

**DEPARTMENT: Humanities and Social Sciences**

**COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2025**

**PO1020 (A3): Introduction to Political Institutions, Processes and Problems – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours  
for 15 Weeks**

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	Dr. T. Ruth Lambert	<b>PHONE:</b>	Please use email to contact instructor
<b>OFFICE:</b>	Virtual	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	tlambert@nwpolytech.ca
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	By appointment		

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** This course is an introduction to the institutions, processes and problems of government emphasizing Canadian and other democratic governments. The course includes discussions of law, constitutions, civil liberties, public opinion, voting behaviours, electoral systems, political parties, interest groups, federalism and nationalism. This course offers an introduction to different fields of political study. Problems to be examined may include: political integration, the right to national self determination, humanitarian intervention, globalization, global warming, terrorism and other issues.

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** None.

**REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

There is no required text to purchase for this course. All material will be available on myClass.

**DELIVERY MODE(S): Remote**

This course will be delivered entirely online. All course components can be completed online.

This course has the requirements listed below for the class. Failure to meet these requirements may affect attendance and participation grades or result in a grade of zero for supervised assessments (for example tests, exams, or in-class writing assignments).

## VIDEOCONFERENCE REQUIREMENTS

Technology:	Please have the following in working order for class: a webcam, microphone, and speakers or headphones. Technological glitches happen, but these are tools you will need to participate in class.
Class Participation:	Please log into class as you would attend class in-person. We will discuss videoconferencing etiquette and expectations during the first few classes so that we can agree to class expectations as a group.
Tests and exams:	There are no additional technology requirements for remote tests and exams. Proctoring software will not be used for this course. No exam proctoring software needs to be purchased or installed.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Define and identify political institutions across democratic political systems
- Explain the similarities and differences in political institutional arrangements and be able to articulate how these arrangements influence political processes
- Be able to engage in dialogue about political issues using readings and data to support positions
- Communicate ideas and analysis verbally and in writing
- Be able to interpret and critically assess varied sources of information

### TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

### EVALUATIONS:

Assignment:	Due Date:	Value:
Test 1 (in class)	February 4, 2025	20%
Test 2 (in class)	March 13, 2025	20%
Policy Brief	March 21, 2025 (11:59pm)	20%
Presentation (in class)	April 1 & 3, 2025	10%
Cumulative final exam	Scheduled by the registrar	30%

Additional details about evaluations will be provided on myClass and in lecture.

### Assignment information:

- Detailed information for each assignment will be available on myClass and covered during lectures prior to the due date.
- The late penalty for assignments is 5% a day.
- Written assignments will be submitted on myClass and submitted to Turnitin.
- Plagiarism, or submitting work which is not your own (including AI-generated work) constitutes academic misconduct and will be addressed under the provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked on page 4 in this outline). In cases where submitted work exhibits concerning patterns or raises questions for the instructor about its creation and the student's intellectual effort involved, students may be required to submit to an oral examination regarding the work at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to participate in the oral examination will result in an assigned grade of 0 for the assessment. If, following the oral examination, the instructor still has concerns about the work, the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked on page 4 in this outline) may be applied.

### GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

#### Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Please note that the following tentative and may be adjusted if needed. Assigned readings for each week are detailed in myClass.

Class dates	Topic	Evaluations/Assignments
January 7, 9	Introduction	
January 14, 16	Regimes & constitutions	
January 21, 23	Executives/legislatures	
January 28, 30	Courts and the rule of law	
February 4, 6	Multiple levels of government	Test 1: February 4, 2025 (in class)
February 11, 13	Political parties	
February 18, 20	Winter Break: no class	
February 25, 27	Electoral systems	
March 4, 6	Public policy	
March 11, 13	Political culture	Test 2: March 13, 2025 (in class)
March 18, 20	Participation and voting behaviour	
March 25, 27	Public opinion and media	Policy brief: March 21, 2025 (11:59pm)
April 1, 3	Social movements	Presentations: April 1 & 3, 2025
April 8, 10	Global politics	** Final exam scheduled by registrar during exam period (April 14-23, 2025)

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

**Respectful participation:** One of the key components of learning in political science is to engage with ideas that may differ from your own. We have ideas about politics because politics is all around us. We may respond quickly to information that opposes our own ideas, but one purpose of learning in this course is to reflect on ideas and better understand opposing ideas. Respectful dialogue with classmates is required. We will treat one another with respect. Expectations around participation will be covered during the first class and re-visited throughout the term as necessary. If you have any concerns about participation, please contact me to discuss.

**Attendance:** Try to attend class regularly. Lecture time is a time to prod at information, ask questions and develop information synthesis skills. We will also use some lecture time to work through issues on assignments.

**Preparation:** Please try to come to class prepared to engage with the material and ask questions or offer analysis on the topics we are discussing. Throughout the semester, I want to see you engaging with the

materials with your peers. By coming to class having read the readings or having thought about how the readings apply to current events, you will demonstrate how information can be used to support arguments and policy positions.

**Assignment preparation:** Please see below for NWP's statement on academic misconduct. In PO 1020, we will review these statements together as you are preparing your assignments so that you can ask questions and seek clarification.

**Assignment deadlines:** In general, you are expected to submit your assignments on time as per the syllabus. It is your responsibility to manage your time to meet these deadlines. However, if you are struggling to meet a deadline, please contact me to discuss an extension, *prior to the deadline*. Please note that extensions are not guaranteed.

**Final exam:** The final exam will be scheduled during the exam period and is cumulative. Please do not make plans for the end of the semester that will prevent you from writing the exam.

Recording or photographing content is not allowed, unless permission has been granted by the instructor.

#### **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.