

POLI 426 – Partis politiques et comportements électoraux au Québec

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Wednesdays & Fridays
10:05 AM-11:25 AM
Macdonald Engineering 280

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00-3:30 PM, or by appointment

Description

This course examines Quebec political parties and party systems, stressing patterns of historical development. The course then explores various theoretical accounts of Quebecers' voting behaviour at the provincial, federal, and municipal levels. It concludes by addressing current challenges involving political parties and electoral behaviour in Quebec.

(Prerequisites: POLI 221 or POLI 222 or POLI 226, or permission of instructor. Listening and writing comprehension of French are also required.)

Structure

Classes will mostly consist of lectures and discussions. In addition, two film documentaries, *Le PQ, l'affaire d'une génération?* and *À contre-courant*, will be presented during Weeks 4 and 5.

Evaluation

Participation: 10%.

Research paper proposal: 10%. Due on February 10 before midnight, to be submitted on MyCourses. Must be no more than 500 words in length. Note that students are encouraged to consult with the professor via email or during office hours before finalizing their paper topics.

Research paper: 40%. Due on April 13 before midnight, to be submitted on MyCourses. Must be no more than 5,000 words in length. Must be written either alone or in pairs. (More details will be provided in class.) Late papers will be assigned a penalty of 5% (2 points) per day including weekends.

Final exam: 40%. Essay questions (covering the entire syllabus). The exam will be scheduled by the university during the regular examination period (April 14-28).

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 **four books**: Réjean Pelletier (ed.), [Les partis politiques québécois dans la tourmente](#), PUL, 2012; Frédérick Bastien, Éric Bélanger, and François Gélinau (eds.), [Les Québécois aux urnes](#), PUM, 2013; Éric Bélanger, Jean-François Daoust, Valérie-Anne Mahéo and Richard Nadeau, [Le nouvel électeur québécois](#), PUM, 2022; Éric Bélanger, Cameron D. Anderson, and R. Michael McGregor (eds.), [Voting in Quebec Municipal Elections](#), UTP, 2022 (all books are available as electronic versions and can also be accessed through McGill WorldCat; the paperback versions are available for purchase at the Le James Bookstore).

Course Outline

- Week 1:** **Introduction** (January 6)
 [No class on January 4]
- Week 2:** [No class on January 11-13]
- Week 3:** **The Provincial Party System and the PLQ** (January 18-20)
 Pelletier: Chapters 1 and 9
 Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau: Chapters 1 and 2
 Benoit, "[Duverger's Law and the Study of Electoral Systems](#)", *French Politics* 4:1 (2006)
- Week 4:** **The PQ** (January 25-27)
 Pelletier: Chapter 10
 Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau: Chapter 10

Bédard, “René Lévesque et l’alliance avec les « bleus »”, in *René Lévesque: mythes et réalités* (2008) (available on MyCourses)

Mahéo and Bélanger, “[Is the Parti Québécois Bound to Disappear?](#),” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 51:2 (2018)

Week 5: The CAQ and the Rise/Role of Third Parties (February 1st-3)

Pelletier: Chapters 11 and 12

Bélanger, “[The Rise of Third Parties in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election](#)”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 37:3 (2004)

Hamel and Thériault, “[La fonction tribunitienne et la députation créditiste à l’Assemblée nationale du Québec](#)”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 8:1 (1975)

Week 6: Quebec-Based Federal Parties (February 8-10)

Pelletier: Chapter 13

Bickerton, Gagnon, and Smith, “The Bloc Québécois and its Nationalist Predecessors”, in *Ties That Bind* (1999) (available on MyCourses)

Noël, “[Distinct in the House of Commons: The Bloc Québécois as Official Opposition](#)”, in *Canada: The State of the Federation* (1994)

Young and Bélanger, “[BQ in the House: The Nature of Sovereignist Representation in the Canadian Parliament](#),” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 14:4 (2008)

Submission of research paper proposal on February 10 (on MyCourses before midnight)

Week 7: Election Campaigning (February 15-17)

Nadeau and Bastien, “[La communication électorale](#),” in *La communication politique* (2003)

Bastien, Bélanger and Gélneau: Chapter 9

Giasson, Del Duchetto, Ouellet and Foster, “[Données, ciblage et positionnement](#),” in *Histoires de communication politique* (2018)

Martel and Del Duchetto, “[Élection 2018: une nouvelle étape dans la pratique du marketing politique au Québec](#),” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 55:1 (2022)

Week 8: Explaining Provincial Voting Behaviour (February 22-24)

Bélanger et al., *Le nouvel électeur québécois*

- Week 9:** Study break
- Week 10:** **Explaining Federal Voting Behaviour** (March 8-10)
Gagnon and Boucher, "[Two Eras of Block Voting in Quebec](#)," in *Canadian Parties in Transition 4th ed.* (2017)
Gidengil et al., "[Electoral Dynamics in Quebec](#)," in *Dominance and Decline* (2012)
Fournier et al., "[Riding the Orange Wave](#)," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 46:4 (2013)
Montigny, "[The Bloc Québécois as a Safe Bet](#)," in *The Canadian Federal Election of 2021*
- Week 11:** **Referendum Voting** (March 15-17)
Langlois, "[Évolution de l'appui à l'indépendance du Québec de 1995 à 2015](#)", in *La démocratie référendaire dans les ensembles plurinationaux* (2018)
Vallée-Dubois, Dassonneville and Godbout, "[About Time: Age, Period, and Cohort Effects on Support for Quebec Sovereignty](#)," *Nations and Nationalism* 26:2 (2020)
Mendelsohn, "[Rational Choice and Socio-Psychological Explanation for Opinion on Quebec Sovereignty](#)," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36:3 (2003)
Clarke, Kornberg and Stewart, "[Referendum Voting as Political Choice](#)", *British Journal of Political Science* 34:2 (2004)
- Week 12:** **Elections at the Municipal Level** (March 22-24)
Bélanger, Anderson and McGregor, *Voting in Quebec Municipal Elections*
- Week 13:** **Challenges to Electoral Democracy I** (March 29-31)
Pelletier: Chapters 2, 3, and 8
Bastien, Bélanger and Gélneau: Chapters 4 and 5
- Week 14:** **Challenges to Electoral Democracy II** (April 5 & April 13)
Bastien, Bélanger and Gélneau: Chapters 11 and 18
Duval, Fortier-Chouinard, Gilbert and Birch, "[Une progression lente, mais constante: le bilan de François Legault comme livreur de promesses](#)", in *Bilan du gouvernement de la CAQ* (2022)
Xhardez and Paquet, "[Beyond the Usual Suspects and Towards Politicisation: Immigration in Quebec's Party Manifestos, 1991-2018](#)", *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 22:2 (2021)

Submission of research paper on April 13 (on MyCourses before midnight)

Final exam (exact date to be announced)