

MCGILL UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLI-412: VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND PUBLIC OPINION

Professor Elisabeth L. Gidengil  
Office Hours (on Zoom): Monday 4:00 to 5:00 and Friday 9:00 to 10:00  
Meeting ID: 720 103 5245  
Passcode: 306247

Fall 2021

e-mail: [elisabeth.gidengil@mcgill](mailto:elisabeth.gidengil@mcgill)

---

---

This course is organized around a series of debates about the factors that shape voting behaviour and public opinion in Canada. We will examine these debates in the light of experiences in recent Canadian federal elections. The course assignments are designed to encourage you to relate your readings to real-world dilemmas in electoral politics. This is a 400-level course and so you are expected to have done the readings and to come to class prepared to discuss the material.

---

---

Polling will be used in this course to enhance engagement and facilitate learning. It will also be used to calculate your participation grade. During a class with polling questions, you will respond to questions using your smartphone, tablet, or laptop. Be sure to come to class with your devices charged and connected to the Internet. Polling will be available through [www.mcgill.ca/polling](http://www.mcgill.ca/polling). If you do not have a phone, tablet, or laptop to use to respond to polling questions, please talk to me immediately in order for appropriate arrangements to be made. If you have a hearing, visual or mobility impairment that limits your ability to participate in polling, you should also contact me immediately (in advance of any evaluations or other class requirements) in order that appropriate arrangements can be made. **In order to receive credit for polling, you must ensure that your device is registered before the end of drop/add.** Please see the instructions at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/polling/>

---

---

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. Please do not hesitate to let me know if any reading is unavailable.

---

---

## TOPIC 1: Foundations—Models of Voting Behaviour

Cameron Anderson and Laura B. Stephenson (2010) “The Puzzle of Elections and Voting in Canada.” In Cameron Anderson and Laura Stephenson, eds., *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 2-14 (MyCourses)

Harold Clarke, Allan Kornberg and Thomas Scotto (2009) *Making Political Choices: Canada and the United States*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 18-24 (MyCourses)

## TOPIC 2: The Class Voting Paradox

Elisabeth Gidengil (2002) “The Class Voting Conundrum.” In Douglas Baer, ed., *Political Sociology: Canadian Perspectives*, Don Mills, Oxford University Press, pp. 274-287  
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/mcgill/reader.action?docID=10334764&ppg=274>

Barry Kay and Andrea Perrella (2012) “Eclipse of Class: A Review of Demographic Variables, 1974-2006.” In Mebs Kanji, Antoine Bilodeau and Thomas J. Scotto, eds., *The Canadian Election Studies: Assessing Four Decades of Influence*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. (MyCourses)

## TOPIC 3: The Religious Paradox

André Blais (2005) “Accounting for the Success of the Liberal Party of Canada.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38(4): 821-40  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/25165882?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25165882?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

William P. Irvine (1974) “Explaining the Religious Basis of the Canadian Partisan Identity: Success on the Third Try.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7: 560-3  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/3231231?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3231231?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

David Morton Rayside, Jerald Sabin and Paul E.J. Thomas (2017) *Religion and Canadian Party Politics* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. Introduction, pp. 3-35. E-Book available via the Library

<https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks3/upress/2017-07-24/1/9780774835602>

Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme (2016) “The Changing Religious Cleavage in Canadians’ Voting Behaviour.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 49(3): 499-518.  
[https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/722E9263E96AC1BEAF07AF185FBABF20/S0008423916000834a.pdf/chan\\_ging\\_religious\\_cleavage\\_in\\_canadians\\_voting\\_behaviour.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/722E9263E96AC1BEAF07AF185FBABF20/S0008423916000834a.pdf/chan_ging_religious_cleavage_in_canadians_voting_behaviour.pdf)

## TOPIC 4: New Canadians and Racialized Minorities: Still the Bedrock of Liberal Support?

Black, Jerome H. (2011) “Immigrant and Minority Political Incorporation in Canada: A Review With Some Reflections on Canadian-American Comparison Possibilities.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 55(9): 1160-88

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764211407843?journalCode=absb&volume=55&year=2011&issue=9>

