

Structures of Canadian Parliamentary Government
POLI 2220
Winter 2023
Mondays and Wednesdays: 10:05am – 11:25am
LSC P5 260

Instructor: Dr. Scott Pruyers

Office: Henry Hicks Building, Room 360

Office Hours: Monday 1:00pm-2:30pm

Email: scott.pruyers@dal.ca

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

The course offers students an introduction to the major political institutions that shape democratic life in Canada. This includes the Constitution, federalism, parliament (House of Commons, Crown, Senate), political parties, election campaigns, the electoral system, and the Charter and judiciary. While the course explores the design, evolution, and modern functioning of these various political institutions, we will also consider whether and how these institutions contribute to the so called 'democratic deficit' and explore the constitutionality of various reform proposals.

Required Texts

Marland, Alex and Jared Wesley. 2020. *Inside Canadian Politics*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. SECOND EDITION.

**See course schedule for additional readings each week. These will be posted to Brightspace

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Provide students with an understanding of the major political institutions that shape political life in Canada as well as contemporary debates/critiques surrounding these institutions.
2. Assist students in rooting their arguments in the relevant literature and expose them to the fundamental arguments of scholars in the field.
3. Help students develop and practice critical reading and writing skills.

Class Format

The class is scheduled to meet twice a week. While the format of class is lecture-based, students are expected to attend having read the required readings for that week.

Course Assignments

Requirement/Assessment	Date	Weighting
Essay Proposal	February 1	10%
Participation	Ongoing	10%
Midterm	February 15	20%
Essay	April 3	30%
Final Exam	During exam period	30%

Essay Proposal (10%) and Essay (30%)

The topics of this paper must be chosen from a specified list of themes/questions. This list, as well as further instructions, will be discussed in class and provided online via Brightspace. Essay proposals should be **2-3 pages** in length and must include the research question, thesis statement, and a brief summary of the major arguments that the final paper will offer. References do not count towards the page limit. Three academic sources are required in the proposal. The purpose of the outline is to identify any potential challenges before writing your final essay (i.e., too ambitious, not enough sources, etc.). The final essay, **10 double-spaced pages**, will build on this proposal (and the feedback provided). All essays and proposals must be submitted via Brightspace on the appropriate day (Feb 1 for the proposal and April 3 for the essay). Late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% per day.

Midterm Exam (20%)

There will be an in-class midterm during Week 6 of the course (February 15). The midterm will cover all assigned readings, lectures, and any videos assigned. Students are expected to integrate course readings, key authors, and relevant examples/illustrations into their answers. A midterm review will be held in class on Feb 13th. The midterm will consist (largely) of two parts: a section in which students will be asked to define and explain the significance of key terms/concepts, and a short essay question. Students will have choice in both of these sections and will not have to answer every question on the midterm.

Online Discussion Participation (10%)

Weekly modules on Brightspace will include a discussion board for student participation. This kind of participation provides students with the ability to interact with one another as well as critically engage with the course material. A series of netiquette guidelines for the course as well as details regarding participation expectations will be posted on Brightspace. Both quality and quantity of participation will be assessed. While the discussion board has a “starting” question, discussion is not limited to this question alone. Students are encouraged to raise other questions related to the module’s specific readings and substantive content.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will be held during the scheduled examination period. Material in readings and lectures (including any films) for the entire course will be tested in the examination. The format will be a combination of definitions, short, and long-answer questions. This examination will be held in the official examination period.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction to the course

January 9 & 11

Week 2: Historical foundations of the Canadian state

January 16 & 18

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 2. "The Constitution." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- McGrane, David & Loleen Berdahl. 2013. "Small Worlds No More: Reconsidering Provincial Political Cultures in Canada." *Regional & Federal Studies* 23(4): 479-493.

Week 3: Mega Constitutional politics

January 23 & 25

- Russel, Peter. 2004. Chapter 8. "Round Three: Patriation." In *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians become a Sovereign People?* Toronto: UTP.
- Russel, Peter. 2004. Chapter 9. "Round Four: Meech Lake." In *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians become a Sovereign People?* Toronto: UTP.

Week 4: Federalism and Indigenous self-governance

January 30 & February 1

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 3. "Federalism in Canada." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- Frances Abele and Michael Prince. 2006. "Four Pathways to Aboriginal Self- Government in Canada." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 36(4): 568-95.

*Essay proposal due February 1

Week 5: Charter and the judiciary

February 6 & February 8

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 7. "The Justice System." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- Hogg, Peter; Bushell, Allison. 1997. "The Charter Dialogue Between Courts and Legislatures." *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 35 (1): 75-124.

Week 6: Midterm

February 13 & 15

*No reading this week. Midterm will be held on the 15th (review on 13th).

WINTER BREAK

Week 7: Parliament (1)

February 27 & March 1

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 6. "The Legislature." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- Heard, Andrew. 2010. "Conacher Missed the Mark on Constitutional Conventions and Fixed Election Dates." *Constitutional Forum* 19: 129-140.

Week 8: Parliament (2)

March 6 & 8

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 5. "The Executive." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.

- Lagassé, Philippe. 2016. "The Crown and Prime Ministerial Power." *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 39(2): 17-23.

Week 9: Political parties and party systems

March 13 & 15

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 9. "Political Parties." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- Carty, Kenneth. 2001. "Three Canadian Party Systems." In Hugh G. Thorburn and Alan Whitehorn (eds.) *Party Politics in Canada*. Toronto: Prentice-Hall.

Week 10: Elections and democracy

March 20 & 22

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 10. "Democracy and Elections." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- André Blais, Maxime Héroux-Legault, Laura Stephenson, William Cross, and Elisabeth Gidengil. 2012. "Assessing the Psychological and Mechanical Impact of Electoral Rules: A Quasi-Experiment." *Electoral Studies* 31(4):829-837.

Week 11: Political communication and the media

March 27 & 29

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 11. "Political Communication." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- Blumler, Jay, and Dennis Kavanagh. 1999. "The Third Age of Political Communication." *Political Communication* 16(3): 209-230.

Week 12: Diversity and representation

April 3 & 5

- TEXTBOOK. Chapter 13. "Diversity and Representation." In *Inside Canadian Politics*.
- Trimble, Linda. 2007. "Gender, Political Leadership and Media Visibility: Globe and Mail Coverage of Conservative Party of Canada Leadership Contests." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40(4):969-993.

*Essay due April 3

* Exam review on April 5

University Grading Policy

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Definition	
A+	4.30	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	4.00	85-89		
A-	3.70	80-84		
B+	3.30	77-79	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.
B	3.00	73-76		
B-	2.70	70-72		

C+	2.30	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
C	2.00	60-64		
C-	1.70	55-59		
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	

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](#)