

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

POLITICAL SCIENCE 1020 [UT (3)]

INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Winter,2003/04
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OH: TBA

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CALENDAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

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. The 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, terrorism and others.

2004 DESCRIPTION:

Given that "a day is a long time in politics" and given the political agenda for 2003-04 (Iraq, Terrorism, Leadership of the CPC, the upcoming presidential elections, etc.) some deviation from the readings is anticipated. Students are expected to keep reasonably up to date on major events and to be prepared to discuss such events in class.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are

1. to gain basic understanding of concepts, terms, and major theories in political science.
2. to gain an understanding of the structure and operation of the Canadian and other "democratic" political systems in a comparative framework.
3. to apply political analysis to contemporary issues and debates.

PREREQUISITE Nil

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grades for each component will be recorded in percentages.

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Library Assignment 1 | 10% | Due January 19, 2004 |
| Term Paper | 30% | Due March 22, 2004 |
| Midterm Examination | 25% | February 16, 2004 (approximately) |
| Final Examination | 35% | Exam week |

GRADING SYSTEM:

Grades throughout the year will be calculated in percentages and converted at the end of the course to the 4 point scale by using the conversion table appended to this outline.

A NOTE ON TERM PAPERS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The ability to express yourself in writing is required for the satisfactory completion of this course. Written submissions must be coherent and legible. The instructor may deduct grades for grammatical, spelling, and/or punctuation errors. This will be discussed further in class. Term papers for this course are normally in the 2500 word range (10 pages typed, double spaced). Suggested topics will be distributed in class. Papers and assignments are due at the start of class on the date due. Late submissions will be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Otherwise, late submission will be assessed a reduced grade - normally 5% per day or portion thereof (including weekends and holidays).

TEXTS

Students should ensure that the correct editions of the following text is obtained:

Mark O. Dickerson and Thomas Flanagan, An Introduction to Government and Politics (6th edition)
(DF on the reading list)

LECTURE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

Students are responsible for all required readings, lecture material and handouts. Additional and/or replacement readings may, on occasion, be assigned as events dictate. Reserve readings are available from the Library. Readings, while numerous, are generally brief. Lecture dates appear below as a rough guide and some variation is to be expected depending on student interest, and the use of class time to discuss topics of current interest.

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION

1 week

- a) Course Outline and Requirements
- b) The Political Process

DF, 22

- c) Society, Government, and Politics

DF, chapter 1

UNIT II: BASIC CONCEPTS

2 weeks

- a) Ideology

DF, 9

- b) Political Culture

DF 5

c) Sovereignty, Nation, and State

DF, 3 and 4

d) Nationalism

DF, 13

UNIT III: INSTITUTIONS

3 weeks

a) Constitutionalism

DF 7

b) Parliamentary and Presidential Systems

DF 20

c) Unitary and Federal

DF 21

The Constitution of the United States (Reserve #6)

DF Appendix A and B

UNIT IV: GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES

3 weeks

a) The Legislative Branch

DF, chapter 26

b) The Executive

DF, chapter 27

Anderson, The Study of Public Policy, pp. 1-25

(Reserve #1)

c) The Civil Service

DF, chapter 28

d) The Judiciary

DF, chapter 29

UNIT VII: POLITICAL PROCESS AND BEHAVIOUR

4 weeks

a) Political Parties

DF, chapter 23

Lowi, "The Mythology of the American Two-Party

System" (Reserve #2)

b) Elections and Electoral Systems

DF, chapter 25

c) Interest Groups

DF 23 and 14 and 15

Pross, "Pressure Groups..." (Reserve #3)

UNIT IX: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

1 week

a) Overview

DF, chapter 8

b) Change and Stability in the International System

Readings TBA

* NOTE: These topics are likely to be dealt with at various points throughout the course and may not be the subject of any particular unit of the course. Readings are TBA

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 1020
ASSIGNMENT**

From the LIBRARY (not the Internet), read and compare any 2 ACADEMIC JOURNAL articles on a similar topic in political science written within the last 4 years.

Your submission **must** include:

1. A statement of the general topic being examined.
2. An identification of the major THESIS being explored in each article
3. A summary of the basic argument of each article
4. An assessment of the evidence presented in each article
5. An analysis of the merits of each article in terms such as:
 - a) the degree to which they actually supported their argument
 - b) the degree to which they added anything to your understanding of the topic

Grading:

Grades will be approximately 75% for items 1-3 above and 25% for items 4 and 5. Note that item 2 is critical since without item 2, none of the remainder can actually be accomplished competently.

Length:

Approximately 4 pages, typed, double-spaced.

Date Due:

See outline

Resources:

An academic JOURNAL is a peer reviewed scholarly publication which contains the results of research into a substantive topic. It is NOT a newspaper, magazine, or popular press publication. If it can be found for general sale, it is not likely an Academic Journal. Examples in Political Science include (but are not limited to):

Canadian Journal of Political Science
Canadian Public Policy
Journal of Canadian Studies
International Journal
International Organization
Foreign Affairs
American Journal of Political Science
American Political Science Review

Note:

It may be wise to select articles that have something to do with your term paper topic.

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 1020
SUGGESTED TERM PAPER TOPICS**

Listed below are a number of topics appropriate for this course. In **all** cases the topic **must** be further specified and defined. In addition, topics must be approved by the instructor prior to submission of the term paper.

1. Privatization of crown corporations.
2. The judiciary as policy makers.
3. The Unification of the Political "Right" in Canada.
4. 1st Nations Self Government.
5. Regionalism in Canada: Causes and consequences.
6. Quebec: the basis for separatism.
7. Reforming Canada's electoral system.
8. BSE: Poisoning Canadian-American Relations?
9. The mobilization of the environmental movement.
10. The viability of Quebec sovereignty.
11. Softwood Lumber: The WTO, the USA, and Political Interests.
12. Has the Canadian federation become too (de)centralized?
13. Controlling the power of the U.S. president.
14. Civil Liberties and Anti-Terrorism Legislation.
15. Ideology versus pragmatism in the Canadian political parties.
16. Western alienation in Canada.
17. The myth(?) of the mosaic/melting pot.
18. The extent of and determinants of racism in Canada.
19. The role of the media in elections.
20. The role of leadership in the political parties of Canada, the United States, or....
21. The Separation of BC /Alberta
23. A topic of your choice: please consult with instructor.
24. Where in the World is Osama Bin Laden?