POLI-221: The Government of Canada (3 credits)

Fall 2019 (Section 1)

Instructor
Daniel Béland, James McGill Professor, Department of Political Science; Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada

Class hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 14:35 to 15:25; Friday lectures replaced by conferences during weeks 3 to 5, 7 to 11, and 13. Please note that the final lecture will take place on Tuesday, December 3, as per university schedule.

Office Hours: Wednesday, 4:00-5:30 pm

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Teaching Assistants
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Course Overview
An examination of key governmental institutions, including parliament, federalism, and the judiciary, the course focuses primarily on federal political institutions. The main goal is to allow students to grasp broad institutional rules and logics that shape Canadian politics. Topics covered include the Constitution, responsible government, parliament, the Crown, elections, political parties, public policy, and federalism. By the end of the class, students should be able to understand how Canadian political institutions work together as a political regime, and how such institutions may change over time. Comparisons with other liberal democracies will also help students understand what is specific about Canadian political institutions.

Required Readings

All the other readings are listed below and available online through the McGill library system, MyCourses, or the stated URL.
Course Requirements

There are five requirements: two short-answer quizzes held in class during the semester on October 2 and November 13, respectively; conference attendance and participation; available conference times to be listed, and can be registered for, on Minerva; a take home essay (1000-1200 words) due on December 3 addressing a topic chosen by the instructor. The questions for the take home essay will be distributed on November 27. The essay should be double-spaced and formatted using Chicago Style, with in-text citations (author/year system). The fifth requirement is the Final Exam held during the formal exam period after the end of classes.

Grade Distribution

First Short-Answer Quiz 15%
Second Short-Answer Quiz 15%
Take Home Essay: 15%
Conference Attendance and Participation 15%
Final Exam 40%

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maitrise d’une langue).

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity).
Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction: The Institutionalist Perspective (September 4, 6)

Malcolmson, xi-xv


Week 2: Regime and Constitution (September 9, 11, 13)

Malcolmson, pp. 3-34.


Week 3: Responsible Government (September 16, 18)

Malcolmson, pp. 37-57.


Week 4: The Charter (September 23, 25)

Malcolmson, pp. 80-99.


**Week 5: The Courts (September 30, October 2, 4 [quiz 1])**

Guest speaker: Professor Christopher Manfredi (September 30)

Malcolmson, pp. 145-166.


**Week 6: Parliament (October 7, 9, 11)**

Guest speaker: former MP Laurin Liu (October 9)

Malcolmson, pp. 123-144.


**Week 7: The Crown and Public Service (October 14: no class [Thanksgiving], October 16)**

Malcolmson, pp. 103-122.


Week 8: Elections (October 21, 23)


Week 9: Political Parties (October 28, 30)

Malcolmson, pp. 194-214.


Week 10: Public Policy and Health Care (November 4, 6)

Guest speaker: Professor Antonia Maioni (November 6)

Malcolmson, pp. 215-239.


**Week 11: Public Policy and Diversity (November 11, 13, 15 [quiz 2])**

Guest speaker: Kelly Gordon (November 11)


**Week 12: The Attorney General and the Politics of Prosecution (November 18, 20, 22)**

Guest Speaker: Professor Irving Cotler (November 18)


Week 13: Federalism (November 25, 27; questions for the take home essay distributed on November 27)

Malcolmson, pp. 58-79.


Week 14: Looking Forward, Looking Backward (December 2, 3; take home essay due on December 3)

Guest speaker: Christa Scholtz (December 2)