



Lakehead University  
Canadian Government  
POLI-2212-FA  
Fall 2015

Instructor: **Normand Perreault** (Department of Political Science)

Classroom: AT 1001

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-1:00

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Office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 13:00 – 13:20, or by appointment

**Course description:**

This course will provide a broad overview of the main features of Canadian government and democracy. Our focus will be on how political institutions in Canada have evolved to respond to the challenges and special circumstances that have shaped Canada, during the course of its history.

We will begin by situating Canada's political system and society within its international context. This will lead us to draw useful comparisons with other political systems, in an effort to identify what is common between Canada and these systems, and what is uniquely Canadian. We will then proceed to discuss the specific aspects of Canadian political culture, economic situation and society that have played a prominent role in defining the Canadian political system.

The next portion of the course will attempt to explain the main features of the Canadian political system, and how these have been articulated into institutional structures and practices. These include regional politics, language politics, identity politics, class politics, pluralist politics, bureaucratic politics, and aboriginal politics.

We will then explore in more detail the main institutional components of the Canadian political system, namely the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada's specific adaptation of British parliamentarianism, parties and elections, and federalism.

We will conclude the semester by examining the special roles played by interest groups, lobby groups, social movements, regional actors, international structures and actors, and the media within the Canadian political system.

### **Required readings:**

- Brooks, Stephen and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2013. (available in paperback) ISBN-10: 0195443748 ; ISBN-13: 978-0195443745
- Additional reading material will be handed out during the semester.

### **Evaluation:**

The evaluation scheme will consist of the following items:

- A first short paper (maximum 1,500 words in length) that is due in class on October 15<sup>th</sup>, and that is worth 30% of your total course grade.
- A second short paper (maximum 1,500 words in length) that is due in class on November 12<sup>th</sup>, and that is worth 30% of your total course grade.
- A final paper (maximum 2,500 words in length) that is due **by email**, at noon, on December 7<sup>th</sup>, and that is worth 40% of your total course grade.

**Late papers are not accepted.**

### **Outline of weekly lectures and readings**

**Week 1 (15 and 17 September) Canada in context: how do we compare with other countries and in what way are we unique?**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 419-434.

**Week 2 (22 and 24 September) The domestic scene: what have we achieved and what do we stand for?**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 369-416.

**Week 3 (29 September and 1 October) Basic concepts of politics: the steady rise of the State and the difficult emergence of democracy. What is politics and how can we situate the essential features of government within a useful context.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 1-25.

**Week 4 (6 and 8 October) Is there a place for money and wealth in politics? The influence of economic factors on the political process.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 77-102.

**Week 5 (13 and 15 October) Does culture play a role in politics?**

(The first short paper is due in class on October 15<sup>th</sup>)

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 29-75.

**Week 6 (20 and 22 October) Regionalism and the great Canadian dream of a country that spans a continent: how regional identities and regional interests have shaped the Canadian political landscape.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 104-127.

**Week 7 (27 and 29 October) The Constitution and the Charter: providing a stable framework for political action, while protecting rights and promoting ideals.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 129-189.

**Week 8 (3 and 5 November) The federal structure of government.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 191-224.

**Week 9 (10 and 12 November) The Parliamentary system in Canada.**

(The second short paper is due in class on November 12<sup>th</sup>)

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 226-272.

**Week 10 (17 and 19 November) Parties, elections and popular participation: the pluralist model of politics.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 275-313.

**Week 11 (24 and 26 November) Interest groups and lobbying.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 314-341.

**Week 12 (1 and 3 December) The role of the media in politics.**

- Stephen Brooks and Marc Ménard. Canadian Democracy: A Concise Introduction, pp. 343-366.

**The final paper is due by email, at noon, on December 7<sup>th</sup>**