

POLI 1060 — Political Worlds: Themes and Concepts
Dalhousie University - Studley Campus, Chemistry: Room 125
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:35 am – 12:55 pm

Instructor: Dr. M. Firmini

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 am – 12:00 pm (alternatives by appointment)

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In this introductory course, you will be exposed to the fundamental concepts of political life. It will introduce you to a range of key issues and approaches that animate contemporary politics in general and, in particular, in Canada. Topics addressed will include:

- Fundamental concepts in political science;
- Political philosophies and the bedrocks of various ideologies;
- The nature and limits of democracy;
- The relationship between citizenship and political power;
- Forms of political participation and electoral systems;
- The relationship between politics and the media.

The course will begin by centering on the basic themes and concepts that help us analyze ‘politics’, society, political values, and institutions, and then moves to apply and understand those concepts as they relate to the Canadian context. It does so through a three dimensional approach:

1. **Political Thought:** What is ‘politics’? What is ‘political science’? What is the source of Canadian ways of thinking about ‘politics’ and ‘society’?
 2. **Political Institutions and ‘actors’:** What are the rules (both informal and formal) that dictate what is permissible to, and desirable for, these ‘entities’ to do? How do the institutions of the state work? How do they affect us? How did we get to these rules? How does Canada understand and apply them? Do they still matter?
 3. **Political values and outcomes:** *What* do we want from politics? *Why* do we want those particular things? Do ‘politics’ and how we think about it matter? Does ‘politics’ affect our everyday life? Does it matter in Canada and in Canadian society? Why (or why not)?
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Textbook and Readings:

1. *Politics*. Andrew Heywood (4th Edition – Palgrave MacMillan).
 2. Other *required* readings will be posted to BrightSpace. It is very important to keep up with class readings in order to gain full benefit from class lectures. Although this seldom occurs, *I may add readings* that will be considered ‘required reading’. These additions will be announced in class should they occur. Students are expected to have done all readings for class.
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Learning Objectives:

The course aims to

- introduce students to the main concepts and themes that animate political science — their provenance, their content, their development, their contemporary relevance; their Canadian application;

- introduce students to mechanisms through which political preferences are formed, how those affect society, political structures and institutions in general and specifically in Canada; how the processes play out in Canada: elections, voting patterns, political parties, and electoral systems;
- describe and analyze how political institutions work, particularly the Canadian parliamentary system, federalism, and the powers of the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary;
- strengthen *critical* and *independent* thinking capacities;
- refine skills related to the evaluation of empirical evidence derived from literature produced in the discipline;
- lay the foundations which will prepare students for more advanced courses in political science.

Knowledge & Skills Acquisition & Application — Objectives:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to be capable of competently

- explaining the main concepts related to the discipline of political science and apply them to real-life situations through independent analysis and critical thinking;
- explaining the basic difference and importance between quantitative and qualitative methods in political science;
- describing basic political philosophies (and their development) and recognize them in speech and/or thought when read or heard in the news or other outlets/venues; explaining their relevance to Canada;
- recognizing and explaining diverse ideological paradigms;
- explaining political preferences and their derivation;
- describing different institutional arrangements, systems and regimes;
- describing the institutional arrangements, structures, and functions in Canada;
- recognizing and explaining electoral systems, political parties, and voting behaviour in Canada;
- recognizing, describing, and operationalizing key concepts in the field of political science;
- structure a logical, methodical, analytical oral argument and research paper related to the discipline;
- communicate effectively in written and oral form.

Assignments and Grading:

There will be one quiz, one mid-term examination, and one final examination each of which *may* be composed of short answer questions, essay questions, multiple choice, and true/false or a combination of these.

There will one paper worth 20 percent. Preliminary ideas about this assignment are outlined below; more will be said during lectures and details will be posted on BrightSpace.

Quiz – October 6: 20 %

Midterm – November 3: 25 %

Paper – November 17: 20%

Final – per registrar: 35%

TOTAL: 100%

Summary of Assignment Requirements: You will develop your own research based on particular topics which will be outlined and discussed in class, and posted to BrightSpace.

