



Grande Prairie Regional College

Department of Arts and Education
College of Arts, Science and Upgrading

Course Syllabus

Political Science 1030: Modern Political Issues

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. Notes: Not open to students who are taking or have taken PO1000. This course is not intended for students majoring in political science. (GPRC Official Calendar Description, 2007-2008)

Instructor Dennis Stavrou, BA, MA, MHI, FACHE(c)
Clinical Health Policy Advisor
Office of the Vice-President,
Health Services (Urban)
Peace Country Health Region

Time Slot W 6-850pm
Classroom B302 (GPRC)

Office Peace Country Health Region
Grande Prairie
2nd Floor Provincial Building
Vice-President's Office

Office Hours Before Class (30 Minutes)
After Class (30 Minutes)
By Appointment

Contact Information Office (M-F 8 am-5 pm) 780.402.8156
Mobile 780.882.7096
Electronic Mail (preferred) gprcpols@gmail.com

Purpose of Course

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the students with issues that pertain to institutional governance. For example, what are the effects of immigration legislation on our Canadian employers, especially in the fields of health care and education? This course will provide students with an overview of the operation of the Canadian political system by reviewing various political issues. At the end of the course, students should have a more informed position on questions such as, what's the best political party to support in Canadian politics, is Canada's political make-up flawed, and what is the Canadian government doing to keep us safe?

Required Textbook

1. *The Language of Canadian Politics: A Guide to Important Terms & Concepts*, 4th edition, by John McMenemy (Wilfred Laurier Press, 2006);
2. Internet and other sources that are listed in the Weekly Outline and Course Terminology section of this outline.

Grade Allocations

1. Class Participation (20 points)
2. Writing Assignment Choices **(Choose a OR b)**:
 - a. Reflective Journals (30 points each, total of 4 journals = 120 points)
OR
 - b. Term Paper (2000 Words) due at the end of the term (120 points)
3. Mid-term #1 (40 points)
4. Final Exam (40 points) – This examination **will not** be cumulative.

Total Points Possible = 220

Late Assignments

If an assignment is late for a legitimate reason, students will be given the opportunity to submit it at a date that is mutually agreeable between them and the instructor. Please note that penalties do apply if no legitimate reason is provided and without the appropriate documentation.

Missed Exams

In a mid-term is missed for a legitimate reason, the student will be given the opportunity to take a make-up mid-term. The make-up mid-term will be different from the original mid-term. Please note that appropriate documentation will be required before a make-up mid-term is administered.

Grading Scale

A+ 90-100	B+ 76-79	C+ 67-69	D+ 55-59
A 85- 89	B 73-75	C 64-66	D 50-54
A- 80- 84	B- 70-72	C- 60-63	F 0-49

Attendance

Students who miss an excessive number of classes may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in the Calendar on pg. 40.

Extra Credit Opportunities

No extra credit opportunities are defined for this course, at this time. However, if an opportunity arises, it will be made available to every student registered for this course. Students are advised to focus their efforts on their assigned work.

Weekly Outline and Course Terminology

Week 1 (September 10th, 2008)

1. Course Overview & Administration
2. Canadian Government
3. What types of political ideas exist in Canada?

Important Terms

- ✓ Citizens – Class cleavage, Political culture, Public opinion
- ✓ Electioneering – Brokerage politics, Populism
- ✓ Ideologies – Centralist, Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism
- ✓ Social Safety Net – Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance, Medicare

Week 2 (September 17th, 2008)

1. What's the best political party to support in Canada?

Important Terms

- ✓ Bloc Quebecois, Conservative Party, Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF 1932-1961), Green Party of Canada (est. 1983), Liberal party (see also Grit), Nationalistes, New Democratic Party, Progressive Conservative Party, Reform Party (1987-2000) (see also Canadian Alliance), Social Credit Party, United Farmers

