



Lakehead University
POLI 4215 Canadian Political Thought (Fall 2018)
MW 11:30-1:00 – BB 1054

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines a variety of important Canadian thinkers, statesmen, and writers, including Lord Durham, Pierre Trudeau, Charles Taylor, George Grant, James Tully, Kari Levitt, and Stephan Leacock. Their writings, speeches, and political practice raise a number of important political themes and questions. What, if anything, defines Canada as a nation? Does Canada allow for meaningful cultural diversity? If so, to what extent is that diversity threatened by the liberalism, the technological age, and/or by the United States? Can Canada's newfound emphasis on individual rights be reconciled with the cultivation and sustainment of healthy and distinct traditions and communities? To what extent can Canada incorporate those traditions and communities that predate the arrival of European settlers without fundamentally altering those same traditions and communities?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and POLICIES

A Note on Seminars:

This is seminar, not lecture-based course. Thus, although the instructor may occasionally provide formal lectures, the focus of class time will be spent discussing the assigned readings, with students doing the vast majority of the talking. Students are expected to fully participate in this discussion, driving it forward by thoughtfully engaging the readings and one another. For the seminar to be successful, students need to: 1. Read the assigned material carefully, taking notes; 2. Bring the readings to class; 3. Come to class with prepared observations and questions from the readings.

The discussion should involve a respectful exchange of ideas that includes a willingness to entertain, and an attempt to understand, points of views that we disagree with. During discussion, students should engage one another in a respectful way, listening to one another charitably, and making room for diverse points of view. Our goal should neither

be to produce (nor enforce) unanimous opinion, nor to engage in empty debate. Rather our aim should be to pursue the truth together.

Required Texts:

1. Fierlbeck, Katherine, ed., *The Development of Political Thought in Canada: An Anthology*, University of Toronto Press
2. Leacock, Stephan, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Norton Critical Edition (please purchase this edition)

Grading:

Quizzes: 1% X 10 (12 quizzes with the lowest 2 scores dropped)

Multiple Choice Test: 5%

Paper: 17.5% X 2

Paper Presentation and Discussion Questions: 2.5% X 2

Final exam: 25%

Participation: 20%

Papers: Students will sign up for two paper topics, each of which will be associated with a particular set of readings. Paper topics can be found in the reading schedule (below). Sign up sheet to be made available.

Each paper will be a formal academic essay of 1800-2000 words. At the end of the paper, students will include 3 discussion questions to be used in that week's seminar. Papers must be handed in as a hard copy during class time, and submitted online. Late papers will receive a penalty of 10% per class day late.

In their papers, students should defend a thesis in a way that provides an in-depth exegesis and analysis of the assigned readings, using evidence from the text to do so. Secondary sources are not required, as the paper is an exercise in analysis and exegesis rather than outside research. If using the assigned text, simply citing by page number is sufficient.

Paper Presentations and Discussion Questions: On the day the paper is due, students will present their paper to the class for 7-9 minutes. They will then take questions. In addition to presenting, students should be prepared to introduce and pose their discussion questions (at the instructor's direction), which will be discussed by the class. Presenting students should print enough copies of their questions for each student and instructor (approximately 27 in total).

Multiple Choice Test: On October 17 there is a scheduled multiple choice test which will test student's comprehension of the assigned Fierlbeck readings (which we will have covered in class), and *Sunshine Sketches* (which we will not have yet covered, but which students will be expected to read on their own prior to this test). The questions about the Fierlbeck readings will be more detailed than those from *Sunshine Sketches*.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be unannounced and will be based on the readings assigned for the day. There will be 12 quizzes. To cover unavoidable absences or lateness, the lowest 2 quiz scores will be dropped; thus, missed quizzes cannot be made up for any reason. To be successful on quizzes, the readings must be read slowly, and likely more than once.

Class Participation: All students are expected to:

1. Read assigned material carefully.
2. Be prepared to discuss the readings.
3. Bring the readings (hard copies) to class.
4. Follow the course's electronic device policy.
5. Avoid: (a) excessive absences and tardies; (b) private conversations; (c) being inattentive and/or appearing inattentive.

Note 1: Consistently meeting these expectations will earn students a mark in the "B" range (70-79%).

Note 2: To earn a mark in the "A" range (80-100%), consistently fulfill the 5 requirements AND regularly participate in class discussion in a thoughtful way.

*Note 3: Failure to follow even one of the 5 expectations may result in an extremely low grade (for instance, several violations of the course's electronic device policy will result in a mark as low as 1/20 for participation). **Participation grades are not free marks!***

Electronic Devices: Cell phone use is not allowed. If a cell phone is visible, the instructor will assume that it is being used. Laptop use is not allowed. No audio or video recording of the class is allowed without the permission of the instructor. Any allowed recording is for private use only, and cannot be shared or published without the instructor's written consent.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected of all Lakehead University students. Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make themselves fully familiar with Lakehead's policy in this area. Although all these policies will be enforced in full, it is worth emphasizing the following:

Plagiarism involves presenting another's work, ideas, theories, or interpretation as one's own.

