



COURSE: MPA 800 Governing Institutions 2023

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Office Hours:

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Course Objective and Description

Political and administrative institutions and processes of government decision-making play a fundamental role in shaping policy outcomes. This course analyzes governing institutions and the processes of modern government as a means of sharpening our understanding of policy formulation and implementation. While the course pays particular attention to the Canadian experience, American comparisons are used to highlight important differences in the way our institutions operate. The knowledge gained in this course should provide a basis for critically assessing political and administrative decision-making, policy outcomes, and possible reforms.

A knowledgeable policy actor requires certain skills to be effective. This course is designed to help future policymakers and advisors acquire some of those skills. These include abilities: to lead using a variety of styles; to work cooperatively and effectively with one's peers; to communicate ideas clearly and succinctly in professional careers; to write efficiently and persuasively; to analyze and synthesize material efficiently and accurately; and to succeed in a professional environment.

Course Texts

These textbooks are essential for the course and available through the bookstore. Note that the first one is an entirely online textbook:

Tossutti, Livianna, Eric Mintz, Kathy Brock & Doreen Barrie. 2023. Canadian Politics Today: Democracy, Diversity, and Good Government. North York: Pearson. (most recent edition needed)

Thomas, David M. and Christopher Sands. Canada and the United States: Differences that Count, fifth edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023. (note this is the 5th edition)

Course Grading

Trial Tests and Quizzes in Text (e-monitored)	20%
Class Participation (in class and small groups)	20%
Structured Controversies Presentations (2 x 10)	20%
Structured Controversies Q&A	20%
Midterm "In-class" writing assignment	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Class Format and Course Requirements

A variety of teaching styles and techniques are used in this course to enhance student learning. Please be patient if one is not to your liking since it may correspond to a learning preference of a colleague.

Interactive Lectures and Class Discussions

Classes will be interactive in style and will complement, not duplicate, the assigned course readings. Recorded lectures and short lectures will be part of the class format but only one knowledge-sharing tool used. Students will be encouraged to discuss current events, ask questions about the pre-recorded lectures and short in-class lectures and to share their ideas during the plenary sessions. At other times, oral exercises such as discussions, small group discussions and "one-minute" cases will be used to cover course material and build professional analytical and communication skills. The purpose of this mixed class format is to clarify course material, to integrate reading and lecture materials and current events, to maximize shared learning, to provide students with the opportunity to relate the readings to the lectures and class discussions, and to help build an appreciation of Canadian governing institutions.

"In-class" Writing Assignment

Students will be required to write **one midterm report** during one class incorporating material from the course lectures, readings, debates and short cases/discussions in this course. The topic for the report will be given out at the beginning of the class during which it is written. Students will be given 60 minutes to write the essay. Note that students with accommodations will have the additional time they are allotted by the Wellness office. The report must follow proper essay format: introduction with a topical sentence, body with substantive arguments and supporting documentation (page references where possible but not necessary), and a conclusion. **Hint:** focus on the material covered to that date and do not discuss topics that have not yet been covered in class.

Trial Tests in Text

The Tossutti et al. text includes short tests in each chapter that assess student learning. Although some students may find these tests a bit tedious, they are a proven tool for enhancing learning, they also provide a means of rewarding students for doing their readings. As a result, students are required to complete the tests in the Tossutti et al. course reader. Progress on the tests will be electronically monitored. Please note the marking system in the text. Marks are calculated and adjusted automatically according to the weightings explained in the text. Please note that the first set of these readings and tests should be completed by the in-class midterm and the second set should be completed by the end of the course (see dates beside readings online). There are no extensions beyond these two specified dates because the monitoring is provided by the publishing company and the performance and readings may be done at the student's chosen pace within the two set periods. Also, the two set deadlines meet the learning objective of timely performance.

Participation

The **participation grade** will be based on evidence of preparation for each class, knowledge of the readings, contributions to small group and plenary discussions in class, general participation in the structured controversies when the group is not presenting and in-class attendance. Marking criteria include: quality of work, pertinence of questions and comments; demonstrated familiarity with the course readings; ability to formulate evidence-based arguments; willingness to challenge accepted ideas; concern for views expressed by others and solicitation of others' ideas; and, ability to respond constructively to challenges and criticism. Thoughtful questions that assist the class in achieving a better understanding of the material are especially encouraged. Quality, not quantity, of comments is important so be sure to listen to and engage your peers. Students will engage in self-assessment of their participation and the final mark will be based on a combination of their self-assessments and the professor's assessment. The participation element of the course is critical in building professional speaking and interpersonal skills. **TIP:** be sure to come to class with the readings done and keep up on current issues.