André Blais (2005) “Accounting for the Success of the Liberal Party of Canada.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38(4): 821-840 (see Topic 3)  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/25165882?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25165882?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Allison Harell (2013) “Revisiting the ‘Ethnic’ Vote: Liberal Allegiance and Vote Choice among Racialized Minorities.” In Amanda Bittner and Royce Koop, eds., *Parties, Elections and the Future of Canadian Politics*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. (MyCourses)

#### TOPIC 5: Territorial Divides

Elisabeth Gidengil, André Blais, Neil Nevitte and Richard Nadeau (1999) “Making Sense of Regional Voting in the 1997 Federal Election: Liberal and Reform Support Outside Quebec.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 32: 247-72.  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/3232842?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3232842?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

David McGrane, Loleen Berdahl and Scott Bell (2016) “Moving Beyond the Urban/Rural Cleavage: Measuring Values and Policy Preferences Across Residential Zones in Canada.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 1-23.  
[https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/juaf.12294?casa\\_token=eMSFJfYxKcUAAAAA:fxpPsO8-6O2dodHKWRXzIndSn\\_eF5nW-v6oGONNJpexGI0Ne1HLfrHGAeMteKaKZT1nLyxsBWrV0OII](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/juaf.12294?casa_token=eMSFJfYxKcUAAAAA:fxpPsO8-6O2dodHKWRXzIndSn_eF5nW-v6oGONNJpexGI0Ne1HLfrHGAeMteKaKZT1nLyxsBWrV0OII)

R. Alan Walks (2004) “Place of Residence, Party Preferences and Political Attitudes in Canadian Cities and Suburbs.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26(3): 269-95  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0735-2166.2004.00200.x/abstract>

#### TOPIC 6: The “Gender Gap”

Elisabeth Gidengil, Joanna Everitt, André Blais, Patrick Fournier and Neil Nevitte (2013) “Explaining the Modern Gender Gap.” In Robert Lexier and Tamara Small, eds., *Mind the Gaps: Canadian Perspectives on Gender and Politics*, Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, pp. 48-63. (MyCourses)

Rosalind Shorrock. 2018. “Cohort Change in Political Gender Gaps in Europe and Canada: The Role of Modernization.” *Politics & Society* 46(2):135–175. <https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/doi/10.1177/0032329217751688>

#### TOPIC 7: Are Canadians Ideological?

Ronald D. Lambert, James E. Curtis, Steven D. Brown, and Barry J. Kay (1986) “In Search of Left/Right Beliefs in the Canadian Electorate.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 19: 541-63  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/3227703?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3227703?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Michael Lusztig and J. Matthew Wilson (2005) "A New Right? Moral Issues and Partisan Change in Canada." *Social Science Quarterly* 86(1): 109-28  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0038-4941.2005.00293.x/abstract>

TOPIC 8: Are Canadians Partisans?

Harold D. Clarke, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc, and Jon H. Pammett (1996) *Absent Mandate: Canadian Electoral Politics in an Era of Restructuring*, Vancouver: Gage, pp. 50-69 (MyCourses)

Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Joanna Everitt and Patrick Fournier (2012) *Dominance and Decline: Making Sense of Recent Canadian Elections*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, chapter 4 (MyCourses)

TOPIC 9: Do Canadians Vote their Pocketbooks?

Cameron Anderson (2010) "Economic Voting in Canada." In Cameron Anderson and Laura Stephenson, eds., *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 139-58 (MyCourses)

Richard Nadeau, André Blais, Neil Nevitte and Elisabeth Gidengil (2000) "It's Unemployment, Stupid! Why Perceptions about the Job Situation Hurt the Liberals in the 1997 Election." *Canadian Public Policy* 26: 77-94.  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/3552257?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3552257?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Recommended (If you are interested in voting behaviour in Quebec)

Daoust, Jean-François, and Ruth Dassonneville. 2018. "Beyond Nationalism and Regionalism: The Stability of Economic Voting in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadienne de Science Politique*, 1-19.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/canadian-journal-of-political-science-revue-canadienne-de-science-politique/article/beyond-nationalism-and-regionalism-the-stability-of-economic-voting-in-canada/6E8D9AD7B6B1655F0A52981A24B41BD7>

TOPIC 10: Do Issues Matter?

