

Y99-00

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
POLITICAL SCIENCE 1000

INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Instructor: Tom Enders
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Office hours: Thursdays 1-2 p.m.
 Fridays 11 a.m. to noon

This course is designed to introduce you to the fundamental concepts, roles and institutions of government and politics. The government and politics of Canada and other democratic countries - primarily the United States and Britain - will be emphasized.

The course will begin by exploring some very basic questions: Do we always need governments? Why? What for? What are human beings really like? What constitutes a rightful authority to govern? What is the best form of government? The novel The Lord of the Flies will serve as a starting point for discussion of these and other questions.

During our study of the main text, Mark Dickerson's and Tom Flanagan's Introduction to Government and Politics, we will have the opportunity to explore a number of intriguing questions and topics related to the subjects of the various chapters. Some of these include: How did the international campaign to ban land mines succeed? Why do different geographical areas have different dominant political views? Is nationalism an idea or force to be fought against in all its manifestations? Which is better: a parliamentary or presidential form of government?

We will conclude the course by reading Jean Elshtain's Democracy on Trial. She discusses a variety of issues that Dickerson and Flanagan present, as well as many other topical political issues. She uses her discussions to develop her own arguments about citizen disengagement, identity politics, resistance to compromise and other challenges to present-day liberal democracies.

Class lectures and discussions will be supplemented by videos and, dependent upon availability, guest speakers.

Course requirements:

Participation and attendance	10%
First exam, Wednesday 13 October	15%
First essay	15%
Christmas examination	15%
Second and longer essay	20%
Final exam	25%

Required texts:

William Golding, Lord of the Flies. London: Faber and Faber, 1954.
The "Educational Edition" is preferred but not essential.

Mark Dickerson and Thomas Flanagan, An Introduction to Government and Politics: a conceptual approach. Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1998.

Jean Bethke Elshtain, Democracy on Trial. Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1993.

Proposed topic list:

1. Lord of the Flies
2. Basic Concepts
DF, chapters 1-4, 7, 8, 5, 6, 9: Political Science; Society, Government and Politics; Power; Legitimacy and Authority; Law; Constitutionalism; Sovereignty and the State; The Nation; International Order
3. Ideology
DF, chapters 10-16, 24: Ideology, Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Communism, Populism, Nationalism, Feminism and Environmentalism; Left, Right and Centre; Political Culture
4. Forms of Government
DF, chapters 17-22: Classification of Political Systems, Liberal Democracy, Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism, Parliamentary and Presidential Systems, Unitary and Federal Systems
5. The Political Process
DF, chapters 23, 25-32: The Political Process, Political Culture, Interest Groups, Political Parties, Communications Media, Elections and Electoral Systems, Representative Assemblies, The Political Executive, The Administration, The Judiciary
6. Democracy on Trial

Please note: the information on this outline is subject to changes. Any changes will be announced in class.