



**POL 112**  
**Introduction to Canadian Politics**

Department of Politics and International Studies  
Winter 2020

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 – 10:00 AM**  
**Bishop Williams Hall**

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*I would like to acknowledge that the land on which our class gathers is the traditional and unceded territory of the Abenaki People.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An analysis of Canadian political institutions and processes. This course will examine the social and economic environment of Canadian and Indigenous politics, political culture, regionalism, linguistic diversity, constitutionalism, federalism, parliamentary government, political parties, elections, and the media.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

With its vast geography and diverse population, Canada is a unique political, economic, and social experiment in today's world. How did this country – a “peaceable kingdom” in the “Great White North” – come to be? How do Canadians govern themselves? How do they manage their linguistic, cultural, and regional diversity? How have they grappled with their colonial past and settler colonial present? In this course, we will consider these questions by learning about the development and structure of Canada's political institutions and processes, as well as the actors that inhabit them. We will examine how our constitutional and legal traditions, political culture, and norms shape the use of power in Canada. We will consider how decisions are made in Canada and who contributes to those processes. By the end of the course, you will have developed the tools necessary for understanding, analyzing, and engaging in Canadian politics.

This course has several learning objectives. The first is to introduce you to Canada's political system, institutions, and politics. The second is to develop your ability to assess Canadian democracy, the structure and function of its political institutions and processes, and to evaluate your own role as a political actor and citizen. The third objective is to build your *political* literacy by situating our academic learning in current political events unfolding in Ottawa, Québec, and elsewhere in Canada. The final objective is to instill an appreciation for this country, its unique politics, and the grand experiment in which *we* are all participating.

## READING REQUIREMENTS

In this course, there is one required text. The textbook can be purchased in-person or online through **Doolittle's Co-op**, accessed in the course reserves at the **Library Learning Commons**, or ordered through online retailers. You may use either the print or the electronic versions of the text.

- Brooks, Stephen and Marc Ménard. 2018. *Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction*. Second Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada. 472 pp.

Readings have been limited to ~35 pp. per week. Students are expected to attend classes prepared to engage these assigned materials through lectures, classroom discussion, online discussion, and breakout groups.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Due Date	Value
1. Online participation	Ongoing (seven questions)	35%
2. Midterm exam	Feb. 27 (60 minutes)	25%
3. Final exam	Apr. examination period	40%

*Online Participation (35%)* – Throughout the term, you will be asked to respond to seven (7) discussion questions using Slack. You will receive a prompt on Tuesday mornings (Jan. 21, 28; Feb. 11, 18; Mar. 17, 24, 31) and have until midnight on Fridays to respond. To sign up for a *Slack* account, use the following address:

[https://join.slack.com/t/pol112-cdnpoli-w20/shared\\_invite/enQtODc2MzA3NjkyMDU1LTZjNThhMzRkZTI3YzhjNWNjODM5MTJIMDhjNDBmODJmZDdlMDM4YjY2MDhlNzM0MGlxMjYwZWZWM4OTI2OGU0YjE](https://join.slack.com/t/pol112-cdnpoli-w20/shared_invite/enQtODc2MzA3NjkyMDU1LTZjNThhMzRkZTI3YzhjNWNjODM5MTJIMDhjNDBmODJmZDdlMDM4YjY2MDhlNzM0MGlxMjYwZWZWM4OTI2OGU0YjE)

While you will be formally graded on your online participation, in class participation is still an expectation. Online and in-class participation provides students with a variety of learning styles access to the best means for communicating their ideas, interacting with their peers, and engaging in a variety of active learning exercises.

*Midterm exam (25%)* – To be held during regular classroom hours. The midterm will cover the first half of the course, including all assigned readings, lectures, and additional materials distributed in class or through *Slack*.

*Final exam (40%)* – To be scheduled during April examination period. The final exam will be a *cumulative*, 90 minute exam, and include multiple choice, identification, and short answer questions.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Academic accommodations.** The Student Accessibility & Accommodation Services helps ensure that all students with disabilities have equal access to programs at Bishop’s University. They arrange for reasonable accommodations in accordance with *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, the new *Act Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. For more information: <http://www.ubishops.ca/future-current-students/student-campus-life/student-services/student-accessibility-accommodation-services/>

The University values the mental health and wellbeing of its students. Professional counsellors are available to help students deal with personal concerns related to adapting to University life, family problems, relationships, difficulties with drugs and alcohol, depression, anxiety and other matters, all of which are handled in complete confidentiality. To book an appointment with one of these counsellors, contact Ms. Francine Hamel by email ([francine.hamel@ubishops.ca](mailto:francine.hamel@ubishops.ca)) or by phone at (819) 822-9600 ext. 2695.

**Classroom community and participation.** The classroom should be an anti-oppressive learning environment. We will adhere at all times to a policy of mutual respect in sharing opinions and ideas, in accordance with Bishop’s University’s Policy on the Prevention of Harassment (<https://www.ubishops.ca/about-bu/bishops-university-leadership-and-vision/governance-and-administration/harassment/>). Rude, discriminatory, oppressive, or otherwise marginalizing comments or language will not be tolerated.

