

**PLSC 354
Canadian Politics**

Eastern Michigan University
Department of Political Science

Winter 2016
MW, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m., 419 Pray-Harrold

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Office Hours: MW, 12:30-2:00 p.m., 3:30-4:30 p.m., or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

So you want to know about Canadian politics, eh? If so, you are in the right class. Although the focus of this course is on the societal, institutional, participatory, and policy dimensions of Canadian politics, we will look at democracy in Canada in comparison with democracy in the United States. This allows us to compare parliamentary democracy and the principle of responsible government with presidential democracy and the principle of the separation of powers.

Following a brief introduction to Canada, its demographics, and its history, as well as a brief overview of key concepts relevant to Canadian politics, we will talk about the societal dimension of Canadian politics, which includes political culture, social and economic setting, diversity and multiculturalism, and regionalism. Next, we will cover the institutional dimension of Canadian politics, which includes Canada's constitution, rights and freedoms, federalism, machinery of government, and administrative state. Later, we will consider the participatory dimension of Canadian politics, which includes parties and elections, interest groups, and the media. The course will conclude with the policy dimension of Canadian politics, which includes policy issues such as language politics, women and politics, Aboriginal politics, and Canada in the world.

Upon completion of the course, you will have an enhanced ability to:

- Appreciate the societal, institutional, participatory, and policy dimensions of Canadian politics.
- Evaluate Canadian politics in the context of political culture, social and economic setting, diversity and multiculturalism, and regionalism.
- Understand Canada's constitution, rights and freedoms, federalism, machinery of government, and administrative state.
- Examine the functions of parties and elections, interest groups, and the media in Canadian politics.
- Analyze and discuss a variety of policy issues in Canadian politics.

- Look at democracy in Canada in comparison with democracy in the United States.
- Compare parliamentary democracy and the principle of responsible government with presidential democracy and the principle of the separation of powers.

Course Structure:

Class meetings combine lectures and discussions. While lectures introduce and explain key concepts, ideas, arguments, and evidence, discussions address critical questions, problems, and issues identified during lectures. You are expected to be active participants in class discussions and contribute meaningfully to the explanation, evaluation, and application of the concepts and issues covered in the course. To this end, you are expected to read the assigned material and be well prepared for each class session.

Throughout the course, you will have opportunities to present policy reports in the roles of premiers of Canada's provinces and territories and of Canadian and U.S. cabinet members. One or two of you will even be elected to the role of Canada's prime minister!

Required Text:

In pursuit of the course objectives, the following text is required:

- Stephen Brooks, *Canadian Democracy*, 8th edition, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-19-901115-5
Link:
http://www.oupcanada.com/higher_education/companion/politics/9780199011155.html

Useful Links:

The following links may be of interest throughout and beyond the course:

- CBC News: <http://www.cbc.ca/news>
- Relations between Canada and the United States: <http://www.can-am.gc.ca/can-am/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Relations between Canada and Michigan: http://can-am.gc.ca/business-affaires/fact_sheets-fiches_documentaires/mi.aspx?lang=eng

Course Requirements:

A midterm exam, a final exam, and a policy report will give you opportunities to demonstrate critical and analytical thinking by applying the material covered in class and in the readings.

Midterm Exam: There will be a midterm exam worth up to 25 points, depending on quality. The midterm exam is **due on Wednesday, March 2 (11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.)**.

Final Exam: There will be a final exam worth up to 25 points, depending on quality. The final exam is **due on Monday, April 25 (9:30-11:00 a.m.)**.

Policy Report: In the roles of premiers of Canadian provinces or territories, of Canadian and U.S. cabinet members, and of Canada's prime minister, you will present policy reports on issues of concern to provinces or territories or to ministries or departments. There will be two projects: a First Ministers' Conference and a Joint Canadian-U.S. Cabinet Meeting. Thirteen students will perform the roles of premiers of Canada's ten provinces and three territories. Of all other students, one half will perform the roles of Canadian cabinet members and one half will perform the roles of U.S. cabinet members. One or two students will perform the role of Canada's prime minister. More specific information on the First Ministers' Conference and the Joint Canadian-U.S. Cabinet Meeting will be provided in separate handouts. Depending on quality, a policy report will be worth up to 40 points, requiring a PowerPoint presentation in class and a paper that is expected to include about four to six double-spaced type-written pages of text as well as a title page and a list of references. The paper is **due in class when your PowerPoint presentation is scheduled**. Please note that a policy report will get **only up to half the credit without a PowerPoint presentation in class and no credit without a paper**.

Class Attendance: Since class performance is related to class attendance, I encourage you to attend class by awarding you up to 10 points for perfect class attendance.