- **Papers must be:**
 1. Written in 12-point font (Times New Roman only).
 2. 9-10 pages double-spaced. Do not exceed this limit of ten (10) pages or fail to meet the minimum of nine (9) pages.
 3. Formatted consistently; styled either MLA or APA.
 - **Papers that do not meet these criteria will not be accepted.**
 - **No late papers will be accepted without a medical justification.**
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Dalhousie Grading Scheme:

A+	90-100	Excellent	Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89		
A-	80-84		
B+	77-79	Good	Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76		
B-	70-72		
C+	65-69	Satisfactory	Evidence of some understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems; benefitting from his/her university experience.
C	60-64		
C-	55-59		
D	50-54	Marginal Pass	Evidence of minimally acceptable familiarity with subject matter, critical and analytical skills (except in programs where a minimum grade of 'C' is required).
F	0-49	Inadequate	Insufficient evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

Rules and Policy Regarding Cell Phone and Computer Etiquette:

1. The use of cellular phones or any other electronic gadgetry is **not permitted** during class; neither are recording devices of **ANY** kind. During regular classes, phones must be stored away and all ringers must be switched to vibrate and, if a call constitutes an *emergency*, students are asked to exit the classroom and make (or take) the call **quietly** in the hallway without disturbing others. Students will be allowed to re-enter the classroom once the communication is completed.
 2. During exams and quizzes, all phones, computers, and electronic gadgets **must be turned off and stored away**.
 3. Use of laptops for taking notes during lectures is permitted; *however*, should complaints arise regarding inappropriate or distracting web browsing during class, the use of laptops **will** be restricted. Use them wisely.
 4. Phone calls, texts, Snap Chat, You Tube, Facebook, Twitter, and **ALL other forms** of social media usage are **NOT** permitted inside the classroom.
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Statement on Academic Integrity (Source: Dalhousie University):

“At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (*The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999*). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

What does academic integrity mean?

At university we advance knowledge by building on the work of other people. Academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic products.

Acknowledgement of other people’s work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information. It is the student’s responsibility to seek assistance to ensure that these standards are met.

How can you achieve academic integrity?

[T]he following are **some ways** that you can achieve academic integrity:

- Make sure you understand Dalhousie’s policies on academic integrity (<http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/Policies/>)
- Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else
- Be sure not to plagiarize, intentionally or unintentionally
- Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work. This includes ideas, figures of speech, graphical representations, diagrams, videos, and images.
- Do not use the work of another from the Internet or any other source and submit it as your own
- When you use the ideas of other people (paraphrasing), make sure to acknowledge the source
- Do not submit work that has been completed...previously [and] submitted for another assignment

Where can you turn for help?

If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, contact me (or the TA); also:

- Academic Integrity website <http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/>
- Writing Centre

(http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)

What will happen if an allegation of an academic offence is made against you?

I am *required* to report every suspected offence... If you are found guilty of an offence, a penalty will be assigned ranging from a warning, to failure of the assignment or failure of the class, to expulsion from the University. Penalties may also include a notation on your transcript that indicates that you have committed an academic offence.

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Policies and Student Resources sections of the academicintegrity.dal.ca website.

Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations".

Plagiarism, therefore, is considered a serious academic offence. *No excuse is acceptable for plagiarism* and **NO AMOUNT OF PLAGIARISM WILL BE TOLERATED AND THUS WILL BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY.** For more information, see:

http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

Requests for Student Accommodation (Source: Dalhousie University):

“Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers experienced related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian human rights legislation. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student’s accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 902-494-2836 for more information or send an email to notetaking@dal.ca

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to fully participate in the class”.

