

# Lakehead

UNIVERSITY

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## **POLI 2110 WDE Canadian Government and Politics/W2026**

**Instructor:** Dr. Todd R. Stubbs

**Class Times:** Web-based (asynchronous)

**Office Hour:** Monday 10:30-11:30 (Zoom), or by appointment.

**Email:** tstubbs@lakeheadu.ca

### **Course Description**

Canada's democratic system is among the most highly developed and respected in the world. Yet, governing Canada is uniquely complex and fraught with challenges and pitfalls that are distinct features of the Canadian experience. This course examines the development and practice of Canadian political institutions, such as Parliament, the prime minister, the courts, and the civil service. The course considers the interaction between the executive and the legislature, the role of interest groups and political parties in policy making, the legal and political impact of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and other issues. Lastly, the course considers current political problems and debates and reflects critically on the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary democracy and democratic governance in Canada.

### **Course Outcomes**

In POLI 2110, students will develop a thorough understanding of how the Canadian system of government developed and currently functions and the nature of Canadian politics, with a focus on the national level. An additional stress is placed on developing critical reading and writing skills, as well as enhancing discussion skills.

### **Mandatory Reading Materials**

Patrick Malcolmson, et al., *The Canadian Regime: An Introduction to Parliamentary Government in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021). \$59.95 (Lakehead University Bookstore).

Additional readings are linked in the syllabus. Check the weekly schedule regularly to stay up-to-date on scheduled readings.

### **Evaluation**

Part I Argumentative Paper: 25%

Research Essay: 35%

Online Posts: (10 x 5% each) 40%

## **Course Structure and Work Requirements**

### **Course Structure:**

This course takes place entirely online in asynchronous format (no Zoom lectures). The thematic structure is broken up into 12 weekly blocks covering a major theme or set of themes. The instructor will upload a PowerPoint lecture at the start of each scheduled week. To complete the course successfully, students should read the posted lecture and the scheduled reading/video and complete the required discussion posts.

### **Evaluated Work:**

a) Argumentative Paper (25%)

**Due 22 February 2026**

**Length:** 1,000 words minimum/1,150 maximum

**Sources:** You must use Malcomson et al. Additional sources may be consulted (no more than three), including reputable websites and scholarly and journalistic articles/books

For this assignment, students will write a brief paper arguing for or against reforming one of Canada's major institutions of governance as covered in Part I of the course, and as outlined in detail in Malcomson et al. Quite typically in Canadian political history, the federal Senate has been subject of contention over the need for reform, but other institutions may be examined as well, including the Crown, Parliament, the Constitution (which includes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Aboriginal Rights sections), the civil service, and the judiciary. A successful paper will demonstrate a good understanding of the themes covered in Part I and provide a clear argument with sound, well-informed reasons to support it.

More detailed guidelines will be posted on D2L.

b) Research Essay (35%)

**Due 22 March 2026**

**Length:** 2,500 to 2,750 words in length, not including the bibliography.

**Sources:** Minimum of 8 scholarly and/or government sources.

The Research Paper will address in depth a theme relating to Canadian government and politics. Additional guidelines, including suggested topics, will be posted on D2L.

For general assistance on writing research papers see:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/research\\_papers/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/research_papers/index.html)

c) Participation (40%)

Participation in this course will comprise your discussion posts. Students are responsible for completing ten of twelve posts. You may complete all twelve posts; your ten highest scores will be counted. Each post will receive a grade out of 4.

### **Evaluation of Written Assignments/Projects:**

#### 80-100% (A range):

Shows advanced competency in meeting the research and/or analytical and/or communications and/or cognitive and/or technical requirements of the assignment.

- The work is of exceptional quality
- The work is insightful, detailed, articulate, grammatically correct, technically correct, and well organized

#### 70-79% (B range):

Exhibits a good effort in meeting the requirements of the assignment or examination.

- The work may be less focused, detailed, organized or less widely researched than a paper worthy of a higher grade or communicates fewer ideas with less detailed analysis than an assignment worthy of a higher grade

#### 60-69% (C range):

Average approach and level of success in communicating analysis, factual material, and ideas.

- The work offers less detailed analysis and/or a lack sufficient research, and /or a less articulate or less clearly focused argument and/or may have technical flaws

#### 50-59% (D range):

A poor level of competency in meeting the requirements of an assignment or examination.

- The work is poorly organized and/or written, features generalized statements, lacks supporting details and/or critical analysis, and features significant technical flaws

#### Below 50% (F):

Failure to meet the requirements of the assignment.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Late Assignments:**

All written work must be handed in on time. Late work will be penalized 2% per day, including weekends and holidays. Late assignments may not be accepted after more than ten days. To obtain an exemption for medical or compassionate reasons, students must present signed supporting documentation.

