



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2015

PO 1030 (A2): MODERN POLITICAL ISSUES – 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763
OFFICE: C415 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Mon. & Wed. 10:30 am - 11:30 pm, or by appointment

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS: Readings to be accessed through the course Moodle site, library databases and the internet, as listed in the syllabus.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This is an introduction to contemporary political issues and events. Topics vary but include matters of contemporary national and international concern such as the Quebec Question, Rights and Environmentalism.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 credits / 3 hours per week

DELIVERY MODE(S): Lecture and Discussion

OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to introduce you to the political world and key political concepts and themes, including political ideologies, individual liberty, rights, and democracy. We will also examine current events and political debates, such as: Is a greater role for the private sector the solution to problems facing Canada's health care system? What should be done to prevent catastrophic consequences of global warming? What is Canada's place in the global community? How does the media influence our understanding of political participants and debates?

My objective is:

- To provide you with a basic political vocabulary of concepts and ideas which will enable an understanding of contemporary issues facing local, national, and global societies.

- To give you the ability to evaluate political issues through a better understanding of differing perspectives and available evidence.

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

- demonstrate an understanding of political concepts and processes; and a familiarity with political ideologies and their real-life applications.
- demonstrate engagement in formal and informal politics through discussion of current events
- assess original and secondary sources of argumentation and evidence, both scholarly and popular, and apply findings to new situations.
- demonstrate essay writing skills, through the presentation and evaluation of evidence.

TRANSFERABILITY: This course has university transferability to Athabasca University, Canadian University College, Concordia University College, Grant MacEwan 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.transferralberta.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%
- Political Writing Assignment..... 15%
- Position Paper.....25%
- Midterm20%
- Final exam30%

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.

Political Writing Assignment: You will be given a number of options for a short written assignment, designed to help you engage with the political world. A handout will be given in class with further details & instructions.

Position Paper: You will write a paper of approximately 8 pages in length, focusing on a debate theme that you have selected. I suggest using a theme which we have discussed in class, but others are acceptable as long as they are cleared with me. This paper will require you to summarize the issues under discussion, explain the various positions on these issues, and offer your own perspective and recommendations. While we may have discussed these issues in class, this is NOT a summary of class discussions – I expect you to examine the issues in greater depth, and look at sources beyond those used in class. A handout will be given in class with further details & instructions.

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:

- A digital 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-1030W2015. (Ex. Jane Smith's paper should be saved as SMITHJane-PositionPaper-1030W2015.)
- 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. This includes having completed assigned readings for the classes. All readings should be available in the text or online, through the Moodle webpage. They can be read online, or printed, should you choose to do so. If you have questions regarding the Student Printing Policy, please visit <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/policies/admin/StudentPrintingPolicy.pdf>.

- Students are expected to make use of the Moodle webpage for the course, including course readings, resources, and messages. You will also need to regularly check your GPRC email address for communications from me.
- 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: Academic and Non-academic (https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/forms_documents/Student_Misconduct.pdf).

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: Academic and Non-academic at https://www.gprc.ab.ca/files/forms_documents/Student_Misconduct.pdf.

****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)	
Week 1	<p>Lecture 1 - Course Introduction: What do we mean by ‘politics’?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M – available on Moodle) Mark Dickerson, Thomas Flanagan and Brenda O’Neill. "Chapter 1: Society, Government & Politics." In <i>An Introduction to Government and Politics</i>. P. 3 – 13. • Canadian Nurses Association, “Nursing Is A Political Act – The Bigger Picture,” <i>Nursing Now</i>, May 2000. 4 pages available online at http://cna-aicc.ca/~media/cna/page-content/pdf-en/nursing_political_act_may_2000_e.pdf
Week 2	<p>Lecture 2 - Ideologies: What do we want in a ‘good society’? What is the left – right spectrum in modern politics?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M) Joseph, Thomas W. “Ch. 4: Political Ideologies.” In <i>Essentials of Canadian Politics and Government</i>. P. 87 – 120. • (M) Dickerson, Mark, Thomas Flanagan and Brenda O’Neill. “Ch. 9: Ideology.” In <i>An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach</i>. P. 113 – 125.
Week 3	<p>Ideologies (continued)</p>
Week 4	<p>Lecture 3 - Democracy: What does democracy need to function well? What does citizenship mean?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M) Paul Johnston & Tom Pocklington, "Democracy and Representative Government." Tom Pocklington, ed. <i>Representative Government: An Introduction to Politics and Government</i>. P. 2 – 15. • (M) Christina Gabriel. “Ch. 12: Citizens & Citizenship.” Frm. <i>Critical Concepts: an introduction to politics</i>. Eds. Janine Brodie & Sandra Rein. P. 157 – 169.
Week 5	<p>Lecture 4 - The Canadian Context: Basics of Canada’s political system & structure. How do we define ourselves?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M) Eric Mintz, Livianna Tossutti, & Christopher Dunn. “Ch. 13: The Federal System, “Ch. 14: The Executive, & Ch. 15: Parliament” <i>Democracy, Diversity and Good Government: An Introduction to Politics in Canada</i>. Toronto: Pearson Canada, 2011. P. 346 – 397, 403 – 408, 412 – 438. <p>** Political Writing Assignment DUE – Oct. 1**</p>