Éric Bélanger and Bonnie Meguid (2008) "Issue Saliency, Issue Ownership and Issue-Based Vote Choice." *Electoral Studies* 27(3): 477-91.  
[http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379408000024?\\_rdoc=1&\\_fmt=high&\\_orig=gateway&\\_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aeaa92ffb](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379408000024?_rdoc=1&_fmt=high&_orig=gateway&_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aeaa92ffb)

André Blais, Mathieu Turgeon, Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte and Richard Nadeau (2004) "Which Matters Most? Comparing the Impact of Issues and the Economy in American, British and Canadian Elections." *British Journal of Political Science* 34(3): 355-63.  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/4092334?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4092334?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

## TOPIC 11: Are Canadian Elections Leader-Centered?

Amanda Bittner (2010) "Personality Matters: The Evaluation of Party Leaders in Canadian Elections." In Cameron D. Anderson and Laura B. Stephenson, eds., *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press (MyCourses)

Amanda Bittner (2018) Leaders always mattered: The persistence of personality in Canadian elections. *Electoral Studies* 54: 297-302

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379417301865>

Harold D. Clarke, Timothy B. Gravelle, Thomas J. Scotto, Marianne C. Stewart and Jason Reifler (2017) Like father, like son: Justin Trudeau and valence voting in Canada's 2015 federal election. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50(3): 701-707.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ps-political-science-and-politics/article/like-father-like-son-justin-trudeau-and-valence-voting-in-canadas-2015-federal-election/65377CF9C2236A5CA7BA471224E91C97>

Richard Johnston, "Prime Ministerial Contenders in Canada." In *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcomes of Democratic Elections*. ed. Anthony King (Oxford University Press: 2002): 158-83

<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0199253137.001.0001/acprof-9780199253135-chapter-6>

## TOPIC 12 Do Canadians Vote Strategically?

André Blais (2002) "Why Is There So Little Strategic Voting in Canadian Plurality Rule Elections?" *Political Studies* 50(3): 445-454

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9248.00378?journalCode=psxa&volume=50&year=2002&issue=3>

Jean-Francois Daoust (2019) "Support for Minority Government and Strategic Voting." In Laura Stephenson, Andre Blais and John Aldrich, eds., *The Many Faces of Strategic Voting: Tactical Behavior In Electoral Systems Around the World*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 75-88. E-book available via the Library:

[https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/v2/search?datasource=library\\_web\\_fields&search=true&scope=wz%3A12129&clusterResults=on&func=find-b&topLod=0&queryString=many+faces+of+strategic+voting&find=Go](https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/v2/search?datasource=library_web_fields&search=true&scope=wz%3A12129&clusterResults=on&func=find-b&topLod=0&queryString=many+faces+of+strategic+voting&find=Go)

## TOPIC 13: Do Campaigns Matter?

Aengus Bridgman, Costin Ciobanu, Aaron Erlich, Danielle Bohonos, and Christopher Ross (2021) "Unveiling: An Unexpected Mid-campaign Court Ruling's Consequences and the Limits of Following the Leader." *The Journal of Politics*

[https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/711177?casa\\_token=GHkSrnZbc0AAAAA:McShyAEOPpyM4Qz5UBXuVB8udpVI4bqvI9yoQXIY2Y73Dn42sD6dtKv2tAE8yKfU-7-t6kkxUj3](https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/711177?casa_token=GHkSrnZbc0AAAAA:McShyAEOPpyM4Qz5UBXuVB8udpVI4bqvI9yoQXIY2Y73Dn42sD6dtKv2tAE8yKfU-7-t6kkxUj3)

Patrick Fournier, Richard Nadeau, André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil and Neil Nevitte (2004) "Time-of-Voting Decision and Susceptibility to Campaign Effects." *Electoral Studies* 23: 661-81.