Grading Scale:

Through the midterm exam, the final exam, a policy report, and class attendance, you can obtain a possible total number of 100 points, which are divided as follows:

Midterm Exam: 25 points
Final Exam: 25 points
Policy Report: 40 points
Class Attendance: 10 points

Your course grade will be based on your total number of points on the following scale:

95-100 A
90-94 A-
87-89 B+
83-86 B
80-82 B-
77-79 C+
73-76 C
70-72 C-
67-69 D+
63-66 D
60-62 D-
0-59 E

Course Outline:

Introduction

Week 1: January 6

Topic: Introduction; Canada, Demographics, and History; Key Concepts

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 1)

Societal Dimension of Canadian Politics

Week 2: January 11 and January 13

Topic: Political Culture

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 2)

Week 3: January 20

Topic: Social and Economic Setting

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 3)

Note: No classes on January 18 (MLK Jr. Day)!

Week 4: January 25 and January 27

Topic: Diversity and Multiculturalism; Regionalism

Reading: Brooks (Chapters 4 and 5)

Institutional Dimension of Canadian Politics

Week 5: February 1 and February 3

Topic: Constitution; Rights and Freedoms

Reading: Brooks (Chapters 6 and 7)

Week 6: February 8 and February 10

Topic: Federalism

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 8)

Week 7: February 15 and February 17

Topic: Machinery of Government

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 9)

Week 8: February 22 and February 24

No classes (Winter Recess)!

Week 9: February 29 and March 2

Topic: Administrative State

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 10)

Participatory Dimension of Canadian Politics

Week 10: March 7 and March 9

Topic: Parties and Elections

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 11)

Week 11: March 14 and March 16

Topic: Interest Groups; Media

Reading: Brooks (Chapters 12 and 13)

Policy Dimension of Canadian Politics

Week 12: March 21 and March 23

Topic: Language Politics; Women and Politics; Aboriginal Politics; Other Policy Issues

Project: First Ministers' Conference

Reading: Brooks (Chapters 14, 15, and 16); Individual Research

Week 13: March 28 and March 30

Topic: Language Politics; Women and Politics; Aboriginal Politics; Other Policy Issues

Project: First Ministers' Conference

Reading: Brooks (Chapters 14, 15, and 16); Individual Research

Week 14: April 4 and April 6

Topic: Canada in the World; Canadian-U.S. Relations

Project: Joint Canadian-U.S. Cabinet Meeting

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 17); Individual Research

Week 15: April 11 and April 13

Topic: Canada in the World; Canadian-U.S. Relations

Project: Joint Canadian-U.S. Cabinet Meeting

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 17); Individual Research

Week 16: April 18

Topic: Canada in the World; Canadian-U.S. Relations

Project: Joint Canadian-U.S. Cabinet Meeting

Reading: Brooks (Chapter 17); Individual Research

Course Policy:

- Please note that the course schedule is subject to change.
- Late policy report papers or absence from the midterm exam, from the final exam, or from policy report PowerPoint presentations will be accepted only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.
- Incomplete grades will be given only for documented medical or family emergencies, and must be negotiated before final grades are due.

- Since I respect students' observance of religious holidays, nobody will be penalized or disadvantaged for missing class on such days.
- Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities will be available upon documentation provided by EMU's Disability Resource Center.
- International students need to make sure that they meet the requirements of their visas to study in the United States.
- I will work hard to help anyone who has to miss class due to illness, religious holidays, or unavoidable conflicts.
- I will try to offer extensive support in office hours and schedule appointments at other times for any student who is staying up-to-date but has questions. Conversely, I will give only basic guidance to a student who lets the course go for no important reason.
- I recommend that students take this class only if they are seriously committed to doing the course work.
- Academic dishonesty (including plagiarism and cheating) will not be tolerated and is prohibited by the EMU Code of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty evident in any assignment will result in a score of zero for the assignment.
- Violations of the EMU Code of Student Conduct or the University's Safe Working and Learning Environment may result in sanctions up to removal from the course or expulsion from the university.

Course Resources:

- If you have questions or comments about class contents, please feel free to email me; please keep your questions and comments brief, precise, and to the point so you may obtain a response as quickly and effectively as possible.
- Additional course-related material and information will be posted through Canvas. For Canvas support, please click on "Help" in the top right corner of the Canvas website (<https://canvas.emich.edu/>).
- If you have questions concerning EMU's Bruce T. Halle Library (<http://www.emich.edu/halle/>) and its resources, please contact a librarian, by phone at 734-487-0020, or visit the on-line library services at <http://www.emich.edu/halle/askalibrarian.html>.
- For issues related to registration and enrollment, please contact EMU's Office of Records and Registration by phone at 734-487-4111.
- For institutional support for students with disabilities, please contact EMU's Disability Resource Center (<http://www.emich.edu/disabilities/>) by phone at 734-487-2470.
- For support related to multicultural issues, please contact EMU's Center for Multicultural Affairs (<http://www.emich.edu/cma/>) by phone at 734-487-2377.
- For academic advising, please contact EMU's University Advising & Career Development Center (<http://www.emich.edu/aac/>) by phone at 734-487-0400.
- For advising in political science, please contact the main office of EMU's Political Science Department by phone at 734-487-3113.