

**COURSE: MPA 800**

**Instructor: Dr. Kathy L. Brock**

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**Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-4:30**

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**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 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. 2021. Canadian Politics Today: Democracy, Diversity, and Good Government. North York: Pearson.

Craft, Jonathan & Amanda Clarke. 2018. Issues in Canadian Governance. Toronto: Edmond.

**Course Grading**

Trial Tests in Text (e-monitored)

20%

Class Participation (in class and small groups)	20%
Structured Controversies Presentations (2 x 10)	20%
Structured Controversies Group Feedback	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. 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** 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 during which it is written. All students will start at the same time. Students will be given 60 minutes to write the essay and must submit their essays electronically within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the assignment. Note that students with accommodations will have the additional time they are allotted added to the end of the hour. 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. **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*

Students will be required to complete the tests in the Tossutti et al. course reader. Progress on the tests will be electronically monitored by the course graders. If the student completes all of the tests successfully, then the student will receive the full 20%. For every test that the student does not complete successfully by the third attempt or which the student neglects to complete, the student will lose 1 of the 20 marks.

### *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. Students will be given the opportunity to identify other students who they believed made extraordinary contributions during the group work. **Hint:** 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 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 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. It 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 and each group will be asked to express ranked preferences for the topics in the two sets of structured controversies. **All groups and members are expected to attend class with the assigned readings done each week to assist their group in learning.** 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 10-15 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 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 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 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. Given that each group will be presenting on two topics, there will be two grades for the presentations.
- Each group will be assessed on the quality of its feedback to the other groups when they are the designated presenters. Note that attendance of group members will be taken into account in the individual assessments of course participation.

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.

## 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"> <li>Operative understanding of institutional, legal and administrative context for policymaking</li> <li>Operative understanding values and principles of Canadian parliamentary democracy in comparative context</li> <li>Operative understanding of key elements of policymaking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive Lectures</li> <li>Readings</li> <li>5 Minute Cases</li> <li>Current Events</li> </ul>
Analysis & Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification and application of theories to practice</li> <li>Critical thinking about emerging issues in policymaking</li> <li>Active analytical comprehension of information</li> <li>Discernment of appropriate policy options given costs and consequences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured Controversies</li> <li>5 Minute Cases</li> <li>Midterm and Tests</li> </ul>
Engagement & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative work with others</li> <li>Effective oral and written communication</li> <li>Effective knowledge transfer and advice through professional modes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small group work</li> <li>Structured controversies</li> <li>Questions/answers during lectures</li> <li>Class discussions</li> <li>Midterm and tests</li> </ul>
Professionalism, Collaboration & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand and model professional norms and behaviours</li> <li>Leadership of teams and decision-making processes including consensus-building and execution</li> <li>Address of policy and personnel challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance and comportment in class</li> <li>Small group work and class discussion</li> <li>Lectures, readings, current events</li> <li>Timely completion of work</li> </ul>

## 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. 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.

<b>MPA 800 GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS</b>			
<b>Course at a Glance</b>			
NB. Please read the chapters and watch the lectures/films before class and when assigned in Chart.			
Week & Date	Topic	Readings to be done before class	Activities Blue = Synchronous Gold = Asynchronous
1. Sept. 8	Introductions	Tossutti et al. Ch. 1	Plenary Discussion & Break-Outs
Week 2 Sep. 15	Canada: Liberal Democracy & Challenges	Tossutti et al. Ch. 2, 10 Craft & Clark, Ch. 11	Lecture on Liberal Democracy and Constitutional Foundations (OnQ) Plenary: Questions on the Lecture Break-Outs & Report Backs
Week 3 Sep. 22	Constitution and Federalism	Tossutti et al. Ch. 12, 4 Craft & Clark, Ch. 7*	NFB Film "The Road to Patriation" <b>SKIP the first minute please.</b> Available at: <a href="https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_to_patriation/">https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_to_patriation/</a> Discussion of film Structured Controversy 1: MAID (Grps 1&2)
Week 4 Sep. 29	Canada: Unity in Diversity	Tossutti et al. Ch. 11, 3 Craft & Clark, Ch. 8	Please view this 2 minute video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aA00_IK_ZUw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aA00_IK_ZUw</a> Guest Speaker: The Honourable Eric Robinson Discussion Groups + Course Review for Assignment
5. October 6 "IN-CLASS" Writing Assignment on Material Covered to Date: Synchronous start at 1:30			
Week 6 Oct. 13	The Westminster Model & The Core Executive	Craft & Clark, Ch. 1, 4* Tossutti et al. Ch. 13	Lecture on Westminster Model (OnQ) Discussion of GG, PM, Cabinet & Central Agencies Structured Controversy 2: Cabinet-Making (Grps 3&4)
Week 7 Oct. 20	The Permanent Executive	Tossutti et al. Ch. 15 Craft & Clark, Ch. 2*, 3 Craft & Clark, Ch. 5	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlYyC5-xv_A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlYyC5-xv_A</a> Structured Controversy 3: The Bargain Now (Grp 5&6) Plenary & Group Discussions of C&C Chapters 5 & 3
<b>OCTOBER 27<sup>th</sup> READING WEEK – No Classes</b>			
Week 8 Nov. 3	Legislative Branch & Elections	Tossutti et al. Ch. 14, 6 Craft & Clark, Ch. 10	Nov. 3 US Election results & <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4quK60FUvkY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4quK60FUvkY</a> Guest Speaker: Gregory Tardi Parliament, Elections Class Discussion on How to Advise Any Party
Week 9 Nov. 10	Political Culture Judicial Branch & Rights	Tossutti et al. Ch. 16 Craft & Clark, Ch. 6*	Lecture on Political Culture (OnQ) Short lecture on Judiciary & rights Structured Controversy 4: Courts vs Executive (Grps 1&2)
Week 10 Nov. 17	Indigenous Governance Public Sector Ethics	Craft & Clark, Ch. 8* Tossutti et al. Ch. 11 Craft & Clark, Ch. 13	Podcast with Dr, Longboat available at <a href="https://blubrry.com/ahkameyimok/">https://blubrry.com/ahkameyimok/</a> Structured Controversy 5: Citizenship (Grps 3&4) Discussions on public sector ethics & environment
Week 11 Nov. 24	Representation, Engagement, & Communications	Craft & Clark, Ch. 14* Tossutti et al. Ch. 7 Craft & Clark, Ch. 16	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government.html</a> <a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/062.nsf/eng/h_00108.html">https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/062.nsf/eng/h_00108.html</a> Struc'd Controversy 6: Networks & Homeless (Grps 5&6) Discussion of Lobbying and Digital Government
12. Dec. 1	Canada & the World: In & Out	Tossutti et al. Ch. 17 Craft & Clark, Ch. 15	Prepare & Submit Participation Self-Assessments Final Thoughts & Review

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Academic Integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://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](http://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.

## **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/>

## **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>