

POLI 3215 FDE Politics of Ontario/F2026

Instructor: Dr. Todd Stubbs

Class Times: Web-based

Office/Hours: (Zoom) Wed. 1:30-2:30, or by appointment

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Course Description

Contemporary Ontario politics has its roots the province's decades-long period of economic growth, which attracted large-scale capital investment and extensive labour migration. These factors contributed heavily to Ontario's outsized influence nationally not only in politics and economics, but also in culture and other fields. Among the results of the province's growth and stability were fairly predictable political patterns and outcomes. Yet more recently, in an age of massive neoliberal restructuring of the global economy, economic shocks and a wide range of disruptive social, cultural, environmental, and technological forces have transformed the province's politics, diminished Ontario's standing nationally and internationally, and raised concerns about the path forward. To explore these issues, this course examines the institutions, processes, and behaviours that shape politics in Ontario. In particular, the course will pursue the following questions: What is the nature of Ontario politics? What ideas, interests, and institutions have influenced and guided its development? How do Ontarians engage their political system and why do they make the political choices they do?

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to encourage students to work with and master a range of theoretical and practical tools and approaches to analyzing and better understanding the social, economic, and historical contexts of politics in Ontario. A broader objective is to foster the development of transferrable writing, research, and analytical skills.

Evaluation

Reflective Paper: 25%

Research Essay: 35%

Participation: 40%

Required Materials

Cheryl N. Collier and Jonathan Malloy, eds., *The Politics of Ontario*, Second Edition (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 2024). \$54.95 (paperback).

Additional readings are posted on D2L. Be sure to consult the syllabus regularly for information on scheduled materials.

Course Structure and Work Requirements

Course Structure:

This course is Web-based and will take place entirely online, in 12 weekly cycles. Pay close attention to the class schedule. Students are expected to read all assigned materials and take an active part in discussions.

Written Assignments/Work Requirements:

1) Participation

Participation is an important component of this course. Students will receive weekly scores out of 4.0 for their online posts. Students must complete ten of twelve weekly posts. If you complete all twelve your lowest two scores will be dropped. See the Discussion Post guidelines for further details.

2) Reflective Paper

Due 28 September 2026

Length: 1,000 words

Sources: 1 to 3 reputable sources (these can be scholarly, government materials, or reputable news items)

For this assignment, students will select one of the weekly themes from Part I – The Framework of Ontario Politics (Weeks 1-3: Ontario's status in Confederation; economy and society in Ontario; Ontario's political culture) or Part II – Institutions (Weeks 4-6: Ontario and Federalism; Municipalities and Intergovernmental Relations; Health and Education) and write a reflective paper on a contemporary political problem of interest to you (a subtheme) related to the general theme.

The paper should accomplish the following tasks:

- Identify the political problem and provide adequate background information so the reader
- has a clear understanding of the pertinent issue(s)
- Discuss your personal interest in the political problem. Why does the issue matter to
- you? What would you like to know more about regarding this issue? This section should be reflexive – in other words, you need to communicate an intention to better understand your political viewpoint

See the Written Assignment Guidelines on D2L for more information.

3) Research Essay

Due 23 November 2026

Length: between 2,000 and 2,250 words

Sources: Minimum of 10 scholarly/government sources

Students will craft a research essay on one of the posted topics (see the Research Essay Guidelines on D2L). The essay will be based on no fewer than ten scholarly/reputable items. A successful essay will feature the following elements:

- A thesis statement in the introductory paragraph
- In-text citations for all paraphrased information and direct quotations
- A works cited page with correct citations for each item

See the Written Assignment Guidelines on D2L for more information.

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.

READ CAREFULLY

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*. The rationale 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 or to assess a student's ability to understand and discuss reading materials when the student has resorted to AI; and 3) it is academically dishonest to pass off work completed by a third party (an AI program) 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. Grade sanctions will also be applied in cases where the student uses AI to feign preparation for class discussion. 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 this class, students must submit a signed and dated Declaration of Academic Integrity (DAI) at the start of the course. The form can be found on D2L under Course Documents.