Structured Controversies

Students will have the opportunity to discuss and debate the course material and their ideas in more detail in selected classes. To enhance learning and the acquisition of professional skills and to ensure debates are productive, a modified version of "structured controversy" will be used in these classes. This format has been selected because it addresses a concern voiced in the classroom and in public life: students, like citizens in a polity, desire greater participation and often claim that only the most vocal or extreme interlocutors are heard and that their voices are drowned out or ignored. While many opinions are held and expressed in public debates and teamwork, often people are unwilling or unable to discuss and evaluate the evidence used to support those opinions or to build constructive compromises and choices between different positions on issues. In some instances, people don't try to understand the arguments of their opponents. "Structured Controversy" is designed to give voice to people and then to facilitate working together to understand and/or resolve controversies and differences –critical skills in professional and personal relationships. It also helps people learn how to think effectively under pressure. (And it's fun too!)

Students will be divided into small groups of 3-6 people in the first week of class according to their ranked preferences for the topics in the two sets of structured controversies. **All groups and members are expected to attend each class with the assigned readings done each week to assist in group learning.** Groups will know the topics for which they are the lead group in advance. However, they will not know which side of the debate they will argue until the beginning of the class in which their topic is presented. Groups that are designated to speak should have arguments prepared on the topic so they can present either side.

- **STEP 1: Preparation** 10 minutes
At the beginning of selected classes, students will form into their groups. The professor will announce what position the two designated groups will debate. The two designated debating groups will decide which of their prepared arguments are strongest for their side and which ones they will present to the class. They will allocate the speaking time and tasks among group members. NB: it may be useful to have one student to record and collate the arguments for presentations. The other groups will prepare one or two questions that they will pose to the debating groups based on their preparation of the readings for class.
- **STEP 2: Presentation of Arguments** 10 minutes
The two groups will have 5 minutes each to present their arguments. The other groups will listen, taking notes and applauding etcetera where appropriate.
- **STEP 3: Discussion** 15-20 minutes
At the beginning of this step, groups will have 2-3 minutes to decide which question(s) they will pose to the groups who presented. Each of the non-presenting groups will pose one question,

and if time permits, a follow-up question to the debating groups. The debating groups must offer an answer based on the assigned material and course work to date. Students in the other groups should take notes on key points of difference or common ground on the issue.

- STEP 4: Seeking Common Ground 15 minutes
Students reconvene into their small groups and discuss what they have heard. They should try to identify principles, values and ideas that provide common ground among the two groups and other views expressed. One person from the non-presenting groups will present one suggestion for a basis of compromise on the issue. After a short (3-4 minute) discussion, one person from each of the debating groups will explain which, if any, of the suggestions for a compromise position is satisfactory.
- STEP 5: Evaluation 5-10 minutes
Each group should identify who the leading performers were for their group that day and suggest ways everyone could do better for the next one. Students should assess whether their views on the topic changed as a result of the discussion and identify any new or interesting ideas that they heard.

The structured controversies are designed to complement the course lectures and readings and to assist students in deepening their understanding of the structure and operation of government. The debates will be based primarily on assigned readings with some supplementary research. For the debate days, please see the course schedule (Course at a Glance Chart) at the end of this syllabus.

There are two types of grades that will be assigned for the structured controversies:

- Each group will be graded on its work when it is a designated presenter. These grades will be assessed at the conclusion of each round of structured controversies.
- Each group will be assessed on the quality of its feedback to the other groups and its overall functioning. Note that attendance of group members will be taken into account in the individual assessments of course participation as well. Using the criteria below, groups will be asked to assess their work as a team and to provide comments on collective and individual performance to the professor.

Criteria for grading include: academic merit; demonstrated evidence of understanding of the topic and the political systems; clarity of thought and expression; level of engagement and interest; ability to convey arguments within the time limits; ability to listen to others and concern for views expressed by others; professional decorum; and, ability to work co-operatively and productively with others. Although students will be assigned group grades for the debates, the quality of their performance within the small groups is one part of the class participation grade assessment criteria.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The following chart captures how course activities fit with key skills and competencies required for policy and government relations actors. The achievement of these skills and competencies will be dependent on individual engagement and motivation in the course. Students should note that the professor's office hours are intended to provide students with an opportunity to improve their engagement and performance in the course by discussing their individual challenges and questions about course material and activities.

COMPETENCY	DESCRIPTOR	COURSE ACTIVITIES
Strategic Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operative understanding of institutional, legal and administrative context for policymaking• Operative understanding values and principles of Canadian parliamentary democracy in comparative context• Operative understanding of key elements of policymaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactive Lectures• Readings• Short In-Class Cases• Current Events
Analysis & Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification and application of theories to practice• Critical thinking about emerging issues in policymaking• Active analytical comprehension of information; timely performance• Discernment of appropriate policy options given costs and consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured Controversies• Short In-Class Cases• Midterm and Tests
Engagement & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative work with others• Effective oral and written communication• Effective knowledge transfer and advice through professional modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small group work• Structured controversies• Questions/answers during lectures• Class discussions• Midterm and in-text tests
Professionalism, Collaboration & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand and model professional norms and behaviours• Leadership of teams and decision-making processes including consensus-building and execution• Address of policy and personnel challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance and comportment in class• Small group work and class discussion• Lectures, readings, current events• Timely completion of work

COURSE READINGS AND ACTIVITIES: These may shift during the course as needed.

