

Political Geography
Geog 3811 – Winter 2024
In-person – Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:30 – 4:00 pm
RC 2001 (originally - RB 1023)
January 8, 2024 – April 9, 2024
Instructor: Reg Nelson – rjnelson@lakeheadu.ca

Course Description:

A broad examination of the spatial nature of politics. How do the particulars of a place, whether a country, city, or university campus affect politics, and how are places shaped by politics at a global, regional and local scale? Special attention will be given to how politics is both experienced and shaped by individuals based upon their relationship to political structures at multiple scales.

Course Objectives:

Rather than memorizing information about different political structures, organizations and concepts, the intent is to encourage the direct application of the vocabulary and concepts of political geography:

- in research and advocacy;
- to engage in political processes;
- to explain the power relationships that shape personal experience based upon understandings of race, gender, ableism, and poverty;
- be able to situate ourselves within different political contexts

Course Organisation:

General Themes by Week

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Expectations
January 8	Create Course Outline		
January 15	Discuss Introduction (Smith, 2020)		Choose Topic – Assign 1
January 22	Discuss Assign 1 Topic w/ Study Group		Assign 1 - Sources
January 29	Decide “Land Back” Groups		
February 5	Practice deputations w/ Study Group		Assign 1 - Draft
February 12	Deliver deputations and presentations to class		Assign 1 – Finished Project
February 19	Family Day – Reading Week		
February 26	What does Land Back mean?		Divide Group Assignments
March 4	Intra-Group work	Inter-Group work	
March 11	Intra-Group work	Inter-Group work	Draft Projects – Assign 2
March 18	Intra-Group work	Inter-Group work	
March 25	Display Land Back Projects – Assign 2		
April 1	Easter – Make-up Day April 9 – Pizza Party		Final Project Due

Textbook and Readings:

We will be using the textbook *Political Geography: A Critical Introduction* by Sara Smith (2020). The textbook is available in multiple formats and will be **necessary** to respond to the discussion prompts each week (40% of the course).

Additional journal articles, websites, videos, podcasts and other media will also be assigned in class or on D2L for the discussions.

You will be expected to access other high quality academic sources to support discussions and other assignments.

Smith, S. (2020). *Political Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley Blackwell.

Note: there are multiple versions available in print, different e-book formats, and it is also available in full on Google Books.

Expectations:

Attendance: You are expected to attend class and take part in discussions and activities.

Communication: I am generally available to talk after class, I answer emails within 24 hours (usually faster) and can usually make time for a meeting during regular workdays, Mon-Fri. You should make me aware of any difficulties that might prevent your completion of course requirements as soon as possible.

[Student Code of Conduct](#): please read and be familiar with your responsibilities and expectations.

Academic Integrity - substantiated instances of academic dishonesty will be promptly reported.

If you are having difficulty, please:

- discuss it with me - "I value integrity more than a deadline" - let's work it out.
- access one of the many other supports available - see the section below for other resources.

A large part of this course will be facilitating discussion both online and in-class. Statements that are demeaning, that are based upon personal characteristics, or that can be perceived as aggressive will not be tolerated.

ChatGPT, Large Language Models (LLMs) and other manifestations of AI tools

In discussion with the class we have arrived at these basic guidelines. If you have other questions that fall outside of these guidelines please bring it up in class so that we can all consider the implications. Do not assume that because your use-case hasn't been addressed that you can proceed with the use of AI tools.

1. All work submitted, for any of the assignments and discussions should be your own original work and all works consulted, paraphrased or quoted that contribute to your work must be properly cited, as per APA guidelines and according to the Lakehead University Code of Conduct.

- It is expected that using LLMs to pose questions about Political Geography may have interesting outcomes that may further foster debate and discussion. If any AI or LLM tool is used, then it must be explicitly noted AND **the question or prompt used as input to the AI/LLM must be included**. Failure to cite the use of these tools in this way will be considered a breach of academic integrity.

