



## GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

Department of Arts and Education

POLITICAL STUDIES 2220/320B

### INTRODUCTION TO CANADIAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, FEDERALISM & THE CONSTITUTION (UT)

January - April 2011

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Office hours: Wed. 1-2:20 p.m. /Fri. 1:30-3 p.m. and by appointment

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**Prerequisite:** none

#### **Required texts/resource materials:**

1. Rand Dyck, Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches, 6th edition.  
Toronto: Nelson, 2011.
2. Course Package for Political Studies 2220/320.
3. Website and database material.

#### **College Calendar Course Description:**

This course examines the workings of the four branches of government at the national level, as well as Canadian federalism and the Constitution. The course also explores efforts to change institutional arrangements to make them more democratic and more responsive to Western Canadians, people in Quebec and aboriginal peoples.

#### **Course Objectives:**

At the end of this course you should be able to understand better how the Canadian political system works (and fails to work), and how it might be improved. You should also have greater insights into some significant political issues.

This course and PO2210 (The Canadian Political Environment) provide a full year introduction to the study of Canadian Politics. The two courses together provide preparation for further studies in Canadian politics at the postsecondary level and serve as a prerequisite.

**Credit/Contact Hours:** This is a three credit course with three hours of instructional time a week.

#### **Delivery Mode:**

Classroom times will be used for lectures and discussions.

**Course requirements:**

Attendance and participation .....	10%
Midterm exam .....	25%
Term Paper .....	30%
Final exam .....	35%

**Conversion table:**

A+ 90 - 100	B+ 76 - 79	C+ 67 - 69	D+ 55 - 59
A 85 - 89	B 73 - 75	C 64 - 66	D 50 - 54
A- 80 - 84	B- 70 - 72	C- 60 - 63	F 0 - 49

For conversion of letter grades to the four-point scale used in grade-point averages, see the College calendar.

**Transferability: UA, AU, UC, UL, CUC, KUC.**

\* Note that credit for both PO2210 and 2220 is needed to receive credit for the core Canadian Politics course at the U of A, POLS 220. The University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge have their own distinctive designations for transferring the combination of PO2210 and PO2220.

\* The grade of D or D+ may not be accepted for transfer to other postsecondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.

**Student Responsibilities:**

\* You are expected to devote time in the classroom to the class itself. Use of cell phones and use of laptops for nonclass purposes is unacceptable. It is also not acceptable to socialize or do work on other courses during the class.

\* You are strongly advised to keep a copy of your own of any work you submit for grading at least until you have your work returned to you.

\*\* Students who miss an excessive number of classes may be denied the opportunity to write the final exam, as stated in the Calendar.

\*\* You are expected to write the final exam when scheduled by the Registrar's Office - with possible exceptions in the case of compelling and urgent circumstances beyond your control. Also note and observe other key dates during the term as provided in the Calendar.

**Statement on Plagiarism and Cheating:**

\* You are required to reference sources fully and properly for written assignments. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with College Calendar information pertaining to cheating and plagiarism, for which there are various penalties depending on the severity of the offense.

# **Topics**

## **I. Introduction.**

The Canadian political system. Branches of government. How governments are formed - how executives and legislatures are chosen.

## **II. Institutions.**

- A. Formal or Symbolic Executive. The Queen. The Governor General and prorogation.
- B. Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- C. Ministerial Responsibility.
- D. Budget Process. Auditor General. Deficits and Debts.
- E. Parliament. "Responsible government" and party discipline. Functions of Parliament and the Legislative Branch. Question Period. Role of MPs.
- F. Senate.
- G. The Courts.
- H. The Charter of Rights.

## **III. Influencing and Forming governments..**

- A. Interest groups.
- B. Political parties.
- C. Elections. Financing parties and elections. Electoral Systems. Proportional Representation. Explaining voting behaviour. Polling.

## **IV. Federalism, the Constitution and related issues.**

- A. Federalism and the division of powers. Shared-cost programs and block funding.
- B. Health care and federalism. Public vs. private delivery of health care services.
- C. Major developments since Confederation: 1982, Meech Lake, Charlottetown Accord.