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.

Due Dates

Reflective Paper: 28 September 2026

Research Essay: 23 November 2026

IMPORTANT: All due dates are valid to 11:59 pm on the specified day. All written assignments must be submitted electronically to the appropriate D2L drop box in pdf or .doc (Word) format. Papers in other formats will not be graded.

Weekly Schedule

Please note: Most readings are drawn from Collier and Malloy, *The Politics of Ontario*. Additional materials are posted on D2L.

Part I – The Framework of Ontario Politics

8-14 September

Week 1 – Introduction: Ontario in Confederation

Malloy, “What is Ontario?” ch. 1.

Major, “Business as Usual,” ch. 3.

15-21 September

Week 2 – Economy and Society: The Neoliberal Paradigm

Graefe, “The Political Economy of Ontario,” ch. 2.

(D2L) Lucy Luccisano and Paula Maurutto, “Neoliberal Populism in Ontario: Premier Doug Ford’s Strategic Politics,” *Norteamérica*, 18, 1 (January-June 2023), 405-433.

22-28 September

Week 3 – Political Culture

Esselment, “Ontario’s Political Parties and the Party System,” ch. 9.

(D2L) Michael McGregor, “Understanding Support for Municipal Political Parties: Evidence from Canada,” *Urban Affairs Review*, 60, 5 (2024): 1382–1410.

Part II – Institutions

22-28 September

Reflective Paper due 28 September 2026

Week 4 – Ontario and Federalism

McDowell, “A Brief History,” ch. 4.

Migone, “The Ontario Executive,” ch. 5.

29 September-5 October

Week 5 – Municipalities and Intergovernmental Relations

Spicer, “Local Government,” ch. 6 .

Simmons, “Ontario Federal-Provincial Relations,” ch. 7.

6-19 October

Week 6 – Health and Education

Deber and Marchildon, “Ontario Health Policy and Politics,” ch. 17.

(D2L) Tamika Jarvis, et al., “Promise and peril: how health system reforms impacted public health in three Canadian provinces,” *Canadian Journal of Public Health* (2023): 714–725.

Part III – Interests and Identities

20-26 October

Week 7 – Women and Ontario Politics

Collier, “Progress Stalled,” ch. 10.

(D2L) Kristin Rushowy, “Are women well represented in the Ontario legislature? ‘The

numbers aren't going to lie,” *Toronto Star*, 30 March 2025..

27 October-2 November

Week 8 – Race and Ontario Politics

Hameed, “Race and Ontario Politics,” ch. 12.

James, “Just Want a Regular Life,” ch. 13.

(D2L) Nicholas Keung, “Study details rental discrimination: Landlords are 14% less likely to respond to applications from racial minorities, newcomers, parents,” *Toronto Star*, 6 March 2025, A13.

3-9 November

Week 9 – Class, Labour, and Ontario Politics

Savage, “The Shifting Landscape,” ch. 15.

(D2L) Chris Erl, “Resentment and Admiration: Public Opinion Toward Teachers and Public Sector Employees in Ontario,” *Canadian Journal of Education* 6, 3 (Fall 2023): 597-627.

10-16 November

Week 10 – Regionalism

Comeau, “Northern Ontario,” ch. 11.

Horak, “Toronto and the GTA,” ch. 16.

(D2L) Niall McGee, “Ontario mining claims violate Constitution, First Nation says: Grassy Narrows to launch legal challenge against province,” *Globe & Mail*, 11 July 2024.

17-23 November

Research Paper due 23 November 2026

Week 11 – Environment

Winfield, “The Environment,” ch. 14.

(D2L) Auditor General of Ontario, *Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt* (King’s Printer, August 2023).

* Read “Reflections,” “1.0 Summary,” “2.0 Background,” and “3.0 Audit Objective and Scope.”

24 November-8 December

Week 12 – What are Ontario’s Most Urgent Current Priorities?

End