Week 6	The Canadian Context (continued)
Week 7	<p>Lecture 5 - Health Care: How is health care regulated & funded? Private vs. Public Sector: Is there a Third Way? The Harper Doctrine.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M) Kevin Taft. "The Special Case of Health Care." In <i>Shredding the Public Interest: Ralph Klein & 25 Years of One-Party Government</i>. P. 93 – 105. • (M) David Gratzner. Excerpt from <i>Code Blue: Reviving Canada's Health Care System</i>. P. 167 – 187, 192 – 4. • Stephen Lewis & Terrence Sullivan. "How to Bend the Cost Curve in Health Care." IRPP Insight No. 1, May 2013. http://archive.irpp.org/pubs/IRPPinsight/IRPP_Insight_no1.pdf • Geoff Norquay. "The Death of Executive Federalism and the Rise of the "Harper Doctrine": Proposals for the Next Health Care Accord. <i>Policy Options</i>, Dec. 2011-Jan.2012, P. 46 – 50. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/issues/the-year-in-review/the-death-of-executive-federalism-and-the-rise-of-the-harper-doctrine-prospects-for-the-next-health-care-accord/
Week 8	**Midterm Exam – Oct. 22**
Week 9	<p>Lecture 6 - The International System & Canada's Place in the World: How does the International system work? How can Canada influence other nations?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M) James John Guy. "Ch. 12: Analyzing the Global System." In <i>People, Politics and Government: A Canadian Perspective</i>. 7th ed. P. 334 – 368. • Brian Easton. "What does a multi-polar world mean?" <i>New Zealand International Review</i> 35.4 July (2010): 21-22. <i>Academic Search Complete</i>. • Michael Ignatieff, Viktor Orban, John Baird. "The new authoritarianism." In <i>Policy Options</i>. Sept. 2014. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/issues/beautiful-data/ignatieff-et-al/
Week 10	<p>Lecture 7 - Climate change and global warming: What does it mean, and what should we be doing about it?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Suzuki Foundation website. "Climate Change: Science and Policy." Please click through the following links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "What is Climate Change?" http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/climate-change-basics/climate-change-101-1/ ○ "Greenhouse Gases" http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/climate-change-basics/greenhouse-gases/ ○ "Climate Change Deniers." http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/climate-change-basics/climate-change-deniers/ ○ "Health Impacts." http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/impacts/health-impacts/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Economic Impacts.” http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/impacts/economic-impacts/ ○ “Forest Impacts.” http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/impacts/forest-impacts/ ○ “Water Impacts.” http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/impacts/water-impacts/ ○ “Canada and the Kyoto Protocol.” http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/canada-climate-change/canada-and-kyoto/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith Curry. “Demon Coal.” 12 Mar. 2012. http://judithcurry.com/2012/03/12/demon-coal/ And “Messes and Super Wicked Problems.” 11 Mar. 2012 http://judithcurry.com/2012/03/11/messes-and-super-wicked-problems/ <i>Climate Etc.</i> Blog. • Gregg Easterbrook. “Global Warming: Who Loses – and Who Wins?” <i>The Atlantic</i>, April 2007. Available online at http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200704/global-warming
Week 11	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 12	<p>Lecture 8 - Media literacy: What’s the story behind the news? Do we understand what we’re seeing?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (M) Eric Mintz, David Close & Osvaldo Croci. “Ch. 8: Politics and the Media.” In <i>Politics, Power, and the Common Good: an introduction to political science</i>. 171 – 196. • Richard Liebrecht. “The Real Worry about Election 2012.” Guest Post on <i>daveberta.ca: Alberta politics blog</i>. http://daveberta.ca/2012/05/richard-liebrecht-alberta-election-2012/ • Jay Davis “News: Beyond the Myth of Objectivity.” Centre for Media Literacy website. Available online at http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article48.html <p>**Position Paper DUE – Nov. 19**</p>
Week 13	Media Literacy (continued)
Week 14	Exam Review