COURSE: MPA 800 – Governing Institutions

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Office: 328 Robert Sutherland Hall Office Hours: Tues 9:30-11:45 am

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Course Objective and Description

Political institutions and processes of 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 function. The knowledge gained in this course should provide a basis for critically assessing political and administrative decision-making and policy outcomes.

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 public and private fora; to write efficiently and persuasively; to analyze and synthesize material; and to succeed in a professional environment.

Course Texts

Students should bring their texts to each class. These textbooks are essential for the course and available through the bookstore:


The following textbook is a short and useful background introductory text on Canadian Government that students may wish to consult before or during the course:

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. 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 and share their ideas during the lectures. At other times, oral exercises such as discussions, small group discussions and “one-minute” cases will be used to deliver course material. 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 Report

Students will be required to write one midterm report in class incorporating material from the lectures, the readings, the debates and the short cases/discussions in this course. The topic for the report will be given out at the beginning of the class in which it is written. The report must follow proper essay format: introduction with a topical sentence, body with substantive arguments and supporting documentation (page references where possible), and a conclusion. You may bring your texts to class for this exercise but you may not bring notes into the class for these exercises. NB: Any texts with extended notes that may assist in writing the report will be removed by the instructor at her discretion for the duration of the writing period. Hint: focus on the material covered to that date and do not discuss topics that have not yet been covered in class.

Participation

The participation grade will be based on evidence of preparation for each class, knowledge of the readings, contributions to small group and class discussions, general participation in the structured controversies and attendance. Marking criteria will 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. Hint: be sure to come to class with the readings done and keep up on current issues.

Structured Controversy

Students will have the opportunity to discuss and debate the course material and their ideas in more detail in selected classes. To enhancing 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 often their voices are drowned out or ignored. While many opinions are held and expressed, 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. Often people don’t try to understand the arguments of
``Structured controversy`` is designed to give voice to people and then to facilitate working together to understand and/or resolve controversies and differences. It helps people learn how to think effectively under pressure. (And it’s fun too!)

Students will be divided into small groups of 4-6 people. All group members are expected to attend class with the assigned readings done each week to assist their group in learning. It will be useful to have your phones and/or computers in class if possible. Note that each group will be required to speak on two assigned topics. Groups will know their topics 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. The groups that are designated to speak should have arguments prepared on the topic so that they can present either side.

- **STEP 1: Preparation** 15 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
  Each of the other groups will pose one question, and if time permits, a follow-up question to the debating groups. The debaters must offer an answer based on the assigned material and course work to date. Students should take notes on key points of difference or common ground.

- **STEP 4: Seeking Common Ground** 20 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 other 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** 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 at a Glance Chart at the end of this syllabus.

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.

Final Exam
Students will be required to write a final two hour examination held during the December exam period. The exam will consist of two questions requiring students to synthesize and analyze material drawn from course readings, lectures, discussions of current events and cases, and debates in a clear, evidence-based and persuasive answer. The students will be graded according to the content and form of their answers. Students may bring their texts, but not notes, into the examination. Any texts with extended notes that may, in the opinion of the instructor, aid in answering the questions will be removed by the instructor at her discretion.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>COURSE ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strategic Thinking                | • 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 | • Interactive Lectures  
  • Readings  
  • 5 Minute Cases  
  • Current Events |
| Analysis & Application            | • Identification and application of theories to practice  
  • Critical thinking about emerging issues in policymaking  
  • Active analytical comprehension of information  
  • Discernment of appropriate policy options given costs and consequences | • Structured Controversies  
  • 5 Minute Cases  
  • Midterm and Final Tests |
| Engagement & Communication        | • Collaborative work with others  
  • Effective oral and written communication  
  • Effective knowledge transfer and advice through professional modes | • Small group work  
  • Structured controversies  
  • Questions/answers during lectures  
  • Class discussions  
  • Midterm and final tests |
| Professionalism, Collaboration & Leadership | • 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 | • Attendance and comportment in class  
  • Small group work and class discussion  
  • Lectures, readings, current events  
  • Timely completion of work |
COURSE READINGS:

The course topics and readings may change throughout the course. Dates may also change depending on the progression through the material and class preference. Outlines of lectures provided in class are intended as a study guide, although not all topics listed may be covered in class. In that case, students should complete the outline themselves based on a combination of the course lectures, discussions, debates and readings. For the course reading, assignment and debate schedule, please see the Course at a Glance Chart.

NB. Please read the chapters in the order assigned in Chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK &amp; DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sept. 9</td>
<td>Introduction: Power</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 1, pp. 1-14</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Canada: Inside and Outside</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 1, pp. 14-33</td>
<td>Lecture, Small Groups followed by Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sept. 16</td>
<td>Unity from Diversity</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 2, pp. 36-80</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>Unity in Diversity: Regionalism</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 3, pp. 123-165</td>
<td>Film (Pt.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sept. 23</td>
<td>The Federation in Operation: MAID</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 4, pp. 81-122</td>
<td>Film (Pt. 2) + Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>Unity in Diversity</td>
<td>C &amp; C, Ch. 11, p. 183-200</td>
<td>Structured Controversy Groups 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sept. 30</td>
<td>The Legislative Branch</td>
<td>C &amp; C, Ch. 7, pp. 109-126</td>
<td>Short Lecture + Course review and questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>IN-CLASS REPORT ON MATERIAL TO DATE</td>
<td>C &amp; C Ch. 1, pp. 3-18</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Oct. 7</td>
<td>Westminster Model</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 5, pp. 166-205</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>The Executive: Formal &amp; Political</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 5, pp. 69-88 (rec’d)</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Oct. 14</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 4, pp. 51-68***</td>
<td>Structured Discussions Groups 3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>The Executive: Formal &amp; Political</td>
<td>C &amp; C, Ch. 4, pp. 167-181</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>The Permanent Executive</td>
<td>C &amp; C, Ch. 10, pp. 19-36 ***</td>
<td>Structured Discussions Groups 5 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>The Legislative Branch</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 8, pp. 288-336</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>The Judicial Branch</td>
<td>C &amp; C, Ch. 2, pp. 19-36***</td>
<td>Structured Discussions Groups 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nov. 4</td>
<td>Political Culture</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 9, pp. 338-385</td>
<td>Lecture/Class Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>Parties, Elections &amp; Democracy</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 10, pp. 386-429</td>
<td>Guest Lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nov. 11</td>
<td>Remembrance Day: No class</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 12, pp. 467-493</td>
<td>Final Thoughts and Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>The Judicial Branch &amp; Public Sector Ethics</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 7, pp. 254-297</td>
<td>Structured Discussion (Ethics) Groups 3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>Rights and Representation</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 13, pp. 91-108</td>
<td>Lecture/Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>Indigenous Institutions and Rights</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 13, pp. 494-520</td>
<td>Structured Discussions Groups 5 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>Engagement &amp; Communications</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 11, pp. 127-145***</td>
<td>Small Groups/Class Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>Course Conclusion</td>
<td>M &amp; W, Ch. 14, pp. 541-586</td>
<td>NB: Self-Evaluations Due</td>
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MPA 800: Governing Institutions
GRADING SCHEME:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class written report</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation (in class and small groups)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Controversies (2 x 15)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100%

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).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Academic Integrity Policy of the School of Graduate Studies, available at http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/forstudents/policiesprocedures/SGSAcademicIntegrityPolicyas ofFeb2012.pdf.

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.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

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

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Queen’s Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/