

**DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences**

**COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2024**

**PO1020 (A3, VC): Introduction to Political Institutions, Processes and Problems – 3 (3-0-0) 45  
Hours for 15 Weeks**

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

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<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	By appointment		

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** This course is an introduction to the institutions, processes and problems of government emphasizing Canadian and other democratic governments. The course includes discussions of law, constitutions, civil liberties, public opinion, voting behaviours, electoral systems, political parties, interest groups, federalism and nationalism. This course offers an introduction to different fields of political study. Problems to be examined may include: political integration, the right to national self determination, humanitarian intervention, globalization, global warming, terrorism and other issues.

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** None

**REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

There is no required text to purchase for this course. All material will be available on myClass.

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** On-Campus and VC

This course includes a videoconference section. Students registered in the videoconference section are able to attend lectures and complete all course components without attendance on campus.

Students are required to have a stable internet connection sufficient to meet the class requirements.

Where disruptions or other technological issues occur with institutional or instructor systems on campus or elsewhere, instructors will ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for videoconference students.

Some videoconference courses may require students to incur reasonable costs for proctoring and other services essential to maintaining the academic integrity of the course. Instructors should design their course to minimize the financial burden on students and are required to submit cost estimates to the responsible department chairperson for approval prior to the start of the course.

This course has the requirements listed below for videoconference students. Failure to meet these requirements may affect attendance and participation grades or result in a grade of zero for supervised assessments (for example tests, exams, or in-class writing assignments).

## VIDEOCONFERENCE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Technology:	Please have the following in working order for class: a webcam, microphone, and speakers or headphones. Technological glitches happen, but these are tools you will need to participate in class.
Class Participation:	<p>Please log into class as you would attend class in-person. We will discuss videoconferencing etiquette and expectations during the first few classes so that we can agree to class expectations as a group.</p> <p>Any activities that we do in class will be designed for participation from those in-person and on videoconference.</p>

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Define and identify political institutions across democratic political systems
- Explain the similarities and differences in political institutional arrangements and be able to articulate how these arrangements influence political processes
- Be able to engage in dialogue about political issues using readings and data to support positions
- Communicate ideas and analysis verbally and in writing
- Be able to interpret and critically assess varied sources of information

### TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

## EVALUATIONS:

Assignment:	Due Date:	Value:
Test 1 (take home)	February 1, 2024	15%
Essay preparation assignment	February 15, 2024 (10pm)	10%
Test 2 (take home)	March 7, 2024	15%
Essay	March 21, 2024 (10pm)	25%
Presentation	March 28, 2024	10%
Cumulative final exam	Scheduled by the registrar	25%

Additional details about evaluations will be provided on myClass and in lecture.

- Detailed information for each assignment will be available on myClass and covered during lectures prior to the due date.
- The late penalty for assignments is 3% a day.
- In cases where submitted work exhibits concerning patterns or raises questions for the instructor about its creation and the student's intellectual effort involved, students may be required to submit to an oral examination regarding the work at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to participate in the oral examination will result in an assigned grade of 0 for the assessment. If, following the oral examination, the instructor still has concerns about the work, the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked on page 5 of this outline) may be applied.

## GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

### Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Please note that dates may be adjusted to accommodate discussion and student interests that results from engagement with the material. Assigned readings for each week are detailed in myClass.

Class dates	Topic	Evaluations/Assignments
January 9, 11	Introduction	
January 16, 18	Constitutions	
January 23, 25	Executives/legislatures	
January 30, Feb. 1	Political parties	Test 1: February 1, 2024 (take home)
February 6, 8	Electoral systems	
February 13, 15	Unitary and federal systems	Essay prep. assignment: Feb. 15, 2024 (10pm)
February 20, 22	Winter Break: no class	
February 27, 29	Participation and voting behaviour	
March 5, 7	Political culture	Test 2: March 7, 2024 (in class)
March 12, 14	Public opinion and media	
March 19, 21	Foreign policy	Essay: March 21, 2024 (10pm)
March 26, 28	Essay conference	Presentation: March 26, 28, 2024
April 2, 4	Globalization	
April 9, 11	Humanitarian intervention	

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

**Respectful participation:** One of the key components of learning in political science is to engage with ideas that may differ from your own. We have ideas about politics because politics is all around us. We may respond quickly to information that opposes our own ideas, but one purpose of learning in this course is to reflect on ideas and better understand opposing ideas. Respectful dialogue with classmates is required. We will treat one another with respect. Expectations around participation will be covered during the first class and re-visited throughout the term as necessary. If you have any concerns about participation, please contact me by email or in-person.

**Attendance:** Try to attend class regularly. Lecture time is a time to prod at information, ask questions and develop information synthesis skills. We will also use some lecture time to work through issues on assignments.

**Preparation:** Please try to come to class prepared to engage with the material and ask questions or offer analysis on the topics we are discussing. Throughout the semester, I want to see you engaging with the materials with your peers. By coming to class having read the readings or having thought about how the

readings apply to current events, you will demonstrate how information can be used to support arguments and policy positions.

**Assignment preparation:** Please see below for NWP's statement on academic misconduct. In PO 1020, we will review these statements together as you are preparing your assignments so that you can ask questions and seek clarification. Plagiarism, or submitting work which is not your own (including AI-generated work), will result in a grade of 0.

**Assignment deadlines:** In general, you are expected to submit your assignments on time as per the syllabus. It is your responsibility to manage your time to meet these deadlines. The deadlines ensure work is complete so I can provide feedback to help prepare you for the assignments that follow. However, if you are struggling to meet a deadline, please contact me to discuss an extension, *prior to the deadline*. Please note that extensions are not guaranteed.

**Final exam:** The final exam will be scheduled during the exam period and is cumulative. Please do not make plans for the end of the semester that will prevent you from writing the exam.

Recording or photographing content is not allowed, unless permission has been granted by the instructor.

#### **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.