

## Lakehead University (Fall 2021): POLI 3519 Political Parties & Electoral Behaviour

**Instructor:** Marc James; [mjames4@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:mjames4@lakeheadu.ca)

**“Office” hours:** I will be quick to respond to questions or concerns by email; “face to face” meetings are available by request (using Zoom)

**Lectures:** Accessed online (asynchronous: there is no requirement to attend “live lectures”; I plan to upload lectures/requirements for **each week on Fridays, beginning on September 10th**)

**Introduction:** This class focuses on the history, development, ideology, and present orientation of Canada’s political parties as well as our electoral system and the electoral behaviour of Canadians. As we are now in the throes of a federal election, we can see the political parties in a more “up close and personal” way through their election strategies, ads, and debates. We will also take the opportunity to compare parties, elections and voting behaviour in the United States and Canada. Our goal as students of Canadian politics is to have a more detailed understanding of the continuing evolution of parties, elections and voting behaviour in modern democracies. Such an understanding may allow us to more wisely consider among possible alternative electoral systems and other changes that could contribute to the greater health of our parliamentary democracy.

**Required e-texts** (these resources will be supplemented by links to other readings on Courselink):

1. Wiseman, Nelson. (2020) *Partisan Odysseys* (digital) U of T Press: Toronto
2. Roy, J. and Alcantara, C. (2020) *Winning and Keeping Power in Canadian Politics* (digital) U of T Press: Toronto

### Requirements:

**1. Discussion Forums (40%):** these are *most crucial* in allowing for discussion and widening our consideration of the issues raised in lectures and readings. You will be asked in lecture to contribute a response of your own to a new forum each week, to comment upon the responses of at least three other classmates, and of course encouraged to keep the polite and constructive discussion going.

**2. Term Essay (30%):** you will be required to write a research essay on a significant issue directly related to our class discussions and taking into consideration the federal election and

its results. I will supply further information and suggested topics very early in the term. The due date for this requirement will be November 19th.

**3. “Take-home” final exam (30%):** the exam assignment will be introduced as part of our lecture on December 3rd. It will be formally assigned during the exam period, and you will be given at least three days to complete the assignment.

### **Tentative Schedule:**

**September 10:** Introduction to class and requirements; who needs political parties? are they detrimental to democracy? Observations on the present election. **No assigned reading.**

**September 17:** Canada’s Political Party History I

**READ:** *Partisan Odysseys (PO)*, Chs. 1-3

**September 24:** Canada’s Political Party History II; we will also discuss the results of the national election and offer information about the **essay assignment**

**READ:** *PO*, Chs. 4-6

**October 1:** Parties, Reform, and Ideologies

**READ:** *PO*, Chs. 7-10

**October 8:** Brokerage Politics and Populism

**READ:** *Political Parties and the Practice of Brokerage Politics* (Carty and Ross); *Right-Wing Populism, Conservative Governance, and Multiculturalism in Canada* (Laycock and Weldon). Links will be available on Courselink “content” or in lecture slides.

**October 22:** Canadian and American electoral systems and criticisms

**READ:** *A better electoral system for Canada* (Derriennic); *Why electoral reform might improve representation and why it might make it worse* (Guntermann). Links will be available on Courselink “content” or in lecture slides.

**October 29:** The media and electoral behaviour

**READ:** *Voting Behaviour in Canada* (Anderson and Stephenson); *The Rise of Digital Media and the Retooling of Politics* (Jungherr; Rivero; Gayo-Avello). Links will be available on Courselink “content” or in lecture slides.

**November 5:** Elections and Reform

**READ:** *Challenge and Change: Elections and Voting* (Gidengil); *Democratic Reform: The Search for Guiding Principles* (Seidle). Links will be available on Courselink “content” or in lecture slides.

**November 12:** Present Challenges

**READ:** *Winning and Keeping Power in Canadian Politics* (Roy and Alcantara), Intro: Ch.1

**November 19:** Present Challenges (essays due)

**READ:** *Winning and Keeping Power in Canadian Politics* (Roy and Alcantara), Chs. 2-5

**November 26:** Present Challenges

**READ:** *Winning and Keeping Power in Canadian Politics* (Roy and Alcantara), Chs. 6-11

**December 3:** Final Thoughts and Exam Assignment Information