COURSE: **MPA 878 - GUIDE TO PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS**

Instructor: William Bromm  
Email: [William.bromm2@ontario.ca](mailto:William.bromm2@ontario.ca)  
[Wb32@queensu.ca](mailto:Wb32@queensu.ca)

Office: 322 Sutherland Hall  
Office Hours:  
Wednesday and Thursday,  
11:30 a.m – 12:30 p.m and by appointment

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

**Summary:** This course examines the Legislative Branch of Government and its role in providing oversight, governance and accountability over the activities of government.

**Background:** The work of the public service in the development of the government’s policy and fiscal agenda does not end with a Cabinet decision or direction.

In many instances, a final Cabinet decision is the start of a second process involving the Legislative Branch of Government, referred to in the remaining parts of this overview as “Parliament”.

The foundation of Canada’s Westminster Parliamentary system is the requirement that the implementation of the decisions of government are based on and subject to approvals and oversight of Parliament. For example, the introduction of a new statute, the amendment of an existing statute, and the overall allocation of funds for government programs are all subject to oversight and approval by the Legislative Branch.

Even a government with a large majority, which inevitably provides a high degree of control over the decisions of Parliament, must still follow the rules governing the activities and decisions of that Parliament.

Therefore, to fully understand and advise on the powers of the Government, a public servant should understand both the powers of Parliament and how those powers may interact with the government decision making process.

Drawing on Federal and provincial examples and the policy work students will have done in other courses, this class will examine the operation of a Parliament, including
the mechanisms it uses to hold the government to account. We will discuss the general operation of Parliament, the rules governing its procedures and practices, the rights and powers held by a Parliament and its members and committees, and the role played by independent Agents of Parliament, such as the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

The overall goal of the course is to provide practical knowledge and examples of the interactions between a government and Parliament and the role public servants play in those interactions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The course will be focused on the key activities of the Legislative Branch of Government that require advice or support from the professional public service. This focus will allow students to learn skills, content and knowledge that would be valuable in a government workplace or any workplace that involves interactions with a Parliament or its members (advocacy groups, stakeholders, etc.).

Working individually and in collaboration with other students, students will:

- Identify and describe the practices, customs, and rules governing Parliament’s activities.
- Consider the role of neutral public servants in what is otherwise considered to be an inherently political environment and how political priorities, relationships and sensitivities impact the role of the professional public servant in the activities of Parliament.
- Analyze aspects of the operation of Parliament in relation to government policy decisions.
- Apply how the rules of the Legislative Assembly impact government policy decisions and communications inside and outside of Parliament.

COURSE REFERENCE MATERIAL:

- Extensive material on the range of topics that will be covered in the course can be found at: https://www.ourcommons.ca/About/ProceduralReferences/Index-e.html
- Background information on Agents of Parliament can be found in the following Public Policy Forum study: https://ppforum.ca/project/agents-of-parliament/

GRADING SCHEME

- In-class exercises on rules, practices and terminology: Up to 10% each to a total of 30%
- Three written assignments with presentation (at least one will be a team exercise): 20% each for a total of 60%
- Participation: 10%
- Total: 100%

Please note: As this is a new course, some grading elements may be subject to
change, but the overall structure will remain consistent.

Total: 100%

**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/](http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/)