

**DISCLAIMER: This syllabus is provided for informational use only. Content and assignments may change before the start of the course. Students enrolled in this course are required to retrieve the latest version of the syllabus from MyCourses at the beginning of the course.**

# INFS 636, FALL 2022

## GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Pre-requisite: GLIS 619 or INFS 619

3 credits

## INSTRUCTOR

**Dr Svetlana Kochkina**

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## DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the structure of governments and the nature and variety of government information sources, including those for legal and statistical information. Emphasis is on the governments of Canada, the provinces, the United States, and selected international organizations.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The goal is to learn the way of thinking about government information through understanding processes and organizational structures of the entities that produce it as means of acquiring skills and efficiency in finding this type of information.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and discuss the nature of government information
- Demonstrate information search skills in a range of government resources and databases
- Critically appraise and select information resources in response to user needs
- Create visual exhibitions or guides on selected topics in government information using LibGuides or Omeka platforms

- Demonstrate the ability to independently learn and afterwards teach the use of unfamiliar information sources and databases
- Understand and value the role and significance of government information services

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

	Date	Topic	Group Assignments
1	<b>Sept. 12</b>	Introduction to the course; what is government information, Canadian government structure; legal systems; Canadian federal government information: legislative branch	n/a
2	<b>Sept. 19</b>	Canadian federal government information: legislative (continued)	Group presentation #1
3	<b>Sept. 26</b>	Canadian federal government information: judicial branch	Group presentation #2
4	<b>Oct. 3</b>	Guest lecture: Omeka Quebec government information	n/a
5	<b>Oct. 10</b>	<b>Study Week (no class)</b>	
6	<b>Oct. 17</b>	US government information: legislative branch	Group presentation #3
7	<b>Oct. 24</b>	US government information: judicial & executive branch; USMCA & NAFTA	Group presentation #4
8	<b>Oct. 31</b>	Site visit: law library legal rare books and government information collections EU, UK, & France government information	n/a
9	<b>Nov. 7</b>	Canadian federal gov. information: executive branch, statistical information and data Guest lecture: gov. information for business	Group presentation #5
10	<b>Nov. 14</b>	Guest lecture: GIS information	Group presentation #6
11	<b>Nov. 21</b>	UN information, UN data; international treaties; OECD; IGO's, NGO's, other non-state actors	Group presentation #7

12	<b>Nov. 28</b>	Citing government and legal information	Group presentation #8
13	<b>Dec. 5</b>	LibGuides, Omeka; review of the semester	Group presentation #9
14	<b>Dec. 12</b>	<b>NO class.</b> Final assignment, <b>due December 12</b>	

#### INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

A combination of lectures, guest lectures, site visits, class exercises, assignments, and discussions. Please note that search assignments are administered using **reverse classroom approach**, which fosters the ability to independently discover and learn new information sources.

#### REQUIRED READING

Forsey, E. A., & Canada. (2016). *How Canadians govern themselves*. Ottawa: Library of Parliament. Retrieved from:

<https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/SenatorEugeneForsey/book/intro-e.html>

#### OTHER COURSE MATERIAL

There is no textbook for this course. A list of recommended readings and supplemental materials is posted on MyCourses.

Assignments, syllabus, and visual supports for lectures and will be posted on MyCourses.

#### GRADES & EVALUATION

1. Take-home search assignments (individual) - **50% total** (5 individual assignments of 10% each) + Extra bonus points for answering additional questions
2. In-class search exercises (group) – **15% total**  
Extra bonus points for presentation of search exercise results – 2% each
3. Government information resources & databases presentation (group) - **15%**
4. Resource guide (LibGuide) & paper **OR** Digital exhibition (Omeka) & paper (in groups of 2 students) - **20%**

#### ASSIGNMENTS

- **No late assignments will be accepted.** The only exception for an extension or a delay are student's illness or an illness in the immediate family (physician's note is required).

- All visual supports (PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc.) for group presentations must be submitted in **electronic format** by the beginning of class (at 5:30 pm) on the due date via MyCourses.
- All search assignments must be submitted by **9:00 pm** on the indicated date in **electronic format** (Electronic copies should be submitted as **Microsoft Word** documents using the Assignments tool in MyCourses with the file name **INFS 636 – Assignment [#] – Family name of the student**.)
- Final paper must be submitted in exact copies **in both electronic and print formats**. Electronic copies should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents using the Assignments tool in MyCourses with the file name **INFS 636 – Assignment [#] – Family name of the student**. LibGuides must be submitted electronically through the LibGuides platform.
- Whenever the words or ideas of others are used, sources must be properly quoted and cited. For in-text citations and reference lists for your written work adopt the style conventions of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

#### INDIVIDUAL SEARCH ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE

	Assignments Release Date	Assignments Due
<b>1</b>	Search Assignment #1, Canadian government information, <b>Sept. 12</b>	Search Assignment #1, Canadian government information, <b>due Sept. 21</b>
<b>2</b>	Search Assignment #2, Canadian government information, <b>Sept. 19</b>	Search Assignment #2, Canadian government information, <b>due Sept. 28</b>
<b>3</b>	Search Assignment #3, US government information, <b>Oct. 10</b>	Search Assignment #3, US government information, <b>due Oct. 19</b>
<b>4</b>	Search Assignment #4, Statistical information and data, <b>Oct. 31</b>	Search Assignment #4, Statistical information and data, <b>due Nov. 19</b>
<b>5</b>	Search Assignment #5, UN, EU, & international treaties, <b>Nov. 14</b>	Search Assignment #5, UN, EU, & international treaties, <b>due Nov. 23</b>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### ACADEMIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All students must be thoroughly familiar with McGill [Student Rights and Responsibilities Inside and Outside the Classroom](#).

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### 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).

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### WRITTEN WORK

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. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

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### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities are urged to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009.

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### COMMUNICATING VIA EMAIL

In line with McGill's Policy on Email Communication with Students, all class-related emails will be sent to your **McGill email account**. Please check your email frequently.

If you have any questions, concerns, or issues that you would like to discuss, you are welcome to contact the instructor via email.

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### PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

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

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#### COPYRIGHT OF COURSE MATERIALS

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or medium without the explicit permission of the instructor.

No audio or video recording of the lectures will be made nor allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

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#### CLASS CONDUCT

This class follows McGill [Policies on Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

The University is committed to maintaining teaching and learning spaces that are respectful and inclusive for all. To this end, offensive, violent, or harmful language arising in contexts such as class discussions, Zoom sessions, including Username (use only your legal or preferred name), virtual backgrounds, “chat” boxes, whiteboard annotations, breakout rooms, MyCourses discussion fora, etc. may be cause for disciplinary action.

The students are urged to participate in any discussion in an active, respectful, and positive manner:

- Openly share analyses and opinions based on the readings and other class materials
- Allow other class members the opportunity to participate
- Be critical of ideas, but **not the person**

Mobile computing and communications devices are permitted in class insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. The use of mobile computing and communications devices must, in all cases, respect policies and regulations of the University.

The policies listed above are not exhaustive. You can find additional McGill [University Policies and Regulations](#) at the Secretariat website.