



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2021

PO1020 (A3): INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS – 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS FOR 15 WEEKS

INSTRUCTOR: Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763
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OFFICE HOURS: 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:

- Eric Mintz, David Close, and Osvaldo Croci. Power, Politics, and the Common Good: An Introduction to Political Science – REVEL Instant Access, 6th edition: Toronto. Pearson Canada, 2021.
- Internet & database readings as listed in the syllabus appendix.
- Readings assigned by instructor in class.

DELIVERY MODE(S): Remote Delivery. This course is delivered remotely. There are no face-to-face or onsite requirements. Students must have a computer with a webcam and reliable internet connection. Technical support is available through helpdesk@gprc.ab.ca.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to introduce you to the political world and the academic study of it, and is intended to:

- Introduce you to political institutions and processes, primarily through a comparison of Canadian, American and British political systems. How similar are they? How significant are the differences? What are their best features? What reforms should be considered? Do these systems measure up to appropriate standards of democracy?
- provide you with a basic knowledge of key political ideas and concepts, and of the major components of a variety of political systems, with a focus on democratic countries;
- demonstrate the value of thinking clearly and systematically about the political world and how it affects your daily life;
- Prepare you for further studies in politics at the post-secondary level.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and compare the basic institutions and governing processes of liberal democratic political systems.
- Outline the types and elements of constitutions and explain how they distribute power, both between branches and levels of government;
- Identify social and economic institutions which shape formal politics and evaluate how they do so;
- Identify and evaluate primary and secondary academic sources;
- Construct basic analytical arguments and provide quantitative and qualitative evidence supporting these arguments;
- Communicate ideas and arguments in a clear and concise manner.

TRANSFERABILITY: This course is considered a University Transferable Course; however, the student has the final responsibility for ensuring the transferability of this course to Alberta Colleges and Universities.

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 and transferable grades.

EVALUATIONS:

Participation	10%	Paper Proposal.....	10%
Reading Summaries	10%	Exams (3 exams, 10% ea).....	30%
Peer Evaluations.....	10%	Term Paper	30%

Participation: You will be required to complete 5 in-class quizzes or take-home assignments at random throughout the semester. Each assignment will be worth 2% the participation grade.

Reading Summaries: You will complete a written summary of one of the assigned readings. Your summary and discussion questions will be posted for class review.

Peer Evaluations: You will complete peer evaluations for your classmates' reading summaries, and you must complete at least 80% of these to receive the participation grade. For example, if there are 20 students in the class, you will need to submit at least 16 evaluations to receive the participation grade. This is an example only; the number of actual summaries submitted will depend on the number of students in the class.

Paper Proposal: This assignment will include an annotated bibliography and outline and will assist you in completing your final paper.

Exams: Exams will be open book and will consist of questions which require a demonstration of knowledge of specific concepts and theories presented in the course, as well as synthesis of that knowledge into long form, written responses. Each exam will deal with material covered to date as well as current events. Sample questions will be provided prior to the exam date.

Term Paper: Your final paper will be a 8 - 10 page persuasive essay on a topic within the broad category of political themes and issues. It will require demonstration of knowledge of specific concepts and theories presented in the course, as well as synthesis of that knowledge into a coherent paper. The paper is written in place of a final exam and the due date will be determined by GPRC'S exam schedule.

More detailed information on all assignments will be distributed in class.

GRADING CRITERIA:

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

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89	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:

Schedule of Lectures & Readings (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students) Additional readings from the Moodle site &/or the Internet will be added to chapter readings listed below.	
Week 1 (Jan. 5 – 9)	Lecture 1: Introduction to the Study of Political Science Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M, C & C (Mintz, Close & Croci) text, Ch. 1, “Understanding Politics.”
Week 2 (Jan. 10 – 16)	Lecture 2: Constitutions & the Rule of Law Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M, C & C text, Ch. 12, “Constitutions, Courts and Laws.”
Week 3 (Jan. 17 – 23)	Lecture 3: Sovereignty arrangements Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M, C & C text, Ch. 13, “Multiple Governments.”
Week 4 (Jan. 24 – 30)	<p style="text-align: center;">**Exam #1 – Mon., Jan. 25**</p> Lecture 4: Parliamentary Systems Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M, C & C text, Ch. 14, “Parliamentary Systems.”
Week 5 (Jan. 31 – Feb. 6)	L.5 (cont.): Parliamentary Systems
Week 6 (Feb. 7 – 13)	Lecture 6: Presidential Systems Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M, C & C text, Ch. 15, “Presidential and Semi-Presidential Systems.”

