



**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION**

**COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2018**

**PO1020 (A3): Introduction to Political Institutions, Processes and Problems – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dawn Moffat McMaster **PHONE:** 780-539-2763  
**OFFICE:** C415 **E-MAIL:** dmcmaster@gprc.ab.ca  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Mon. & Wed. 1:00 - 2:00 pm, or by appointment

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** This course is an introduction to the institutions, processes and problems of government, emphasizing Canadian and other democratic governments. The course includes discussions of law, constitutions, civil liberties, public opinion, voting behaviours, electoral systems, political parties, interest groups, federalism and nationalism. This course offers an introduction to different fields of political study. Problems to be examined may include: political integration, the right to national self-determination, humanitarian intervention, globalization, global warming, terrorism and other issues.

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** None

**REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

- Eric Mintz, David Close, and Osvaldo Croci. Power, Politics, and the Common Good: An Introduction to Political Science, 5<sup>th</sup> edition: Toronto: Pearson Canada, 2018.
- Internet & database readings as listed in the syllabus appendix.
- Readings assigned by instructor in class.

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** Lecture and discussion

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course is designed to introduce you to the political world and the academic study of it, and is intended to:

- Introduce you to political institutions and processes, primarily through a comparison of Canadian, American and British political systems. How similar are they? How significant are the differences? What are their best features? What reforms should be considered? Do these systems measure up to appropriate standards of democracy?
- provide you with a basic knowledge of key political ideas and concepts, and of the major components of a variety of political systems, with a focus on democratic countries;
- demonstrate the value of thinking clearly and systematically about the political world and how it affects your daily life;
- Prepare you for further studies in politics at the post-secondary level.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and compare the basic institutions and governing processes of liberal democratic political systems.
- Outline the types and elements of constitutions and explain how they distribute power, both between branches and levels of government;
- Identify social and economic institutions which shape formal politics and evaluate how they do so;
- Identify and evaluate primary and secondary academic sources;
- Construct basic analytical arguments and provide quantitative and qualitative evidence supporting these arguments;
- Communicate ideas and arguments in a clear and concise manner.

**TRANSFERABILITY:** UA, UC, AU, UL, KU

**\*Warning:** Although we strive to make the transferability information in this document up-to-date and accurate, **the student has the final responsibility for ensuring the transferability of this course to Alberta Colleges and Universities.** Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca> or, if you do not want to navigate through few links, at <http://alis.alberta.ca/ps/tsp/ta/tbi/onlineSearch.html?SearchMode=S&step=2>

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions.**

**Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

**EVALUATIONS:**

Participation ..... 10%  
 Paper Proposal..... 15%

Term Paper..... 30%  
 Midterm Exam..... 15%  
 Final Exam..... 30%

**Participation:** You will be required to complete 5 in-class quizzes or take-home assignments at random throughout the semester. Each assignment will be worth 2% of the participation grade.

**Term Paper:** The **Paper Proposal** is an assignment which will assist you in completing your final paper. You will receive a handout in class detailing the expectations for each assignment. Your final paper will be an 8 – 10 page persuasive essay on a topic within the broad category of political institutions & their impact.

**Exams:** Exams will consist of questions which require demonstration of knowledge of specific concepts and theories (multiple choice, matching questions, and short-response questions), as well as synthesis of that knowledge into original responses (essay-style questions). The mid-term will deal with material covered to date, while the final exam will be cumulative. Both exams will be written online in a computer lab, although the option for hand-writing is also available.