2. What are the top government jobs in Canada? (part 1)

Important Terms

- ✓ Executive Branch – Ambassador, Appointment power, Cabinet, Chief of Staff, Executive Assistant (Ministerial), Governor General, Lieutenant Governor, Ministers of the Crown, Prime Minister's Office (PMO)
- ✓ Legislative Branch – Members of Parliament (MPs), MHA, MLA, MNA, MPP, Parliamentary Secretaries, Public Accounts Committee, Senate, Speaker of the Legislature

Week 3 (September 24th, 2008)

- What are the top government jobs in Canada? (part 2)

Important Terms

- ✓ Bureaucracy – Auditor General of Canada, Associate / Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Electoral Officer, Chief of the Defense Staff, Clerk of the Privy Council, Comptroller General of Canada, Deputy Minister, Merit System (in the public administration), Public Administration (civil service), Public Service Commission of Canada
- ✓ Judicial Branch – Chief Justice, Judicial System (judiciary)

1. Is Canada becoming Americanized?

Important Terms

- ✓ Ties to Britain – British Connection, Commonwealth of Nations, Crown, Parliamentary – cabinet system, Statue of Westminster (1931)
- ✓ Globalization – Canadian International Development Agency, Organization of American States (OAS), Tariff, World Trade Organization (WTO)
- ✓ Ties to the USA – Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (1989), Continentalism, North American Free Trade Agreement (1992), Reciprocity
- ✓ Canadian Culture – Canadian Council (est. 1957), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

Week 4 (October 1st, 2008)(Journal#1 Due)

1. What are some of Canada's political flaws?

Important Terms

- ✓ Background – Constitution, Constitution Act (1867), Have (have not) provinces, Sections 91 and 92, Separatism
- ✓ Changing the Constitution – Amendment, Consultative Mechanisms, General Amending Formula
- ✓ Modern Developments – Calgary Declaration (1997), Charlottetown Accord (1992), Clarity Act (2000), Distinct Society Clause, Meech Lake Accord, Special Status, Triple E-Senate

2. Are all Canadian citizens really equal?

Important Terms

- ✓ Affirmative Action, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), Canadian Human Rights Commission (1977), Civil Liberties, Equality Legislation, Gay and Lesbian Rights, Gender Politics, Geographic Cleavage, Land Claims and Settlements, Multiculturalism, Native Self-Government, Persons Case (1930), Racism, Social Movement Organizations

Week 5 (October 8th, 2008)

1. Should we trust the government and politicians with our money?

Important Terms

- ✓ Ethical Concerns – Conflict of Interest, Crossing the Floor, Lobby, Parliamentary Indemnity, Patronage, Scandal
- ✓ Taxation – Collectivism, Equalization Grants, Income Tax, Means Test, Redistributive Policy, Spending Power

2. What is done to prevent corruption in Canadian politics?

Important Terms

1. Accountability, Collective (cabinet / ministerial) Responsibility, Electoral Law, Free Vote, Freedom of Information, Mass Media of Communication, Ministerial

Responsibility, Opposition Parties, Question Period, Recall, Responsible Government, Press Gallery, Vote of Confidence

Week 6 (October 15th, 2008)

1. Review for Mid-Term Exam
2. Mid-term Exam

Week 7 (October 22nd, 2008)(Journal#2 Due)

1. What does the Canadian government do to keep us safe?

Important Terms

- ✓ Security Organizations – Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Communications Security Establishment (CES), North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, est. 1949), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP, est. 1873), Security Intelligence Review Committee (est. 1984)
- ✓ Terrorism in Canada – October (FLQ) Crisis (1970)
- ✓ Criminal Activity – Capital Crime and Punishment, Criminal Code of Canada
- ✓ Extraordinary Powers – Antiterrorism Act (2001), Emergencies Act (1988), Emergency Power, National Security Certificate, Public Safety Act (2004), Security of Information Act

Week 8 (October 29th, 2008)

Public Policy

1. What is Policy?

Torjman, Sherri. What is Policy? Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Sept 2005.

<http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/544ENG.pdf>

2. The Public Policy Cycle

Marchildon, Gregory. Royal Commissions and the Policy Cycle in Canada: *The Case of Health Care*. Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, Fall 2001.

