

POLI 226 – La vie politique québécoise

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Wednesdays & Fridays
10:05 AM-11:25 AM
Trottier 1080

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 PM, or by appointment

Description

This course offers an introduction to Quebec politics looking at institutions, ideologies and political behaviour. Part I presents the main ideological elements that have shaped Quebec politics up to this day. Part II offers an overview of the recent evolution in Quebec's political life and addresses contemporary debates about the character and quality of democratic life in Quebec, analyzing those issues using the conceptual tools developed in Part I. (An ability to read French is helpful but not required.)

Structure

Classes will mostly consist of lectures. In addition, extended clips from three film documentaries on Quebec politics will be presented: *Québec My Country Mon Pays* (January 19), *Breaking Point* (January 31), and *A License to Remember* (February 7).

Evaluation

Midterm exam: 25%. Essay questions (on Part I). February 14, location TBA.

Research paper: 35%. Due on April 10 before midnight. Must be no more than 3,000 words in length and submitted as a PDF document on MyCourses. Must be written either alone or with one partner. The topic of the essay must be chosen among a list of specific contemporary themes relating to Quebec politics, using one recent text from *L'état du Québec* (provided on MyCourses) as a starting point. (More details will be provided in class.) A penalty of 5% (1.75 point) off per 24-hour period late applies, including weekends.

Final exam: 40%. Essay questions (covering the entire syllabus with a particular emphasis on Part II). The exam will be scheduled by the university during the regular examination period (April 15-30).

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.

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 [McGill's Guide to Academic Honesty](#) for more information).

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.

Required Readings

Most of the required readings can be accessed through the links provided. Readings that are not available via links to the Library are available on MyCourses. The remaining readings are to be found in the following **two books**: Stéphan Gervais, Christopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy (eds.), [Quebec Questions, 2nd ed.](#), Oxford University Press, 2016 (**required**); and Éric Bélanger et al., [Le nouvel électeur québécois](#), PUM, 2022 (**suggested**). Electronic and paperback copies of the books are available for purchase via the Le James Bookstore.

Course Outline

Week 1: **Introduction** (January 5)

Part I – Historical and Political Context

Week 2: **The Evolution of Political Ideologies** (January 10-12)

Political ideologies in Quebec • Emancipation and the Patriot movement • Survivance, the Church, and the Duplessis regime • Rattrapage

QQ: chapters 2, 3, and 4

Rioux, “The Development of Ideologies in Quebec,” in *A Passion for Identity* (1993) (available on MyCourses)

Week 3: **The Rise of Neo-Nationalism** (January 17-19)

Citélbrists versus neo-nationalists • The Quiet Revolution

McRoberts, “[The Quiet Revolution: The New Ideology of the Quebec State](#),” in *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis* (1993)

Trudeau, “[New Treason of the Intellectuals](#),” in *Federalism and the French Canadians* (1968)

Aquin, “[The Cultural Fatigue of French Canada](#),” in *Contemporary Quebec Criticism* (1979)

Week 4: **Quebec Within the Canadian Federation** (January 24-26)
Competing visions of Quebec's place within Canada • Federal-Quebec relations since the 1960s • The 1980 referendum

Dion, "[Tradition and Progress](#)," in *Quebec: The Unfinished Revolution* (1976)

Martel, Coates, Pâquet and Gohier, "[Quebec and Confederation: Gains and Compromise](#)," in *Reconsidering Confederation* (2018)

Week 5: **The Constitutional Debate and Beyond** (January 31-February 2)
The 1982 repatriation • Meech and Charlottetown • The 1995 referendum and its aftermaths • The current period

QQ: chapter 18

McRoberts, "[The 1995 Quebec Referendum](#)," in *Misconceiving Canada* (1997)

Week 6: **The Question of "Québécois" Identity** (February 7-9)
Defining the nation • Collective memory • Pluralism and citizenship

QQ: chapters 5 and 6

Week 7: Midterm exam (February 14) (location TBA)

February 16: In-class presentation by Political Science Librarian Hye-jin Juhn on using the university library for your research.

Part II – Contemporary Democratic Issues

Week 8: **Political Parties and Voting Behaviour** (February 21-23)
The party system • The electoral system • Voting behaviour

Bélanger et al., *Le nouvel électeur québécois* (2022)

Week 9: **Public Opinion and Social Movements** (February 28-March 1st)
Sovereignty support • The labour movement • Women's movement • New social movements

QQ: chapters 14, 19, and 20

Collombat and Noiseux, "[Le syndicalisme est-il un groupe de pression?](#)," in *Groupes d'intérêt et mouvements sociaux* (2017)

Week 10: Study break

Week 11: Language Politics (March 13-15)

The language crisis • Liberal and PQ language policies • The francisation process: immigrants, business and workplace

QQ: chapters 10, 11, and 12

Week 12: Community Relations (March 20-22)

Anglophones • Indigenous Peoples • Interculturalism and laïcité

QQ: chapters 15, 16, and 25

Stevenson, "[English-Speaking Québec: A Political History](#)," in *Quebec: State and Society* (2008)

Week 13: Governance and Public Policy (March 27-April 3)

The "Quebec model" • Neocorporatism • New Public Management

QQ: chapters 21, 22, and 23

Week 14: Quebec and the World (April 5)

Quebec's foreign relations • Economic partnerships across the globe

QQ: chapters 26 and 27

No class on April 10-12 (online submission of paper due April 10)

Final exam (exact date to be announced)