Supports:

Please talk with me if you are experiencing difficulty. I may not always be able to help but will try to direct you to someone who can. Supports available include, but are not limited to:

- [Student Accessibility Services](#) - “facilitates the provision of academic accommodations for students with temporary and/or permanent disabilities/medical conditions.” Academic Accommodation is available to all students that need it and will be facilitated by Student Accessibility Services.
- [Student Health and Wellness](#) - “provides a range of counselling options, health services, and wellness programs.”
- [Student Success Centre](#) - can help with “time management, reading and note taking, study skills, exam preparation, resume and cover letter, job searching, networking and much more.”
- [Academic Support Zone](#) - part of the Student Success Centre focused on tutoring, writing, math skills and other academic resources.
- [Indigenous Student Services Centre](#) - “Our aim is to help Indigenous students to achieve success in their academic goals through a variety of support services.”
- [LUSU Student Centres](#) - don’t forget that your student fees help fund the [Food Resources Centre](#), [Gender Equity Centre](#), [Pride Central](#), [Aboriginal Awareness Centre](#), [Multicultural Centre](#) and a [Sustainability Initiative](#).

Evaluation:

Your assignments and other marked components of the course are designed to facilitate learning and understanding and to provide evidence of these achievements.

All assignments must use **APA 7th Edition** formatting where possible. For example, an essay should use APA styling for all components while a website must, at a minimum, employ in-text citations and have an APA formatted reference list. If in doubt ask. I will often consult the Purdue University Writing Lab for their [APA Formatting and Style Guide \(7th Edition\)](#).

Assignment/ Project	Description	Deliverables/Breakdown	Mark
AIM Course	Academic Integrity Matters	Upload 2 certificates to Course Site.	5%
Participation	Attend classes and contribute to activities and discussions		10%
Discussions	A mix of online and in-person discussions		40%
Assignment 1	Advocacy and Political Engagement – see assignment details		20%
Assignment 2	Land Back project – see assignment details		25%

Assignments/Projects/Presentations

AIM Course (5%):

AIM Certificate & Refresher Module

Due: January 19

NOTE: No other assignments will be accepted until the two certificates have been uploaded to D2L.

The AIM Course is available through Lakehead University MYCOURSELINK. Both the 8 module AIM course and the Refresher Module must be completed. This should take about an hour to complete and is intended to be an easy 5% towards the entire course.

Go to MyCourseLink (<https://mycourselink.lakeheadu.ca>)

- Log in using your Lakehead username and password
- Click "Self Registration" from the menu at the top of the page
- Select "Academic Integrity Matters (AIM)" from the list
- Follow the steps presented until it confirms that you've been registered
- Complete the modules

After you have completed the 8 modules you must also complete the Refresher module (this will only become available after completing the original AIM course).

Upload **both** Certificates to Assignment 1 on the Course D2L site. Note that these **must be the PDF files** generated in the Awards section of D2L, not a screenshot.

Participation (10%)

This is different from the formal weekly discussions. It is basically an attendance mark but with the added expectation that you participate in activities and discussions that take place in the classroom each day. In general, this will not be graded – show up and be engaged and you will earn the full 10%.

Weekly Discussions (40%):

4% per week over 10 weeks

There will be assigned readings each week from the textbook by Smith (2020) and other journal articles, videos, and webpages as announced in class and posted on D2L.

Discussions will take place both within discussion forums on D2L and during class time. You **must cite readings and sources using APA formatting** within the discussions.

Assignment 1 (20%)

Advocacy and Political Engagement – choose a political topic that interests you and that you believe needs to be addressed by local, regional, national or international governing bodies. You will imagine that the rest of class represents the organization or government that you are trying to influence. You must persuade us with impactful arguments that incorporate references to scholarly articles, reports, treaties, strategic plans and other official documents. Your

argument may be written, in the form of a presentation, maps, artwork, or other media so long as it:

- illustrates in-depth knowledge of the topic, including references to scholarly work and official documents,
- has a spatial (geographic) component – we will discuss what this means in-class.
- Utilizes a critical approach to political geography as described by Smith (2020).

