



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2012

PO 1020 (A3): INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS

3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763
OFFICE: E401-7 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca
OFFICE HOURS: M, W; 10 – 11:30 am, or by appointment

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

- Mark Dickerson, Thomas Flanagan and Brenda O'Neill. An Introduction to Government and Politics: 8th Edition. Nelson, 2010.
- Internet & database readings as listed in the syllabus appendix.
- Readings assigned by instructor in class.

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.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 credits (3-0-0)/45 hours

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture

OBJECTIVES: This course, along with Political Studies 1010, is designed to introduce you to the political world and the study of it. PO 1020 is intended to:

- Introduce you to political institutions and process, 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?
- Encourage you to appreciate the value of thinking systematically about the political world around us;
- Prepare you for further studies in politics at the post-secondary level.

TRANSFERABILITY: This course has university transferability to Athabasca University, King's University College, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and the University of Lethbridge. For complete information, consult the Alberta Transfer Guide (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**

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A⁺	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A⁻	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B⁺	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B⁻	2.7	70 – 72	
C⁺	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C⁻	1.7	60 – 62	
D⁺	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

EVALUATIONS:

Participation	10%
Article Review.....	5%
Bibliography.....	5%
Paper Outline.....	10%
Persuasive Paper.....	30%
Midterm Exam.....	20%
Final Exam.....	20%

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.

Persuasive Paper: The **Article Review, Annotated Bibliography, and Outline** are assignments which will assist you in completing your final paper. You will receive a handout in class detailing the expectations for each of these assignments.

Your final paper will be a 10 - 12 page persuasive essay on a topic within the broad category of political institutions & their impact. I will also supply you with a handout in class which will outline in greater detail what I expect from this paper. The paper will be **due on Mon., Mar. 26** in class.

Exams: Exams will consist of both short and long answer questions, as well as some multiple choice or matching questions. The mid-term will deal with material covered to date. The final exam will be cumulative, although emphasis will be on the second half of the semester.

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:

- Assignments will be submitted on paper in class, and electronically by 5 p.m. on the due date. Paper copies are easier for me to read, and allow me to provide you with notes on specific elements of your assignment. Electronic copies provide me with the option of submission to an online plagiarism detection service in the case that plagiarism is suspected. PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE COPY WHICH IS SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY MATCHES THE PAPER COPY RECEIVED IN CLASS.
- 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 has 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 arrive to class on time and prepared.
- Laptops and cellphones are permitted in class, with a few caveats.
 - Cellphones should be on silent or vibrate mode, and I expect you wait to check calls or messages until after class. If an emergency requires otherwise, I expect you to advise me at the beginning of class.
 - Laptops are to be used for class work ONLY. Students carrying out other activities will be asked to leave their laptops at home.
- Working on assignments for other courses is not permitted. Students doing so will be asked to leave the 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 (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:

Plagiarism and/or cheating can result in serious consequences (i.e. a grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: A Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty) and/or suspension or expulsion from the College). If I suspect plagiarism on assignments, I reserve the right to submit these to an online plagiarism detection service, as specified in Section 1.4 of the GPRC Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating (www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/).

It is your responsibility to ensure that you fully understand what constitutes plagiarism and/or cheating. If you have any question as to what these acts involve, please refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/.