	Paper Proposal Due – Fri., Feb. 12
(Feb. 14 – 20)	WINTER BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 7 (Feb. 21 – 27)	L.6 (cont.) Lecture 7: Political Parties Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, C & C text, Ch. 6, “Political Parties.”
Week 8 (Feb. 28 – Mar. 6)	L.7 (cont.) ** Exam #2 – Wed., Mar. 3 **
Week 9 (Mar. 7 – 13)	Lecture 8: Elections & Electoral Systems Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, C & C text, Ch. 7 “Elections, Electoral Systems & Voting Behaviour.”
Week 10 (Mar. 14 – 20)	L. 8 cont.
Week 11 (Mar. 21 – 27)	Lecture 9: Political Communications & The News Media Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, C & C text, Ch. 8 excerpt, “The Communications Media.” 195-204.
Week 12 (Mar. 28 – Apr. 2)	L. 9 cont. Lecture 10: Political Culture & Socialization Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M, C & C text, Ch. 5, “Political Culture, Political Participation & Political Socialization.”
Week 13 (Apr. 4 – 10)	L. 10 cont.
Week 14 (Apr. 11 – 12)	**Exam #3 – Mon., Apr. 12**

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Full participation in class will require demonstration that you have completed the assigned readings, as well as an active role in group work and class discussions.

Punctual submission of assignments:

- An electronic copy is due by midnight on the due date. It should be submitted via Moodle, and should be formatted as a PDF. If you do not know how to save a document as a PDF, please contact me.

- Please title your paper as follows: LASTNAMEFirstname-Assignment-1020W2021. (Ex. Jane Smith's paper should be saved as SMITHJane-TermPaper- 1020W2021.)
- Late assignments will be docked 3% (i.e. an A becomes an A-) for each day they are late. If extenuating circumstances necessitate an extension on an assignment, you are required to speak with me AHEAD OF TIME, and appropriate paperwork (i.e. a medical note) may be required. Also, please note that you are required to write the final exam on the date scheduled by the College. You should take this into account when making any travel plans.

Classroom Conduct:

GPRC is committed to promote an environment free of harassment or discrimination where respect will be given to ethnic, cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity, and expects individuals will conduct themselves with respect for one another. This means your behavior should exhibit respect for yourselves, each other, the instructor, and the course material. As such:

- Students are expected to log in to Zoom on time and prepared, with cameras on and microphones muted. A camera AND mic is mandatory - visibility is accountability! If you are concerned with privacy in your environment, please feel free to use a virtual background (instructions are available here: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background#h_01ED77TMFJXBJGY9KKJBC916FK).
- Be prepared to communicate both through your mic and via chat. For example, if you need to step away for a moment, please advise me via chat BEFORE turning your camera off. Please note, the chat feature in zoom is to be limited to questions to the instructor or supportive comments to students ONLY; it is NOT a place to have a general text chat.
- Please use the emojis available in Zoom (Hand up, thumbs up, etc. ...). We will review how to use these in our first class.
- I encourage an atmosphere of positive and constructive debate. Expressing criticism or annoyance with a view expressed by another person, either through a comment, audible noise, facial expression or body language, is not acceptable, unless you are prepared to debate your position openly & respectfully in class.
- Regular attendance. If you know you are going to be absent from class, I expect you to contact me prior to class with a reason. Students who miss more than 1/3 of classes (9 or more) may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in GPRC's Examination Policy (available at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/).

For information on key dates and other important matters, please refer to the GPRC Calendar, available www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Calendar at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies>.

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