Marking Scheme – the mark for this assignment will be based upon 3 different components:

- A draft presentation to your study group. (5%),
- Feedback that you give to your colleagues based upon their draft presentations. You will be expected to give actionable comments, of two or three sentences, to each of your colleagues to help improve their final assignment. (5%),
- The final project as displayed in class and submitted on D2L (photographs, video, or audio may be needed depending on the medium chosen). This presentation may take several forms. It is expected that the presentation or discussion should be about 10-15 minutes with additional time for questions. (10%)

Assignment 2 (25%)

LAND BACK – What is ‘Land Back’ and what does it mean for our society? The class will be divided into three groups so that the concept of Land Back can be explored at different scales:

1. What does Land Back mean for **local communities** including governance, taxation, community relationships, and
2. How can Land Back be managed at a **national scale** and how does it fit within existing structures such as the Indian Act, the Constitution, decisions by the Supreme Court, and modern Treaties and Land Claims.
3. What can examples of Indigenous sovereignty in other countries teach us about Land Back? What **international governance** structures, Treaties, and agreements affect Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples and what are the implications for Land Back.

Because International agreements affect National politics which in turn affects local/community politics, it will be necessary to liaison between the three groups working at different scales. This will also insure that the groups are not insular and that everyone in the class has exposure to concepts of Indigenous sovereignty and Land Back across different scales and jurisdictions. The groups will be responsible for deciding on the task for each group member; however, it is expected that each group member will be responsible for an independent project or article which will be marked individually.

Time will be allotted during class time for work within and between groups.

Marking scheme – marks will be awarded based upon 2 components:

- Ability to work as a group member based upon peer-evaluation, including the ability to incorporate feedback from discussions with other groups (10%),
- The final project as displayed to class and submitted on D2L (photographs, video, or audio may be needed depending on the medium chosen. Each individual’s component of the project should be approximately equivalent to a 2,500 word essay, although this may vary depending on other original work submitted. (15%)

Rubric

All assignments and presentations will be evaluated by your ability to incorporate the various themes explored during the course.

	Rating			
	4	3	2	1
Assignment Basics				
Sources	Uses multiple research-quality sources	Uses multiple sources	Information from few sources or lower-quality sources	Information from a single source.
Themes/Ideas	Logical sequencing and structure while demonstrating synthesis of ideas	Logical sequencing and structure while demonstrating a summary of ideas	Little organization or structure. Still addresses important themes/ideas	Little organization or structure and doesn't adequately address themes/ideas
Bloom's Taxonomy	Demonstrates ability to critique and evaluate concepts and develop original ideas.	Ability to apply information in new situations and demonstrate technical knowledge.	Demonstrate understanding of ideas/concepts in different contexts.	Demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts and ideas as described in readings and discussions.
References/Citations	Excellent use of APA (7 th ed.) formatting	Good use of APA formatting with some difficulties	Citations and references are present but with little consistency and formatting.	Little structure to citations and references.
Specific to Presentations				
Presentation Style	Excellent pacing and structure to presentation. Follows time constraints	Good pacing to presentation. Exceeds 2 or 3 minutes less/more than time constraint	Sequencing and pacing do not contribute to presentation of material.	Presentation not adequately planned and executed.
Use of multi-media (images, maps, graphics, audio, video)	Excellent use of multi-media to illuminate ideas and themes	Good use of multi-media to illuminate ideas and themes	Little use of multi-media to illuminate ideas and themes	No attempt or haphazard attempt to use multi-media
Note: language can be used to illuminate ideas. There may be instances where projects do not benefit from multi-media but may instead be more forcefully illustrated with poetry or prose. This will be taken into account.				
Answer questions	Excellent ability to answer questions with references to course material and other academic sources.	Illustrates ability to clearly answer questions and knowledge of relevant sources.	Can answer questions within the context of presentation/project material and sources	Difficulty answering questions using sources referenced in the presentation/project.