**Deferrals and other accommodations.** If you require an accommodation or deferral for any other purpose, including family emergencies, please speak with the Dean of Arts and Science in McGreer 301. The Deans office can coordinate with all of your professors/instructors and support you in completing your work/term.

**Email Policy.** I will respond to emails within 48 hours during weekdays. I will only respond sporadically to emails sent on weekends. You should note the course code (‘POL 123’) in the subject line of your email.

**Grading.** Grading in this course will be done using percentage grades. See below for this course’s grading scheme:

Passing grade.....	50% – 100%; P (pass)
Failing grade.....	0% – 49%; F (failure)
80%–100%.....	(equivalent to A)
70%–79%.....	(equivalent to B)
60%–69%.....	(equivalent to C)
50%–59%.....	(equivalent to D)

**I’ll use your pronoun.** It’s no big deal. See [www.nbdcampaign.ca](http://www.nbdcampaign.ca). In addition, class rosters and University data systems are provided to instructors with students’ legal names and gender identifications. However, knowing that not all students use their legal names or sex/gender assigned at birth, I am happy to use the name and/or pronouns you use. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use. If these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a way to share this information with others in a way that is comfortable and safe for you.

**Late penalties.** There are no late penalties in the course. If you miss a discussion without appropriate documentation or deferral from the Dean of Arts and Science, then you will be assigned a ‘0’ for that week’s discussion.

**Language of instruction.** The language of instruction of the institution is English. Nonetheless, students have the option to submit individual written work in either English or French, except where a knowledge or competency in a language is an object of the course. Students who wish to submit work in French must notify their instructor by the Add/Drop deadline so that, if necessary, special arrangements can be made for the evaluation of their work. Please see the Academic Calendar for more information.

**Make-up tests.** Make-up tests for missed midterm exams will only be considered when appropriate official documentation is provided from a medical professional or the Dean of Arts and Sciences. If a quiz will be missed due to a pre-scheduled event (i.e. academic event, athletic event, or family emergency), arrangements should be made *before* the scheduled quiz.

**Plagiarism.** Reproduced from the Bishop's University Academic Calendar:

2.1 Plagiarism is a kind of academic dishonesty in which an individual uses the work of another without appropriate acknowledgement. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following practices:

- Using another's work without acknowledgement
- Copying material without quotation marks
- Paraphrasing too closely the exact words of the originating author
- Submitting work written in whole or in part as one's own by another individual.

2.2 The following practices related to plagiarism are also prohibited:

- Helping another student plagiarize
- Submitting in whole or in part work for which the student has received credit in another course, unless the permission of the instructor has been obtained
- Submitting any statement of fact known to be false or providing a fabricated reference to a source.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

**Religious observance.** Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

**Slack.** *Slack* is an online tool that allows users to chat, share content, and direct messages through their browser, desktop, tablet, or smartphone app. *Slack* has been widely adopted as a means of office communications across the private sector and particularly by journalism, media, and internet companies. We'll be using *Slack* to facilitate participation outside the classroom. I will also hold online office hours concurrently with my office hours in McGreer and at other times. Supplementary readings and materials will be distributed through *Slack*. You can download the desktop or mobile app here: [www.slack.com](http://www.slack.com).

**Writing Centre.** The Writing Centre is located in the Library. Get help with planning, organizing, outlining, sentence structure, grammar, referencing and citations. This service is free.

## OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Date	Topic	Required Reading/Assessments
Jan. 9	<i>Introduction</i>	<b>*Citizenship quiz*</b>
Jan. 14	<i>Political Life in Canada</i>	Chap. 1
Jan. 16		
Jan. 21	<i>The Canadian Constitution</i>	Chap. 6
Jan. 23		<b>*Discussion #1* (Jan. 21)</b>
Jan. 28	<i>Federalism</i>	Chap. 7
Jan. 30		<b>*Discussion #2* (Jan. 28)</b>
Feb. 4	<i>French Canada</i>	Chap. 5 (pgs. 119-131)
Feb. 6		“French Canada and the Quebec Question” ( <i>Slack</i> )
Feb. 11	<i>Parliamentary Government</i>	Chap. 8
Feb. 13		<b>*Discussion #3* (Feb. 11)</b>
Feb. 18	<i>Parties and Elections</i>	Chap. 9
Feb. 20		<b>*Discussion #4* (Feb. 18)</b>
Feb. 25	<i>Indigenous Politics</i>	Chap. 5 (148-169)
Feb. 27	<b>**Midterm exam** (60 minutes)</b>	
Mar. 2-6	<b>READING WEEK</b>	
Mar. 10	<i>Gender and Multiculturalism</i>	“The Women’s Movement” ( <i>Slack</i> )
Mar. 12		Chap. 5 (132-147)
Mar. 17	<i>Political Culture</i>	Chap. 2
Mar. 19		<b>*Discussion #5* (Mar. 17)</b>
Mar. 24	<i>Regionalism</i>	Chap. 4
Mar. 26		<b>*Discussion #6* (Mar. 24)</b>
Mar. 31	<i>Political Communications &amp; the Media</i>	Chap. 11
Apr. 2		Presentation by Shelby Page <b>*Discussion #7* (Mar. 31)</b>
Apr. 7	<i>Exam review</i> <i>Make-up class for storm days, etc.</i>	

