

**Governing Institutions
School of Policy Studies
Queen's University
Fall 2020/Winter 2021**

Professor: Dr. Lori Turnbull

Office hours: virtual by appointment

Email: lturnbul@dal.ca

Course synopsis

This course offers a critical analysis of the major institutions that shape politics and governance in Canada, including: the prime minister and cabinet; the House of Commons; the Senate; the electoral system; the public service; and, intergovernmental relations. Each weekend, we focus on a particular institution by delving into its inner workings as well as some of the more prominent proposals for its reform. Special attention will be paid to the shifting power dynamics among institutions and actors and the implications of these power relationships for the integrity of democracy. This is a course about power and decision making in various political institutions and jurisdictions in Canada.

The course will draw on the current and relevant literature in political science and public administration, and will also incorporate media reports, opinion pieces, and think tank publications. At the end of the course, students should feel able to offer critical commentary on the state of political institutions in Canada and the potential implications of their reform.

Course structure

Each weekend, we will meet via Zoom on Fridays (11-12:30 ET) and Saturdays (12:30-2 ET). We will discuss the readings, as well as relevant events and developments in politics and government. After each session, I will be available via Zoom for office hours for another hour.

Readings

All readings are available online for free.

Assignments

The overall grade will be comprised of the following items:

- Four 1250-word papers (each one worth 20%)
- participation in class discussions via Zoom (20%)

Paper topics and dates:

1. Minority government in Canada (due November 6)
2. The role of political parties (due December 4)
3. Values and ethics in the public service (March 5)
4. Decision making and power in governmental institutions (April TBD)

Topics and Readings

Weekend 1: Responsible Government and Executive Power

- Prime Minister of Canada. 2015. *Open and Accountable Government*. Available at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2015/11/27/open-and-accountable-government>
- Public Policy Forum. 2015. "Time for a Reboot: Nine Ways to Restore Trust in Canada's Public Institutions." Available at: <http://www.ppforum.ca/sites/default/files/Report%20-%20English.pdf>
- Sabin, Jerald. 2014. "Contested Colonialism: Responsible Government and Political Development in Yukon." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 47:2

Weekend 2: The House of Commons

- Galandy, Jennifer and D. Scharie Tavcer. 2019. "Improving Gender Representation in Canadian Federal Politics and Parliament." *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 42:1. Available at: <http://www.revparl.ca/english/issue.asp?param=238&art=1837>
- Godbout, Jean-Francois and Bjorn Howland. "The Emergence of Parties in the Canadian House of Commons (1867-1908)." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 46: 4.
- Public Policy Forum. 2019. "Digital Democracy Project: Media, Knowledge and Misinformation. Available at: <https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DDPResearch-Memo-1-Aug2019.pdf>

Weekend 3: Campaigns, Brands, and Money

- Commonbat, Thomas and Magali Picard. 2020. "Third Parties Strive to Become a Driving Force in Elections." *Policy Options*. Institute for Research on Public Policy. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/july-2020/thirdparties-strive-to-become-a-driving-force-in-elections/>
- Public Policy Forum. 2017. "Transparent and Level: Modernizing Political Finance in Canada." Available at: <https://www.ppforum.ca/publications/transparent-and-level-modernizing-political-financing-in-canada/>

- Wesley, Jared and Renze Nauta. 2020. "A glimpse into the world of party platform design. Policy Options. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/july-2020/a-glimpse-into-the-world-of-party-platform-design/>

Weekend 4: The Senate, reformed?

- Thomas, Paul. 2019. Toward a New and Improved Senate. Institute for Research on Public Policy. Available at: <https://irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Moving-Towards-New-and-Improved-Senate.pdf>
- Christopher Reed. 2017. "The Applicability of the Salisbury Doctrine to Canada's Bi-Cameral Parliament" *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 40:4.

Weekend 5: Canada's Public Service

- Aucoin, Peter. 2012. "New Political Governance in Westminster Systems: Impartial Public Administration and Management Performance at Risk" *Governance* 25:2.
- Jones, Peter. 2017. "The futures of Canadian governance: Foresight competencies for public administration in the digital era." *Canadian Public Administration* 60:4.
- Kernaghan, Kenneth. "A Special Calling: Values, Ethics, and Professional Public Service." Available at: <https://www.tbssct.gc.ca/psm-fpfm/ve/code/scv-eng.pdf>
- Campeau, Holly and Kike Roach. 2020. "The policy maker's path to defund the police." Policy Options: Institute for Research on Public Policy. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/august-2020/thepolicymakers-path-to-defund-the-police/>

Weekend 6: Decision-Making and Power

- Lortie, Pierre. 2020. "The changing strains of federalism." Policy Options. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/february-2020/the-changing-strains-of-federalism/>
- Slack, Enid and Thomas Hachard. 2020. "Now, with a deal made to help cities, the work begins." Policy Options. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/august-2020/now-with-a-deal-made-to-help-cities-the-work-begins/>
- Poucette, Terry Lynn. 2018. Spinning Wheels: Surmounting the Indian Act's impact on traditional Indigenous governance." *Canadian Public Administration* 61:4