[http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379403000751?\\_rdoc=1&\\_fmt=high&\\_origin=gateway&\\_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aea92ffb](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379403000751?_rdoc=1&_fmt=high&_origin=gateway&_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aea92ffb)

#### TOPIC 14: The Impact of the Media

Dobrzynska, Agnieszka, André Blais & Richard Nadeau (2003). "Do the media have a direct impact on the vote? The case of the 1997 Canadian election." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 15: 27-43. [https://academic.oup.com/ijpor/search-results?rg\\_ArticleDate=2003&fd\\_Volume=15&fd\\_IssueNo=1&fd\\_StartPage=27](https://academic.oup.com/ijpor/search-results?rg_ArticleDate=2003&fd_Volume=15&fd_IssueNo=1&fd_StartPage=27)

[https://academic.oup.com/ijpor/search-results?rg\\_ArticleDate=2003&fd\\_Volume=15&fd\\_IssueNo=1&fd\\_StartPage=27](https://academic.oup.com/ijpor/search-results?rg_ArticleDate=2003&fd_Volume=15&fd_IssueNo=1&fd_StartPage=27)

Marsha Barber (2008) "Getting the Picture: Airtime and Lineup Bias on Canadian Networks during the 2006 Federal Election" *Canadian Journal of Communication* 33(4): 621-37

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/219599026?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:wcdiscovery&accountid=12339>

#### TOPIC 15 Political Knowledge and Vote Choice

Amanda Bittner (2013) "Coping with Political Flux: The Impact of Information on Voters' Perceptions of the Political Landscape, 1988-2011." In Amanda Bittner and Royce Koop, eds., *Parties, Elections and the Future of Canadian Politics*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press (MyCourses)

Elisabeth Gidengil, André Blais, Neil Nevitte, and Richard Nadeau, *Citizens* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), Chapters 3 and 4 <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=10130602>

Jason Roy (2009) "Voter Heterogeneity: Informational Differences in Voting." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42: 117-37

[http://www.jstor.org/stable/27754442?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27754442?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

#### TOPIC 16: Who Abstains from Voting and Why?

André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte and Richard Nadeau (2004) "Where Does Turnout Decline Come From?" *European Journal of Political Research* 43: 221-36.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2004.00152.x/abstract>

Brenda O'Neill (2003) "Examining Declining Electoral Turnout among Canada's Youth," *Electoral Insight* 5(2)

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=eim/issue8&document=p4&lang=e>

Paul Howe, "Electoral Participation and the Knowledge Deficit," *Electoral Insight* Vol. 5, No. 2, (July, 2003), pp. 20-25.

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=eim/issue8&document=p5&lang=e>

Daniel Rubenson, André Blais, Patrick Fournier, Elisabeth Gidengil and Neil Nevitte, "Accounting for the Age Gap in Turnout." *Acta Politica* (2004) 39: 407–421  
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/217165843?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:wcdiscovery&accountid=12339>

#### TOPIC 17: Indigenous Peoples and Electoral Participation

Loleen Berdahl, Greg Poelzer and Bonita Beatty, "Aboriginal Turnout in Northern Saskatchewan." *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 2(1) (2012): 26-41  
<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/aps/index.php/aps/article/viewFile/11741/pdf>

Patrick Fournier and Peter Loewen, *Aboriginal Electoral Participation in Canada*. Elections Canada (2011) [http://www.elections.ca/res/rec/part/abel/aep\\_en.pdf](http://www.elections.ca/res/rec/part/abel/aep_en.pdf)

Allison Harell, Dimitrios Panagos and J. Scott Matthews, *Explaining Aboriginal Turnout in Federal Elections: Evidence from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba*. In *Aboriginal Policy Research: Voting, Governance and Research Methodology*, eds. Jerry White, Julie Peters, Dan Beavon, and Peter Dinsdale. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing (2011): 3–24  
<http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1407&context=aprci>

Kiera Ladner and Michael McCrossan, *The Electoral Participation of Aboriginal People*. Elections Canada, Working Paper Series on Electoral Participation and Outreach Practices (2007) [http://elections.ca/res/rec/part/paper/aboriginal/aboriginal\\_e.pdf](http://elections.ca/res/rec/part/paper/aboriginal/aboriginal_e.pdf)

