
| June 7 | <p>Opposition in the House and House Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Aucoin et.al. (2011), <i>Democratizing the Constitution: Reforming Responsible Government</i>, Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, Chapter 5 "Letting the People Decide: When Elections Aren't Enough" David E. Smith (2013), <i>Across the Aisle: Opposition in Canadian Politics</i>, Toronto: UTP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1 "Opposition: Somebody has to do it" Chapter 6 "Opposition, More or Less" Chapter 9 "The Problem of Parliamentary Opposition Today" Lawrence Luduc (2009), "Coalition Government: When it Happens, How it Works," in Peter Russell and Lorne Sossin (eds.), <i>Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis</i>, Toronto: UTP. Peter Russell (2009), "Learning to Live with Minority Parliaments," in Peter Russell and Lorne Sossin (eds.), <i>Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis</i>, Toronto: UTP. |

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| June 8 | <p>Officers of Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliament of Canada, (2014) “Officers and Officials of Parliament” found at: http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/compilations/OfficersAndOfficials/OfficersOfParliament.aspx David Pond, (2010) “The Impact of Parliamentary Officers on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy: A Study of The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development & The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario,” Canadian Parliamentary Study Group http://www.studyparliament.ca/English/pdf/PondPaperFinal-2010-e.pdf <p>GROUP DISCUSSION 2</p> |
| June 12 | <p>Constitutional Authority and Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eric Mintz et al (2015), <i>Politics, Power and the Common Good, Fourth Edition</i>, (Toronto: Pearson). Chapter 11 “The Constitution and Constitutional Change” Chapter 12 “The Charter of Rights and Freedoms” Heather McIvor (2013), <i>Canadian Politics and Government in the Charter Era</i>, Don Mills, ON: Oxford. Chapter 6 “Parliament and the Courts in the Charter Era” <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> |
| June 13 | <p>Executive Federalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Simeon, Ian Robinson and Jennifer Wallner (2014), “The Dynamics of Canadian Federalism,” in James Bickerton and Alain-G Gagnon (eds), <i>Canadian Politics, Sixth Edition</i>, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press.) Martin Papillon and Richard Simeon (2004), “The Weakest Link? First Ministers’ Conferences in Canadian Intergovernmental Relations,” in <i>Canada: The State of the Federation</i>, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press. <p>GROUP DISCUSSION 3</p> |
| June 14 | <p>Public Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gregory Inwood (2012), <i>Understanding Canadian Public Administration, Fourth Edition</i>, (Toronto: Pearson). Chapter 1 “The Nature of Public Administration” Chapter 5 “Public Administration and Institutions: The Real World of...” |
| June 15 | <p>Civil Society, Media and Parliamentary Actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miriam Smith (2005), “Arenas of Influence: Parliament, Parties and Elections,” in <i>A Civil Society?: Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life</i> (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press), pp. 109-143. Lisa Young and Joanna Everitt (2004), “Talking to Governments,” in <i>Advocacy Groups</i>, (Vancouver: UBC Press), pp. 87-103. Kirsten Kozolanka (2014), “In Whose Interest? Government Communication and Public Accountability,” in Kirsten Kozolanka (ed.), <i>Publicity and the Canadian State:</i> |

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| | <p><i>Critical Communication Perspectives</i>, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ken Rubin and Kirsten Kozolanka (2014), “Managing Information: Too Much Publicity, Not Enough Public Disclosure,” in Kirsten Kozolanka (ed.), <i>Publicity and the Canadian State: Critical Communication Perspectives</i>, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press). <p>GROUP DISCUSSION 4</p> |
| June 19 | <p>Parliamentary Reform Part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Aucoin et.al. (2011), <i>Democratizing the Constitution: Reforming Responsible Government</i>, Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications, Chapter 6, “Conclusion: Reforming Responsible Government” Grace Stogstad (2009), “Western Canada and the ‘Illegitimacy’ of the Liberal-NDP Coalition Government,” in Peter Russell and Lorne Sossin (eds.), <i>Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis</i>, Toronto: UTP. Jennifer Smith (2009), “Parliamentary Democracy versus Faux Parliamentary Democracy,” in Peter Russell and Lorne Sossin (eds.), <i>Parliamentary Democracy in Crisis</i>, Toronto: UTP. |
| June 20 | <p>Parliamentary Reform Part 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David E. Smith (2003), “The Canadian Senate: What Is to Be Done?” in <i>The Canadian Senate in Bicameral Perspective</i>, Toronto: UTP Bruce M. Hicks and Andre Blais (2008), “Restructuring the Canadian Senate through Elections,” IRPP Choices, 14:15, November 2008. Jennifer Smith (2013), <i>Abolishing the Senate: the NDP’s Bad Idea, Quebec: The Federal Idea</i>. Found at: http://ideefederale.ca/documents/IF_Senat_ang.pdf <p>GROUP DISCUSSION 5</p> |
| June 21 | GROUP PRESENTATIONS |
| June 22 | GROUP PRESENTATIONS |