

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

Fall 2023 (Section 1)

### **Course Outline**

#### **Instructor**

Daniel Béland [he/him], James McGill Professor in the Department of Political Science and Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada.

**Class Times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:05 pm to 5:25 pm. Conferences will take place during weeks 3 to 9, and 11 to 13; room information for the conferences TBA. Please note that the lectures will not be recorded. However, the PowerPoint slides used during the lectures will be posted on MyCourses.

**Classroom:** Strathcona Anatomy and Dentistry Building M-1.

**Office Hours:** after each lecture from 5:30 to 6:30 pm.

**Office:** Ferrier 102a [to access the office use the stairs located outside the Ferrier building, next to the James Administration Building: <https://maps.mcgill.ca/>]

**Email:** [daniel.beland@mcgill.ca](mailto:daniel.beland@mcgill.ca) **Twitter [X]:** @danielbeland **Instagram:** belanddaniel

#### **Teaching Assistants**

TBA

#### **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 Reading**

Patrick Malcolmson et al. 2021. *The Canadian Regime: An Introduction to Parliamentary Government in Canada, Seventh Edition*; referred to as “Malcolmson” below; hard copies available at McGill Bookstore; electronic copies available for purchase on the University of Toronto Press website: <https://utorontopress.com/9781487525378/the-canadian-regime/>. All the other readings are listed below and available online through the McGill library system, MyCourses, or the stated URL.

## **Course Assignments**

There are three written assignments: an in-class midterm exam; a short argumentative take-home essay (700-800 words) addressing the topic selected by the instructor, and a final exam, which will take place in person during the official exam period. All the assignments should be double-spaced and formatted using Chicago Style with in-text citations (author/year system); the strict word limit of 800 for the take-home essay excludes the references, which should be listed separately at the end of the document. Please do not share your essay with classmates ahead of submission. *University rules about cheating and plagiarism will be strictly enforced.* Finally, a five percent mark is allocated for conference attendance and participation (i.e., students showing up regularly and well-prepared so that they can discuss the readings with the TA and their peers).

## **Grade Distribution**

Midterm Exam: 30%

Short Essay: 25%

Final Exam: 40%

Conference attendance and participation: 5%

## **Extraordinary Circumstances**

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

## **Copyright**

All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

## **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.

*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 maîtrise 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/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for

more information). *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>).*

## **Land Acknowledgement**

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

### Week 1: Introduction (August 31)

### Week 2: Regime and Constitution (September 5, 7)

Malcolmson, Preface to the Seventh Edition, Chapter One, and Chapter Two

Russell, Peter H. 2010. "Constitution" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, pp. 21-38. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Stein, Michael B. 1997. "Improving the Process of Constitutional Reform in Canada: Lessons from the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Constitutional Rounds," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 30(2): 307-338. Reading available on MyCourses.

### Week 3: Responsible Government (September 12, 14) [Add/Drop Deadline: September 12]

Malcolmson, Chapter Three

Savoie, Donald J. 1999. "The Rise of Court Government in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 32(4): pp. 635-664. Reading available on MyCourses.

Heard, Andrew. 2009. "The Governor General's Decision to Prorogue Parliament: A Chronology and Assessment," *Constitutional Forum*, 18(1): 1-11.  
[https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/constitutional\\_forum/index.php/constitutional\\_forum/article/view/10914/8412](https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/constitutional_forum/index.php/constitutional_forum/article/view/10914/8412)

### Week 4: The Crown and Public Service (September 19, 21)

Virtual guest speaker: Former Clerk of Privy Council Mel Cappe

Malcolmson, Chapter Four

Lagassé, Philippe. 2013. "The Crown, the Sovereign, and Elizabeth II." [blog entry]  
<https://lagasse.com/2013/07/28/the-crown-the-sovereign-and-elizabeth-ii/>

Lagassé, Philippe. 2020. "Disciplining and Dismissing Governors General." [blog entry]  
<https://lagasse.com/2020/07/21/disciplining-and-dismissing-governors-general/>

Smith, Jennifer and Marcella Firmini. 2017. "The Crown in Canada" in Peter Oliver, Patrick Macklem, and Nathalie Des Rosiers (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Canadian Constitution*. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Molot, Henry L. 2010. "The Public Service of Canada" in Christopher Dunn (ed.), *The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration* (Second Edition). Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 55-74. Reading available on MyCourses.

#### Week 5: The Charter (September 26, 28)

Malcolmson, Chapter Nine

Hiebert, Janet. L. 2010. "The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, pp. 54-71. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Hogg, Peter W. 2001-2002. "The Charter Revolution: Is it Undemocratic?" *Constitutional Forum*, 12 (1-3), pp. 1-8.

[https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/constitutional\\_forum/index.php/constitutional\\_forum/article/view/11067/8507](https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/constitutional_forum/index.php/constitutional_forum/article/view/11067/8507)

Russell, Peter H. 2007. "The notwithstanding clause: the Charter's homage to parliamentary democracy," *Policy Options*, February 1. <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/assets/po/the-charter-25/russell.pdf>

#### Week 6 Parliament (October 3)

Virtual guest speakers: Former MP Laurin Liu and Former Senator André Pratte

Malcolmson, Chapter Five

Thomas, Paul. G. 2010. "Parliament and Legislatures: Central to Canadian Democracy?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, pp. 153-171. Available online through the McGill Library website.