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

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Schedule of Lectures & Readings (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students)	
Jan. 9 – 13 (Week 1)	Syllabus Distribution I. Introduction. A. What is politics and political science? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D,F & O text, Ch. 1, "Society, Government and Politics" and Introduction, "The Study of Political Science." • Robin V. Sears, "From Cairo to Canada, A Very Big Year." <u>Policy Options</u>, Dec. 2011 – Jan. 2012, p. 17 – 23. <p><i>**Note that <u>Policy Options</u> articles are available at www.irpp.org/po/. For back issues, click on <Back Issues> and follow the links to the publication date.</i></p>
Jan. 16 – 20 (Week 2)	A. Introduction (continued) B. Liberal democracy & the branches of government. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D,F & O text, Ch. 22, "The Political Process" • D,F & O text, Ch. 17, "Liberal Democracy" • Jeremy Kinsman. "The Year of Outrage: From Tahrir Square to Zucotti Park." <u>Policy Options</u>, Dec. 2011 – Jan. 2012, p. 24 – 29. C. Sovereignty and sovereignty options - unitary, federal and confederal arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D,F & O text, Ch. 21, "Unitary and Federal Systems"
Jan. 23 – 27 (Week 3)	II. Elections and Election-related topics A. Parliamentary vs. presidential systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D, F & O text, Ch. 20, "Parliamentary and Presidential Systems" • Fair Vote, "How the Electoral College Works Today: Frequently Asked Questions" at http://www.fairvote.org/?page=969 <p>**Wed., Jan. 25 – Article Review Due**</p>
Jan. 30 – Feb. 3 (Week 4)	B. The Single-Member Plurality System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D, F & O text, Ch. 25, "Elections and Electoral Systems." C. Proportional Representation and other electoral systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Milner, "The Case for Proportional Representation," <u>Policy Options</u>, November 1997, p. 6-9 • Daniel Pellerin and Patrick Thomson, "Proportional Representation is Likely to Create More Problems Than it Would Solve," <u>Policy Options</u>, October 2004, p. 54-9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrew Heard, "Reform of the Electoral System," at http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/reform.html
Feb. 6 – 10 (Week 5)	<p>D. Political parties & their functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D, F & O text, Ch. 23, "Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements: The Organization of Interests." Robin Sears. "The Decline and Irrelevance of Canada's Political Parties." <i>Policy Options</i>, May 2005, p. 9-16. William Greider, "The Democratic Promise of Occupy Wall Street." <i>The Nation</i>. 12 Dec. 2011 http://www.thenation.com/article/164767/democratic-promise-occupy-wall-street
Feb. 13 – 17 (Week 6)	<p>E. Voting behaviour & voter turnout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elisabeth Gidengil, Andre Blais, Neil Nevitte and Richard Nadeau, "Turned Off or Tuned Out? Youth Participation in Politics," in <i>Electoral Insight</i>, July 2003, p. 9-14 http://www.elections.ca/eca/eim/article_search "Voter Turnout in Canada," Maple Leaf Web. Approx. 8 pages at http://www.mapleleafweb.com/features/voter-turnout-canada Jeffrey Roy, "Politicians and the Public: Bridging the Great Divide." <i>Policy Options</i>. Oct. 2011, p. 53 – 7 <p>**Mon., Feb. 6 – Bibliography Due**</p> <p>**Wed., Feb. 15 - MIDTERM EXAM **</p>
Feb. 20 – 24	<p>NO CLASS</p> <p><i>Feb. 20: Family Day</i></p> <p><i>Feb. 21 – 24: Winter Break</i></p>
Feb. 27 – Mar. 2 (Week 7)	<p>F. News media & their functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D, F & O text, Ch. 24, "Communications Media." David Buckingham. "Young People, Politics & News Media: beyond political socialization. " <i>Oxford Review of Education</i>, Vol. 25, No 1 & 2 (1999). P. 171 – 184. (Available through the GPRC Library, Academic Search Complete database.) Jay Davis "News: Beyond the Myth of Objectivity.' <i>Centre for Media Literacy website</i>. Available online at http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article48.html
Mar. 5 – 9 (Week 8)	<p>III. Government institutions and political processes</p> <p>A. Political culture – Canadian and American attitudes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D, F & O text, Ch. 5, "Political Culture & Socialization" Michael Whittington & Richard Van Loon, "The Socio-Historical Roots of Political Culture," <i>Canadian Government & Politics</i>, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996, p. 94-7 [handout]. Michael Adams, "Canada and the United States – Separated at birth," <i>Policy Options</i>, August 2003, p. 85-91 <p>**Mon., Mar. 5 – Paper Outline Due**</p>

<p>Mar. 12 – 16 (Week 9)</p>	<p>A. The executive branch & its functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D, F & O text, Ch. 27, “The Political Executive” <p>B. Legislatures & the role of the representative.</p> <p>D, F & O text, Ch. 26, “Representative Assemblies</p>
<p>Mar. 19 – 23 (Week 10)</p>	<p>C. Bureaucracies: impartiality, efficiency and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D, F & O text, Ch. 28, “The Administration”
<p>Mar. 26 - 30 (Week 11)</p>	<p>D. Local government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. Richard Tindal & Susan Nobes Tindal. "Municipal Government at the Crossroads." In <i>Local Government in Canada</i>. 7th edition. Toronto: Nelson Education, 2009. [handout] <p>**Mon., Mar. 26 – Paper Due**</p>
<p>Apr. 2 – 6 (Week 12)</p>	<p>E. The judicial system & the American Bill of Rights vs. the Canadian Charter of Rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D, F & O text, Ch. 29, "The Judiciary" • Simon Potter, "Judging the Judiciary: The Rule of Law in the Age of the Charter," <u>Policy Options</u>, October 2003, p. 34-8. • F.L. (Ted) Morton, "Can Judicial Supremacy Be Stopped?" <u>Policy Options</u>, October 2003, p. 25-9
<p>Apr. 9 – 12 (Week 13)</p>	<p>F. Interest groups & their functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D, F & O text, Ch. 23, “Political Parties, Interest Groups and Social Movements: The Organization of Interests,” p. 372 – 384. <p>REVIEW CLASS</p>