### Discussion topics (*Slack*)

Jan. 21, 2019: *Should parliament or the courts have the final say over controversial issues?*

Jan. 28, 2019: *Should provincial governments or the federal government direct pipeline construction?*

Feb. 11, 2019: *Is the prime minister too powerful?*

Feb. 18, 2019: *Should Canada reform its electoral system?*

Mar. 17, 2019: *Is Canada a postnational nation-state?*

Mar. 24, 2019: *What issues divide Central and Western Canadians? How can we bridge those divides?*

Mar. 31, 2019: *Should the Canadian government subsidize newspapers and other forms of journalism?*

## Appendix A – Online Code of Conduct

In this course, you will be participating in course discussions and assignments in-person and through a variety of online tools. I expect you to adhere to the same standards of behaviour and engagement that you would follow in person and on campus.

### 1. Respectful conduct

- a. All participants in online discussions should maintain an environment that is *free of harassment* towards the teaching team and members of the class. This includes demeaning written or oral comments based on ability, age, ancestry, citizenship, creed, ethnic origin, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, language group, marital status, place of origin, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, religion, religious dress, religious practice, sex, and/or sexual orientation of that individual or those individuals. All participants must abide by the Bishop's University Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.ubishops.ca/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-Student-Conduct.pdf>). Please refer to the Code for additional information.
- b. All participants should *respect the views of others* and respond in a courteous manner in our discussions about the materials and issues explored in the course.
- c. All participants should make *valuable contributions* to online discussions. Contributions should be thoughtful and in keeping with the tone and direction of our discussions.
- d. All participants should respect the privacy of other members of the class by not sharing or spreading private information.
- e. All participants should respect the integrity of Bishop University's computer systems, such as *Moodle*, and the online discussion tool *slack.com*.

### 2. Participation

- a. I expect *active participation* from everyone in our online discussions. This includes asking questions, responding to discussion prompts, respectfully engaging other participants in debate, and introducing new ideas and information to our discussions.
- b. I expect *clear communication* from everyone in our online discussions. Given the real-time nature of our discussions, however, I recognize that typos, spelling and grammatical errors, and other mistakes can happen. You have the option to edit your entries, but my focus will be on the quality of your ideas and contributions to our discussions.
- c. Have fun!

### Appendix B – Participation grade rubric

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Non-performance (0)</i>	<i>Satisfactory (1)</i>	<i>Good (2)</i>	<i>Excellent (3)</i>
<b>A. Includes and applies relevant course concepts, theories, and materials correctly with citations and sources.</b>	Does not explain relevant course concepts, theories, or materials. Does not provide citation of sources.	Summarizes relevant course concepts, theories, or materials. Provides citation some of the time.	Applies and analyzes relevant course concepts, theories, or materials correctly. Provides citation most of the time.	Evaluates and synthesizes course concepts, theories, or materials correctly, using examples or supporting evidence. Consistently provides citation.
<b>B. Responds to fellow learners, relating the discussion to relevant course concepts and providing substantive feedback.</b>	Does not respond to fellow learners.	Responds to fellow learners without relating discussion to the relevant course concepts. Provides feedback, but it is not substantive.	Responds to fellow learners, relating the discussion to relevant course concepts. Feedback is substantive most of the time.	Responds to fellow learners, relating the discussion to relevant course concepts, and consistently extends the discussion through provision of substantive feedback.
<b>C. Applies relevant professional, personal, or other real-world experiences.</b>	Does not contribute professional, personal, or other real-world experiences.	Contributes some professional, personal, or other real-world experiences that may or may not relate to course content.	Applies relevant professional, personal, or other real-world experiences.	Applies relevant professional, personal, or other real-world experiences and extends the discussion by responding to the examples of peers.
<b>D. Participation entry is well-written in complete sentences with proper syntax, grammar, and spelling. Emojis and GIFs welcome.</b>	Did not submit an entry to that week's discussion.	Entry is poorly written with syntax, grammar, and spelling errors. Many typos.	Entry is well-written, with good syntax, grammar, and spelling. Few typos.	Entry is written at a superior level with excellent syntax, grammar, and spelling. Few typos.

*n.b.* Students will be graded out of 12 marks. You will receive a direct message with a grade in the following format: ABCD = #/12. So, if you receive an assessment of 3232 = 10/12, you received 3 for criteria A, 2 for criteria B, 3 for criteria, and 2 for criteria D.