O'Brian, Gary William. 2018. "Understanding Canadian Bicameralism: Past, Present and Future," Presented at the 2018 Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association (Regina). <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/conference/2018/1214.O%27Brien.pdf>

#### Week 7: The Courts (October 12)

In-class guest speaker: Senator Marc Gold (October 12)

Malcolmson, Chapter Ten

Kelly, James B. and Christopher Manfredi. 2010. "Courts" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, pp. 39-53. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Cairns Way, Rosemary. 2017. "Reforming Judicial Appointments: Change and Challenge," *University of New Brunswick Law Journal*, 68: 18-29. Reading available on MyCourses.

Levin, Avner and Asher Alkoby. "Shouldn't the bench be a mirror? The diversity of the Canadian judiciary," *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, 26(1): 69-88. Reading available on MyCourses.

Week 8: Elections (October 19)

Virtual guest speaker: Professor John Courtney

Malcolmson, Chapter Six

Marotta, Sebastian. 2015. *Can the U.S. Solve Gerrymandering? Lessons from Unlikely Sources*. Washington, DC: The Wilson Center.

[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/article/ci\\_150825\\_internpapers\\_marotta\\_v1.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/article/ci_150825_internpapers_marotta_v1.pdf)

Courtney, John C. 2001. "Drawing the Maps" in *Commissioned Ridings: Designing Canada's Electoral Districts*. McGill-Queen's University Press, pp. 74-93. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Week 9: Political Parties (Midterm on October 24; October 26)

Malcolmson, Chapter Seven

Johnston, Richard. 2010. "Political Parties and the Electoral System" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, pp. 208-225. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Pruysers, Scott and William Cross. 2016. "Candidate Selection in Canada: Local Autonomy, Centralization, and Competing Democratic Norms," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(7), 781-798. Reading available on MyCourses.

Week 10: Federalism (October 31, November 2; topic for short essay posted on MyCourses on October 31)

Malcolmson, Chapter Eight

Smith, David E. 2010. "Canada: A Double Federation" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, pp. 75-91. Available online through the McGill Library website.

Lecours, André. 2017. "Dynamic De/Centralization in Canada, 1867-2010," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 49(1), pp. 57-83. Reading available on MyCourses.

Week 11: Equalization, Fiscal Federalism, and Health Care (November 7, 9)

Béland, Daniel, André Lecours, Gregory P. Marchildon, Haizhen Mou, and Rose Olfert. 2017. *Fiscal Federalism and Equalization Policy in Canada: Political and Economic Dimensions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1-52. Electronic version of the book available on McGill library website; search for book title before downloading chapter.

Maioni, Antonia. 1997. "Parting at the Crossroads: The Development of Health Insurance in Canada and the United States, 1940-1965," *Comparative Politics*, 29(4): 411-431. Reading available on MyCourses.

Martin, Danielle, Ashley P Miller, Amélie Quesnel-Vallée, Nadine R Caron, Bilkis Vissandjée, and Gregory P Marchildon. 2018. "Canada's Universal Health- Care System: Achieving its Potential," *The Lancet*, 391: 1718–1735. URL: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30181-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30181-8/fulltext)

Week 12: Employment Insurance, Welfare, and Poverty (November 14, 16)

Geoffrey E. Hale. 1998. "Reforming Employment Insurance: Transcending the Politics of the Status Quo," *Canadian Public Policy*, 24(4): 429-451. PDF available on MyCourses.

Gerard W. Boychuk. 2015. "Federal Policies, National Trends, and Provincial Systems: A Comparative Analysis of Recent Developments in Social Assistance in Canada, 1990-2013" in Daniel Béland and Pierre-Marc Daigneault (eds.), *Welfare Reform in Canada: Provincial Social Assistance in Comparative Perspective*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 35-52. Electronic version of the book available on McGill library website; search for book title before downloading chapter.

Plante, Charles. 2019. "Policy or window dressing? Exploring the impact of poverty reduction strategies on poverty among the Canadian provinces," *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 35(1): 112-136. PDF available on MyCourses.

Week 13: From COVID-19 to the Politics of Gender (November 21, 23; **short essay due on MyCourses on November 23 by 11:59 pm**)

In-class guest speaker: Professor Kelly Gordon

Béland, Daniel, André Lecours, Mireille Paquet and Trevor Tombe. 2020. "A Critical Juncture in Fiscal Federalism? Canada's Response to COVID-19," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. <https://bit.ly/2X0bZ5r>

Daniel Béland, Shannon Dinan, Philip Rocco, and Alex Waddan. 2021. "Social Policy Responses to COVID-19 in Canada and the United States: Explaining Policy Variations Between Two Liberal Welfare State Regimes," *Social Policy & Administration*, 55(2): 280-294. Reading available on MyCourses.

hooks, bell. 2015. *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. London: Routledge (Introduction and Chapter 1). Reading available on MyCourses.

Week 14: Diversity, Inequality, and Public Policy (November 28 and 30)

In-class guest speakers: Professor Debra Thompson and Professor Christa Scholtz

Banting, Keith and Debra Thompson. 2021. "The Puzzling Persistence of Racial Inequality in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. doi:10.1017/S0008423921000585 Reading available on MyCourses.

Zach Parrott. 2022. "Indian Act," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.  
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act>

Week 15: Review (December 5)

No readings.

**Final Exam**: official time, date, and location to be announced later during semester.