

POLI 2110 FA
CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Fall 2026

Monday & Wednesday: 2:30am to 4:00am
ATAC 2015

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 4pm to 5pm

1. Course Description

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of Canadian government and politics, emphasizing the complex coexistence of diverse social and political identities within the Canadian state. Students will critically examine how various social, institutional, and political forces shape the governance of Canada, with a particular focus on the tensions and interactions between regionalism, Indigenous sovereignty, and democratic principles. The course will address pressing issues such as political culture, federalism, and the ongoing challenges of reconciling competing interests in a multicultural society. Through a combination of lectures and robust class discussions, students will engage with key concepts and theoretical frameworks that illuminate the shifting power dynamics underpinning Canadian political life. The course encourages a critical analysis of how norms and political forces influence perceptions of justice, equality, and coexistence within the Canadian context.

By the end of this course, students will critically assess the foundations of Canadian political identity, with an emphasis on the historical, social, and political factors that shape Canadian political culture and governance. They will evaluate the significance of Indigenous sovereignty, apply key concepts of power and governance to contemporary issues, and analyze the roles of regionalism, federalism, and political culture in shaping policy and behavior. Students will also examine mechanisms of political participation, develop research and analytical skills, and engage in critical discussions on multiculturalism and social cohesion. Ultimately, they will apply their knowledge to analyze current political events, connecting theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios in Canadian politics.

This course consists of twice-weekly lectures. Lectures will introduce key concepts and theoretical approaches in the service of robust class discussions.

2. Required Texts:

Available through the bookstore: *Canadian Politics Today: Democracy, Diversity and Good Government, 1st edition*, Livianna Tossutti, Eric Mintz, Kathy L Brock, Doreen Barrie (Pearson, 2021). \$69.99 CAD

I will upload to D2L all the other articles and book chapters outlined in the weekly readings.

3. Assessment

Participation (25%)

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions by critically engaging with the course readings and lectures. They should contribute to discussions by asking questions, responding to peers, and applying the key concepts discussed in class.

Bi-weekly, In Class Quizzes (5 x 5% = 25%)

Bi-weekly quizzes will assess students' understanding of the core concepts and readings covered in the previous weeks. These quizzes will take about 15 minutes include short-answer questions that focus on the key themes discussed in lectures. There will be six quizzes, but only five will count, since your lowest mark, or a missed quiz, will not be included in the tally.

Mid-Term Quiz (25%)

The mid-term quiz will be a more comprehensive assessment covering Weeks 1-6. This open-book, timed quiz will include questions that require students to apply the concepts learned in the first half of the course to specific scenarios or case studies in Canadian politics.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will consist of several essay questions requiring students to synthesize and critically analyze the course material. Students will be asked to apply the theoretical frameworks and key concepts discussed throughout the course to current political issues in Canada. The exam will be open-book, allowing students to reference course readings, lecture notes, and other relevant materials.

4. Course Schedule

WEEK 1 (Sept. 9)

INTRODUCTIONS

Where do countries come from? Why countries at all? Is Canada a special country?

WEEK 2 (Sept. 14 & 16)

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL POWER

Key Concepts: four dimensions of power, politics, government, democracy

WEEK 3 (Sept. 21 & 23)

INDIGENOUS NATIONHOOD

Key Concepts: nationhood, sovereignty, treaty

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 11: "Indigenous Rights and Governance"

WEEK 4 (Sept. 28 & 30)**EMPIRE AND STATE BUILDING**

Key Concepts: settler colonialism, genocide, Royal Proclamation, Quebec Act

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 2: "Canada's Political Development and Challenges"

WEEK 5 (Oct. 5 & 7) No classes.**READING BREAK****WEEK 6 (October 12 & 14)****CONFEDERATION, CONSTITUTION, AND FEDERALISM**

Key Concepts: British North America Act, Indian Act, federalism, constitutionalism, Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 10: "The Constitution, Constitutional Change, and the Protection of Rights and Freedoms"

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 12: "The Federal System"

WEEK 7 (October 19 & 21)**19th MID-TERM QUIZ****21st CANADIAN POLITICAL CULTURE AND IDEOLOGIES**

Key Concepts: Founding Fragments theory, Formative Events theory, regionalism, ideology, conservatism, Red Toryism, liberalism, socialism

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 5: "Political Culture"

WEEK 8 (October 26 & 28)**ECONOMICS**

Key Concepts: taxation, federal finance, inflation, deficit, national debt

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 4: "The Canadian Economy, Inequality, and the Environment"

Stephen Metcalf, "[Neoliberalism: The Idea That Changed the World](#)" *The Guardian* (August 17, 2017)

"[The progressive case for MMT: Lifting the veil of money](#)" *Canadian Dimension* (February 1, 2022)

WEEK 9 (November 2 & 4)**NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Key Concepts: staples thesis, natural resources, resource curse, sustainability

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 4: "The Canadian Economy, Inequality, and the Environment"

Leanne Simpson. 2002. "Indigenous Environmental Education for Cultural Survival"
Canadian Journal of Environmental Education 7(1).

WEEK 10 (November 9 & 11)**POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS**

Key Concepts: political parties, single-member-plurality, proportional representation

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 8: "Political Parties"

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 9: "Elections, the Electoral System, and Voting Behaviour"

WEEK 11 (November 16 & 18)**THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

Key Concepts: constitutional monarchy, constitutional conventions, formal and political executive, powers of the prime minister, cabinet secrecy and solidarity, party discipline

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 13: "The Executive"

WEEK 12 (November 23 & 25)**THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH: PARLIAMENT**

Key Concepts: responsible government, good government, confidence, bicameralism, House of Commons, Senate, Parliamentary sovereignty

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 14: "Parliament"

WEEK 13 (November 30 & December 2)**THE JUDICIARY**

Key Concepts: rule of law, judicial independence, Charter reference case, common law, civil law, Indigenous law

Canada's Politics Today Ch. 16: "The Judicial System: Law and the Courts"

Academic Integrity

A breach of Academic Integrity is a serious offence. The principle of Academic Integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing, and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students are strongly advised to familiarize themselves with the Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity ("[The Code](#)") - and, in particular, sections 26 and 83 through 85. Non-compliance with the Code will NOT be tolerated in this course and the Code will be adhered to in terms of disciplinary action. The Code provides a full description of academic offences, procedures when Academic Integrity breaches are suspected and sanctions for breaches of Academic Integrity.

Lakehead's Accommodation Statement

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities/medical conditions. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities/medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability/medical condition and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please email sas@lakeheadu.ca or visit <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>