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

#### GRADE BREAKDOWN

Op ed. (due date: on or before October 5, 2021): 15%

Response to op ed. (due date: on or before October 28, 2021): 5%

Project: (November 25, 2021): 40%

Exam I (October 19, 2021): 15%

Exam II: (December 1, 2021): 20%

Participation (as measured through polling) 5%

Note: Each assignment is graded out of 100 marks. **A penalty of two marks per weekday will be subtracted for late submissions.** In the case of group projects, all members of the group will receive the same grade and each member must submit a signed statement confirming that s/he has contributed equally to the preparation of the report. **Failure to provide the required information on your proposed project by October 7 (see assignments) will result in a penalty of 10 marks.** There will also be a penalty of two marks per day for late submissions.

Both exams are essay format.

**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](#) (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

Since polling records will be used to compute a portion of your course grade, **responding as someone other than yourself is considered an academic offense**. Using the credentials of another student will be interpreted as intent to commit an academic offense. Please refer to McGill's policy on Academic Integrity and Code of Conduct. <http://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/plagiarism> <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest>. Also, please be aware that I can track responses to open-ended questions so be sure to respond responsibly (e.g. no obscenities, hate speech, etc.)

**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 maîtrise d'une langue.

**Recording:** No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

**Support for Students:** Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; many [resources](#) are available on-campus, off-campus and online. If you have difficulty affording food or if you lack a safe and stable place to live and believe that this may affect your performance in this course, I encourage you to contact the [Dean of Students](#) who can connect you with support services.

## Required Assignments

### 1. Op-ed (worth 15% of your final grade) Due date: on or before October 5, 2021

You will write an op-ed about a topic related to elections in Canada. Your op-ed **must** be between 900 and 1,000 words in length. You will express an opinion on your chosen topic that is substantiated by background research. Do not use footnotes, endnotes or in-text citations. Instead, use formats such as: "According to a 2019 Elections Canada report"; "A study by McGill professor Daniel Béland found that ..." You must list your sources at the end of your op-ed (this listing will **not** be included in the word count). You will be judged on the quality of your argument and your use of appropriate sources. A good op-ed not only argues in favour of some option but also anticipates and rebuts possible counter-arguments. Be sure to give your op-ed a catchy title. If you are not sure about the



appropriate format for an op-ed, consult the op-eds page of a reputable newspaper. Please include the word count at the end of your op-ed.

Possible topics could include: Should Canada institute compulsory voting? Should we lower the minimum voting age to 16? Should there be quotas for candidates from numerically underrepresented groups? Should Canada change its electoral system? Should third parties be allowed to advertise their views during election campaigns? Should there be public funding of political parties? Should there be limits on spending for party leadership campaigns? Should Canada move to online voting? You are welcome to write on other topics **subject to my approval**. The op-ed must be posted as a discussion topic on MyCourses.

## **2. Response to op-eds** (worth 5% of your grade) Due date: October 28, 2021

You will add a written comment on one of your colleagues' op-eds. The word count must be between 450 and 500 words. Your comment could expand on the arguments that have been made or could provide counter-arguments. Just be sure to treat the op-ed with respect and to substantiate your arguments. You should follow the guidelines regarding citations as laid out above. The response must be posted on MyCourses.

## **3. Project** (worth 40% of your final grade) Due date: November 25, 2021

You must choose from **ONE** of the options listed below. Whichever option you choose, you are strongly encouraged to consult with me well before the submission date in order to ensure that you hand in your best work. Please note that a Library workshop will be held on September 23 to provide tips on searching the literature on voting behaviour and public opinion. It will be led by Sandy Hervieux, the Political Science Area Librarian [sandy.hervieux@mcgill.ca](mailto:sandy.hervieux@mcgill.ca)

**NOTE:** You **MUST** provide the requested information by **October 7** (see below). Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 10 marks off the final grade for the assignment.

### **Option 1: Individual Term Paper**

You will write a term paper on a topic of your choice that relates to voting behaviour and public opinion in Canada. The term paper must be 12 to 15 pages double-spaced, excluding bibliographic references. Your paper should address a clear question, synthesize the academic literature on the topic and develop a well-reasoned response to your motivating question. You may choose, if you wish, to address your question by comparing Canada with another country. You are expected to do additional reading and research. You must provide citations for all sources that you have used. These should be cited in the text using the following format: (Smith, 2015: 96) with the full bibliographical reference appearing as an appendix to your report.