**IMPORTANT:** Unsubstantiated technical problems or electronic submission of blank files or otherwise unreadable files are not legitimate excuses for late penalty exemption.

**AI policy:** The use of generative AI to interpret texts and generate prose is not permitted for any written work submitted for credit in this course; for clarity, this injunction applies to weekly posts and written papers. The rationale here is simple: 1) the student who uses generative AI to substitute for the effort of reading and producing independent writing does not learn to interpret texts proficiently or write at a university level; 2) it is a flagrant waste of the instructor's time and effort to grade papers produced by a machine; and 3) it is academically dishonest to pass off work completed by a third party as one's own.

In cases of suspected use of AI to substitute for independent writing and reading, the instructor reserves the right to refuse to assign a grade to the paper, since it is not the student's work. In addition, by attempting to receive credit for work that is not their own, students who violate the

course AI policy should expect their case to be referred to the department head and the faculty dean, where further penalties may be imposed.

**IMPORTANT:** since Grammarly now uses generative AI, it is not permitted for use in this course.

For more information on the University's AI policy see

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/chatgpt-ai-tools>

### **Academic Misconduct:**

Lakehead University's policy on academic misconduct can be found in the online Course Calendar. See <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity>

A copy of the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures" including sections on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct may also be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

- a. The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.
- b. A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

Students disciplined under the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures may appeal their case through the Judicial Panel.

Note: "Plagiarism" shall be deemed to include:

- a. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
- b. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given."

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## Weekly Schedule and Due Dates

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### Due Dates

**Argumentative Paper:** 22 February 2026

**Research Essay:** 22 March 2026

All due dates are valid until 11:59 pm on the specified day. The written assignment must be submitted electronically to the appropriate D2L drop box in pdf or .doc (Word) format. Please do not submit documents in any other file format.

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### Weekly Schedule:

#### Part I: Ideas, Values, and Institutions

##### Week 1 (5 January-11 January)

Introduction to the Course/Ideas, Values, and Institutions: An Overview

Malcolmson, Introduction.

##### Week 2 (12 January-18 January)

Canada's Foundational Principles

Malcolmson, Ch. 1.

##### Week 3 (19 January-25 January)

The Canadian Constitution and Federalism

Malcolmson, Ch. 2 and 8.

##### Week 4 (26 January-1 February)

Responsible Government: The Bedrock of Canadian Democracy

Malcolmson, Ch. 3.

**Week 5 (2 February-8 February)**The Crown, Parliament, and the Civil Service

Malcolmson, Chs. 4 and 5.

Mario Polèse, “Why not replace the monarchy with a monarchy of a different kind?”  
*Policy Options*, 12 December 2022.

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2022/monarchy-canada-indigenous/>

**Week 6 (9 February-22 February)****Argumentative Paper due 22 February 2026**The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Modern Judiciary**Reading week 16-22 February**

Malcolmson, Chs. 9 and 10.

**Part II: Politics, Policy, and Participation****Week 7 (23 February-1 March)**Democracy in Canada: What Are the Issues?

Malcolmson, Chs. 6 and 7.

Andrew Parkin, “What public opinion tells us about the political outlook for 2026,”  
*Policy Options*, 29 December 2025.

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2025/12/outlook-2026/>

**Week 8 (2 March-8 March)**Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Politics

Eva Jewell, “A Decade of Disappointment: Reconciliation & the System of a Crown,”  
*The Yellowhead Institute*, 30 September 2024.

<https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2024/09/30/a-decade-of-disappointment-reconciliation-the-system-of-a-crown/>

Douglas Sanderson, “Indigenous-settler relations need bold solutions and strong political will,” *Policy Options*, 20 December 2022.

<https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2022/sanderson-indigenous-solutions/>

**Week 9 (9 March-15 March)**Intersectional Issues in Canadian Politics

Tammy Findlay, “Intersectionalities of Opportunism: Justin Trudeau and the Politics of ‘Diversity,’” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 60 (March 2022): 40-59.  
<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/ijcs.60.x.40>

**Week 10 (16 March-22 March)****Research Paper due 22 March 2026**Interest Groups, Grassroots Politics, and Environment

(Film) *Ramillages (Gatherings) Seeds* (NFB, 2020).  
<https://www.nfb.ca/series/gatherings/season1/episode2/>

**Week 11 (23 March-29 March)**Globalization and International Politics

Deborah de Lange, “A sustainable, circular economy could counter Trump’s tariffs while strengthening international trade,” *The Conversation*, 12 December 2024.  
<https://theconversation.com/a-sustainable-circular-economy-could-counter-trumps-tariffs-while-strengthening-international-trade-245127>

**Week 12 (30 March-7 April)**Is Canadian Democracy Healthy? / Course Wrap-Up

Malcolmson, Conclusion.

(End of Course)