MPA 800 GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS: Course at a Glance			
Week/Date	Topic	Preparation for Class	Activities
1. Sept. 5	Introduction: Canada as a Liberal Democracy	Tossutti et al. Ch. 1 Lecture 1 (OnQ) Tossutti et al. Ch. 2	Course Information and Introductions Plenary: Questions on the Pre-Recorded Lecture Break-Outs & Report Backs
2. Sept. 12	Canada: Unity from Diversity	Tossutti et al. Ch. 10	Lecture and Discussion
		Thomas & Sands Ch. 1	NFB Film “The Road to Patriation” – Part I https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_to_patriation/
3. Sept. 19	Constitution and Federalism	Tossutti et al. Ch. 12, 4	“The Road to Patriation” – Part II Discussion of film
		Thomas & Sands Ch. 6	Structured Controversy 1: Federalism https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2022/why-federalism-matters/
4. Sept. 26	Canada: Unity in Diversity	Tossutti et al. Ch. 11 Thomas & Sands, Ch. 12	Guest Speaker: Paul Chartrand https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7RREOuBAMQ
		Tossutti et al. Ch. 3	Discussion Groups + Review for Assignment
5. October 3 “IN-CLASS” Writing Assignment on Material Covered to Date			
October 10: Thanksgiving and Reading Week – No Classes			
6. Oct. 17	The Westminster Model	Lecture 2 (OnQ) Two Systems: PM vs Pres	Plenary Discussion, Break-Outs & Report Backs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4quK60FUvkY
	The Executive: Formal & Political	Tossutti et al. Ch. 13 Thomas & Sands, Ch. 7	Structured Controversy 2: PMs vs Presidents (Grps 3&4)
7. Oct. 24	Legislative Branch	Tossutti et al. Ch. 14 Thomas & Sands Ch. 8	Struct'd Controversy 3: Parliament/Congress (Grps 5&6)
	The Executive: Permanent	Tossutti et al. Ch. 15 Thomas & Sands Ch. 10	Guest Speaker: Ravendra Naidoo Innovation and Doing Things Differently in Public Sector
8. Oct. 31	Judicial Branch & Rights	Tossutti et al. Ch. 16 Thomas & Sands Ch. 9	Structured Controversy 4: (Grps 1&2)
	Political Culture	Tossutti et al. Ch. 5 Lecture 3 (OnQ)	Class Discussion on How You Can Advise Any Party
9. Nov. 7	Parties & Elections	Tossutti et al. Ch. 6 Thomas & Sands Ch. 5	Struc'd Controversy 5: (Grp3&4)
	Elections and Democracy	Tossutti et al. Ch. 8, 9 Thomas & Sands Ch. 3	Guest Speaker: Gregory Tardi on Elections https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajavsMbCapY
10. Nov. 14	Indigenous Gov't, Protests, Participation	Thomas & Sands Ch. 13 Tossutti et al. Ch. 7	Structured Controversy 6: (Grps 5&6)
		Tossutti et al. Ch. 11	Dan Longboat Podcast (Episode 14, July 23, 2020) https://blubrry.com/ahkameyimok/archive/?pi=6
11. Nov. 21	Policy: Energy vs. Environment?	Thomas & Sands Ch. 14, 15	Remarks, Break-Outs & Report Backs https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/062.nsf/eng/h_00108.html
	Digital Governance	Assigned Reading OnQ	https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government.html Prepare & Submit Participation Self-Assessments
12. Nov. 28	Canada & the World	Tossutti et al. Ch. 17 Thomas & Sands Ch. 4	Final Reflections: The Savvy Public Servant

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic Integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities).

Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment or the failure of a course to the rescinding of a degree.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES:

Students with physical and learning disabilities must contact QSAS and the instructor as soon as possible in order for accommodations/modifications to course expectations to be made.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to working with students with disabilities to remove barriers to their academic goals. Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS), students with disabilities, instructors, and faculty staff work together to provide and implement academic accommodations designed to allow students with disabilities equitable access to all course material (including in-class as well as exams). If you are a student currently experiencing barriers to your academics due to disability related reasons, and you would like to understand whether academic accommodations could support the removal of those barriers, please visit the QSAS website (<https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services>) to learn more about academic accommodations. To start the registration process with QSAS, click the **Access Ventus** button found on the Ventus student portal: <https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/ventus>

Ventus is an online portal that connects students, instructors, Queen's Student Accessibility Services, the Exam's Office, and other support services in the process to request, assess, and implement academic accommodations.

To learn more about Ventus, visit A Visual Guide to Ventus for Students: <https://www.queensu.ca/ventus-support/students/visual-guide-ventus-students>

COPYRIGHT:

The link below provides a brief summary of the Copyright Act of Canada (the Act) as it relates to instruction at Queen's University.

<https://library.queensu.ca/help-services/copyright-fair-dealing/copyright-basics-instructors>

Please see the academic and other course regulations on the course website in OnQ for the official versions.