A preliminary bibliography and a brief (one to two paragraphs) summary of your proposed topic is due on **October 7**

## Option 2: Group Research Project

For this assignment, you will form teams of two to four members. You will formulate a research question and then conduct original research in order to come up with an answer. Your research method could involve the analysis of existing data (e.g. from the Canadian Election Studies <http://www.queensu.ca/cora/ces.html>) or statistics from official sources or the collection of your own data through e.g. interviews, a survey, a content analysis of election coverage. If your research will involve interaction with human participants, you **MUST** first obtain ethics certification. This is a relatively straightforward process but should be initiated as early in the term as possible in order to allow time for the approval process. Information is available at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/reb-i-ii-iii/submission-process>. **Please contact me soonest if you are going to need ethics certification.** I will assist you with the process.

Your report must identify a clear research question and must include a review of the relevant academic literature, an explanation of your research methods, an analysis of your findings and a concluding discussion. The length of your report will vary depending on the size of your team: two members (15 to 20 pages), three members (20 to 25 pages), four members (25 to 30 pages). These page lengths exclude bibliographic references. Pages must be double-spaced. You must provide citations for all sources that you have used. These should be cited in the text using the following format: (Smith, 2015: 96) with the full bibliographical reference appearing as an appendix to your report.

To do well on this project, it is particularly important that you consult with me. I will be happy to provide guidance but I can only do this constructively if you consult me well before the submission deadline and particularly while you are designing your research and analyzing your data.

You may assign responsibilities as you wish among team members. Every member of the team will receive the same grade for the written report and **must** submit a signed statement confirming that s/he has contributed equally to the preparation of the report.

A preliminary bibliography and a brief (one or two paragraphs) summary of your research question and proposed research method(s) is due on **October 7**.

## Option 3: Group Project (Party Strategist Option)

For this option you will form a team of four members. Each team will select one federal political party and then assume the role of campaign strategists preparing for the next federal election. Your team will prepare a report that draws on the academic literature to analyze the strategic challenges that confront your party and that recommends a strategy for the party as it prepares for the next election. The names of your team members and your choice of party are due on **October 7**.

In preparing your report, you will be expected to draw on what you have learned during the course from both class discussions and course readings. You are also expected to do

additional reading and research. You must provide citations for all sources that you have used. These should be cited in the text using the following format: (Smith, 2015: 96) with the full bibliographical reference appearing as an appendix to your report. Be sure to provide supporting evidence for your analyses and recommendations and to explain and justify any assumptions that you are making. You are welcome to consult me about sources and, of course, to discuss your ideas as you work on the project. The expected length is 25 to 30 pages, double-spaced, excluding the bibliographical references. You may assign responsibilities as you wish among team members. Every member of the team will receive the same grade for the written report and **must** submit a signed statement confirming that s/he has contributed equally to the preparation of the report.

#### **Option 4: Group project (Media Analyst Option)**

For this option you will form a team of four members. Each team will select one region of Canada (Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, British Columbia) and then assume the role of media analysts preparing for the next federal election. Your team will prepare a report that draws on the academic literature to analyze the strategic challenges that confront each party in your region and to assess each party's electoral prospects. The names of your team members and your choice of region are due on **October 7**.

In preparing your report, you will be expected to draw on what you have learned during the course from both class discussions and course readings. You are also expected to do additional reading and research. You must provide citations for all sources that you have used. These should be cited in the text using the following format: (Smith, 2015: 96) with the full bibliographical reference appearing as an appendix to your report. Be sure to provide supporting evidence for your analyses and recommendations and to explain and justify any assumptions that you are making. You are welcome to consult me about sources and, of course, to discuss your ideas as you work on the project. The expected length is 25 to 30 pages, double-spaced, excluding the bibliographical references. You may assign responsibilities as you wish among team members. Every member of the team will receive the same grade and **must** submit a signed statement confirming that s/he has contributed equally to the preparation of the report.