<http://www.uregina.ca/sipp/documents/pdf/ssgm.pdf>

3. The Impact of the Charter of Rights on Public Administration

Carroll, Sieglel, Jones. *Classic Readings in Canadian Public Administration*. Oxford University Press 2005. P 443-462.

Week 9 (November 5th, 2008)

Health Policy (Part I)

1. Canada Health Act - <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowTdm/cs/C-6///en;>
2. Canada's Health System - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/system-regime/2005-hcs-sss/index-eng.php;>

3. Health Care Accessibility - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/acces/index-eng.php>;
4. Health Human Resources - http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/alt_formats/hpb-dgps/pdf/pubs/hhr/2007-frame-cadre/2007-frame-cadre-eng.pdf;
5. E-Health - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/ehealth-esante/index-eng.php>;
6. Health Care Expenditures in Canada - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/expen-depens/2001-exp-depen-1980/index-eng.php>;
7. Health Care in Alberta - <http://www.health.alberta.ca/>;

Week 10 (November 12th, 2008)(Journal#3 Due)

Health Policy (Part II)

Continuation from Week 9

Week 11 (November 19th, 2008)

Immigration Policy

1. Forging a New Immigration Policy.
Knowles, V. *Strangers at our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy 1540-2006*. Dundurn Press 2007. P 105-126, 247-272.
2. Walker, B. *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada*. Canadian Scholar's Press Inc 2008. P 17-48.
3. Protecting Canadians – Immigration Act
Citizenship and Immigration Canada – www.cic.gc.ca

Week 12 (November 26th, 2008)

1. Provincial Immigration Policy;
2. Education Policy;

Week 13 (December 3rd, 2008)(Journal#4 Due)

1. Course Evaluations;
2. Review for Final Exam;

Reflective Journal Guidelines

Instead of a term paper, it was felt that a reflective journal will be an assignment that will provide students with the opportunity to freely express their ideas and opinions, and at the same time, learn and meet the college's requirements for a writing assignment. As such, four journals will be assigned throughout the term as per the topics listed below.

In order to be successful and receive a good mark in the Reflective Journals, students will have to write their ideas in a concise and clear manner. Papers should be handed in on-time, they should not exceed one to two pages each (double space), and they should address one of the assigned topics. **If students would like to write on a topic that is not listed, they should first seek approval of their topic from the instructor, in advance.**

Reflective Journal Topics

Reflective Journal #1

1. Why study Political Science?
2. What areas of Political Science are you most interested in and why?
3. Discuss Canada's political system by justifying the candidate of your choice.

Reflective Journal #2

1. What is your understanding of the political / governance system of the USA? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a system?
2. What is your understanding of the political / governance system of Canada? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a system?
3. Who is the head of state in Canada and what is their constitutional role?

Reflective Journal #3

1. How are the authorities of the Federal vs. Provincial / Territorial governments different? How does that affect our current governance system?
2. Discuss a topic related to the health care system in Canada today.
3. What are the effects of the medicare system in our society?
4. What is your understanding of the funding mechanisms for healthcare from the federal government;

Reflective Journal #4

1. What are the effects of immigration on today's Canadian society?
2. How are the topics of immigration and employment inter-related?
3. Do you think that education is funded well in Canada? If so, why?
4. Do you think that social services are funded well in Canada? If so, why?

Term Paper

If you choose to write a term paper instead of the Reflective Journals, please contact the instructor for further instructions and topic approvals. **All topics have to be approved in advance.**

Mid-Term / Final Exam Guidelines

During this term, there will be two Exams. Please note that the final exam will **NOT** be cumulative.

The Mid-Term and Final Exam will comprise of:

- a. Identifications (Six total, students expected to write four);
- b. Short Essays (Three total, students expected to write 2).

Approximately one week before the exam, students will be provided with a review sheet. This review sheet will contain sample identification and short essay questions which can be discussed in class during the session prior to the Mid-Term or Final Exam.