To avoid plagiarism, writers should always:

1. Put quotation marks around any words from sources
2. Paraphrase material completely; changing (with the help of a thesaurus) or rearranging a few words or the tense of a verb is not paraphrasing.
3. Give accurate and complete citations for all material *including paraphrased material.*
4. Avoid borrowing entire arguments or approaches to a subject from another writer. Make it 'original' while staying faithful to the assignment parameters.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Readings and schedule will be adjusted as necessary at the instructor's discretion.

PART I

Note: Students must sign up for one paper topic from each part

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| 9/05 | Course Outline |
| 9/10 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 1 Lord Durham According to Lord Durham, what are the defining principles of good government? In his view, what challenges does the particular Canadian situation pose to achieving these principles? How and to what extent does he think these challenges can be met? (3 Students) |
| 9/12 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 9 Kari Levitt What is Levitt's critique of corporate capitalism? How does Levitt connect that critique to liberalism, and what bearing does that connection have on political life in general, and Canadian politics in particular? (3 Students) |
| 9/17 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 11 Pierre Trudeau According to Trudeau, what defines (and what ought to define) Canada as a nation? How does his answer fit with his aim of multiculturalism? Does the framework he provides offer what is necessary for a healthy political community? (4 Students) |
| 9/19 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 12 George Grant Parts I-II Explain Grant's critique of liberalism. How is it connected to his understanding of technology? (3 Students) |
| 9/24 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 12 George Grant Parts III-IV Outline Grant's account and critique of the intellectual forces behind liberal justice. What alternative to liberal justice does he offer? (4 Students) |
| 9/26 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 15 Charles Taylor What does Taylor mean by the "Malaise of Modernity," and what factors does he see as contributing to that malaise? What does he prescribe as a way forward? (4 Students) |
| 10/1 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 16 James Tully According to Tully, what is the aim of multiculturalism? Does he provide a coherent and defensible theoretical foundation for this aim? Does the framework he aims at offer what is necessary for a healthy political community? (3 Students) |
| 10/3 | Fierlbeck—Chapter 17 Will Kymlicka (3 Students)
According to Kymlicka, what is the aim of multiculturalism? Does he provide a coherent and defensible theoretical foundation for this aim? Does the framework he aims at offer what is necessary for a healthy political community? |
| 10/8 | Thanksgiving Holiday |
| 10/10 | TBA |
| 10/15 | TBA |

PART II

Note: For papers in this section, although emphasis should be placed on the current week's chapter(s) associated with the essay prompt, students are encouraged to discuss other parts of the book when relevant to the argument.

- 10/17 Multiple Choice Test on *Sunshine Sketches* and Fierlbeck reader
- 10/22 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Preface, Ch. 1 (2 Students)
What is Leacock's purpose in writing this book? In answering this, consider (a) what light the preface sheds on the first chapter (and vice versa); (b) the importance and meaning of the title; (c) the character of Mr. Smith, including a comparison of Smith and Leacock the narrator.
- 10/24 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 2 (2 Students)
Compare the characters of Mr. Smith and Mr. Thorpe, including their standing in the community and their relationship with each other. What does this chapter mean to show about politics, economics and social standing in Mariposa?
- 10/29 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 3 (4 Students)
What insights does Leacock's description of the expedition shed on his conception of Canadian politics and society? What criticisms of Canadian life does he offer? What praise?
- 10/31 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 4-5 (3 Students)
Examine the relationship of rhetoric (words), and mathematics in relation to the book's characters and themes.
- 11/5 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 4-6 (3 Students)
Examine the character of Reverend Drone. What light does his episode shed on the books major themes and questions?
- 11/7 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 7-9 (3 Students)
What is Leacock's view of love and marriage, and what factors does he see as important to its success or failure?
- 11/12 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 7-9 (3 Students)
Explore the theme of death as it appears in these stories, and throughout the book. How is the reader to reconcile this darker aspect of Leacock's book, and the sunny version of life in Mariposa that he presents?
- 11/14 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 7-9 (3 Students)
Explore the character of Pupkin or Judge Pepperleigh, connecting their words, deeds, and motivations to Leacock's deeper teaching about political, economic, and social life
- 11/19 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 10-11 (3 Students)
What role does self-interest play in the life of Mariposa, and in the election of Mr. Smith? Does Leacock consider self-interest to be more powerful than other factors in political life? Why or why not?
- 11/21 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 10-11 (3 Students)
What does the Marioposa election result say about Canadian identity? In answering, consider Leacock's presentation of Canadians' view of the British Empire and the United States.

- 11/26 Leacock, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, Ch. 12 (3 Students)
What are the differences between city life and town life? What is the significance of the one to the other? Is one superior to the other?
- 11/28 TBA
- 12/3 TBA