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

<b>Schedule of Lectures &amp; Readings</b> (subject to alteration, upon consent of instructor and students)	
Week 1 (Jan. 8 – 12)	Lecture 1: Introduction to the Study of Political Science Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C (Mintz, Close &amp; Croci) text, Ch. 1, "Understanding Politics."</li> </ul>
Week 2 (Jan. 15 – 19)	Lecture 2: Liberal democracy & the political process. Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 10, "Democracy &amp; Democratic Government"</li> <li>• (M – available on Moodle) Mark Dickerson, Thomas Flanagan &amp; Brenda O'Neill. "Ch. 22: The Political Process." In <i>An Introduction to Government &amp; Politics: A Conceptual Approach</i>. p. 321-28.</li> </ul>
Week 3 (Jan. 22 – 26)	Lecture 3: Constitutions & the Rule of Law Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 12, "Constitutions, Courts and Laws."</li> </ul>
Week 4 (Jan. 29 – Feb. 2)	Lecture 4: Sovereignty arrangements & multiple levels of government Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 13, "Multiple Governments."</li> </ul>
Week 5 (Feb. 5 – 9)	Lecture 5: Parliamentary Systems Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 14, "Parliamentary Systems."</li> </ul> <p><b>**Wed., Feb. 7 – Bibliography &amp; Outline Due**</b></p>
Week 6 (Feb. 12 – 16)	L.5 (cont.): Parliamentary Systems
(Feb. 19 – 23)	<b>**WINTER BREAK – NO CLASS**</b>
Week 7 (Feb. 26 – Mar. 2)	<p><b>**Mon., Feb. 26 - MIDTERM EXAM **</b></p> Lecture 6: Presidential Systems Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 15, "Presidential and Semi-Presidential Systems."</li> </ul>
Week 8 (Mar. 5 - 9)	L.6 (cont.): Presidential Systems
Week 9 (Mar. 12 - 16)	Lecture 7: Political Culture & Socialization Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 5, "Political Culture, Political Participation &amp; Political Socialization."</li> </ul>

Week 10 (Mar. 19 - 23)	Lecture 8: The News Media Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 8 excerpt, "The Communications Media." 195-204..</li> </ul> <p><b>**Wed., Mar. 21 – Term Paper Due**</b></p>
Week 11 (Mar. 26 - 30)	Lecture 9: Political Parties Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 6, "Political Parties."</li> </ul>
Week 12 (Apr. 2 - 6)	Lecture 10: Elections & Electoral Systems Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M, C &amp; C text, Ch. 7 "Elections, Electoral Systems &amp; Voting Behaviour."</li> <li>Eric Grenier. "The Politics and Priorities of Canada's Youth." CBC Pollcast Podcast. 21 Apr. 2016. <a href="http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-pollcast-coletto-youth-1.3545379">http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-pollcast-coletto-youth-1.3545379</a></li> </ul>
Week 13 (Apr. 9 - 13)	L. 10 cont.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Full participation in class will require demonstration that you have completed the assigned readings, as well as an active role in group work and class discussions.

### Punctual submission of assignments:

- An electronic copy is due by midnight on the due date. It should be submitted via Moodle, and should be formatted as a PDF. If you do not know how to save a document as a PDF, please contact me.
- Please title your paper as follows: LASTNAMEFirstname-Assignment-PO1020W2018. (Ex. Jane Smith's paper should be saved as SMITHJane-TermPaper-PO1020W2018.)
- Late assignments will be docked 3% (i.e. an A becomes an A-) for each day they are late. If extenuating circumstances necessitate an extension on an assignment, you are required to speak with me AHEAD OF TIME, and appropriate paperwork (i.e. a medical note) may be required. Also, please note that you are required to write the final exam on the date scheduled by the College. You should take this into account when making any travel plans.

### Classroom Conduct:

GPRC is committed to promote an environment free of harassment or discrimination where respect will be given to ethnic, cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity, and expects individuals will conduct

themselves with respect for one another. This means your behavior should exhibit respect for yourselves, each other, the instructor, and the course material. As such:

- Students are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared. This includes having completed assigned readings for the classes. All readings should be available in the text or online, through the Moodle webpage. They can be read online, or printed, should you choose to do so. If you have questions regarding the Student Printing Policy, please visit <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>.
- Students are expected to make use of the Moodle webpage for the course, including course readings, resources, and messages. You will also need to regularly check your GPRC email address for communications from me.
- Laptops and cellphones are permitted in class, with a few caveats.
  - Cellphones should be on silent or vibrate mode, and I expect you wait to check calls or messages until after class. If an emergency requires otherwise, I expect you to advise me at the beginning of class.
  - Laptops are to be used for class work ONLY. Students carrying out other activities will be asked to leave their laptops at home.
- Working on assignments for other courses is not permitted. Students doing so will be asked to leave the class.
- I encourage an atmosphere of positive and constructive debate. Expressing criticism or annoyance with a view expressed by another person, either through a comment, audible noise, facial expression or body language, is not acceptable, unless you are prepared to debate your position openly & respectfully in class.
- Regular attendance. If you know you are going to be absent from class, I expect you to contact me prior to class with a reason. Students who miss more than 1/3 of classes (9 or more) may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in GPRC's Examination Policy (<https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>).

For information on key dates and other important matters, please refer to the GPRC Calendar, available [www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/).

### **STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at [www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/\\*\\*](http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/**)

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. **Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones,**

**Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.**

**\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.**