- ✓ No alternative dates for quizzes/exams/due dates will be set except for serious medical conditions
- ✓ No assignments will be given for extra credit.
- ✓ Be advised that lectures will cover large portions of material that will not be posted on BrightSpace.
- ✓ DO NOT book any travel before the exam schedules are known.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with course ‘Drop Dates’. These can be found here: http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html

September

6: Welcome to Dalhousie! (No readings for September 6th)

- Course introduction and expectations
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8: Introduction to basic concepts

- What is 'politics'?
- Does 'politics' affect you? What is its relevance in your everyday life?
- What is 'political science'?
- Approaches to Political Science

Readings: Chapter 1: pp. 1-16; 18-22.

13 & 15: Power – the medium of exchange; where it all began: 'Democracy' & Classical Republicanism – universal denominators?

- What is power and why is it essential to 'politics' and 'political science'?
- Who has power?
- How is power exercised?
- How political leadership is held accountable. Can they be replaced?
- What are the beliefs that justify the distribution and exercise of power?
- Foundations of the beliefs about society and the purpose of government
- Role of power in ideologies

Readings: Chapter 4: pp. 80-107
Chapter 12: pp. 265-269
BrightSpace: Readings # 1 & # 2
BrightSpace: Reading # 3

20 & 22: Sovereignty, the State, Citizenship, rights and duties & the Nation

- What is 'sovereignty'? What is the 'State'? The Canadian State
- What does it mean live in a 'sovereign' state? Sovereignty in Canada
- What is citizenship and who is a 'citizen'?
- What does it mean to be a 'sovereign citizen' and a 'sovereign individual'?
- Canadian Citizenship
- What is a 'nation'?
- The Canadian case: Quebecois nationhood; Indigenous nationhood

Readings: Chapter 3: pp. 56-65; pp.67-79
BrightSpace: Reading # 4
Chapter 5: pp. 108-127
BrightSpace: Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968): *New Treason of the Intellectuals* (Federalism & the French Canadians).
BrightSpace: Rene Levesque (1976): *For an Independent Quebec* – 54, Foreign Affairs 734 (pp. 741-42).

27 & 29: Political Culture & Socialization; Politics, Society & identity

- Networks of beliefs about society and the purpose of government
- Have we ever questioned ‘what’ we value; ‘why’ we value; ‘whence’ our values?
- Quiz preparation

Readings: Chapter 7: pp. 151-170
BrightSpace: Reading # 5

October

4: Constitutions & the Rule of Law

- What is a constitution? Where does this idea come from?
- Why do we need one? Do we?
- What is ‘the rule of law’? Is this still valued?
- Quiz Preparation

Readings: Chapter 15: pp. 331-350
BrightSpace: Reading # 6

6: Quiz

11 & 13: Ideologies: Liberalism & Conservatism

- What does ‘liberal’ mean; what does ‘conservative’ mean?
- What does each think about the purpose of government?
- Evolution: from their ‘classical’ incarnations to the present paradigms

Readings: Chapter 2: pp. 27-38; re-read pp. 60-65
BrightSpace: Reading # 7

18 & 20: Socialism & Communism; Fascism & its ‘copy cats’

- What is ‘socialism’?
- Communism: what is it?
- Mussolini’s Fascism & the movements and parties it inspired

Readings: Chapter 2: pp. 38-42; 43-46
Chapter 2: 46-48
BrightSpace: Reading # 8 (Excerpt: Communist Manifesto)
BrightSpace: Reading # 9 (Excerpt: The Doctrine of Fascism (*‘La Dottrina del Fascismo’* - B. Mussolini))

25 & 27: Forms of Government; Systems and Regimes; Branches

- What is a government?
- What forms of government exist?

Readings: Chapter 12: pp. 265-283;
Chapter 17: pp. 378-390
BrightSpace: Reading # 10

November

1: Branches (continued): Executive, legislative & the Judiciary; Law & Judges, Policy (& Bureaucracy)

Readings: Chapter 15: pp. 331-350.
Chapter 16: pp. 356-365
Chapter 13: pp. 284-307
BrightSpace: Reading # 11

MIDTERM: 3

Fall Break: November 7-11

15 & 17: The Canadian State – The American State

(Paper due on the 17th)

- Canadian parliament and Constitutional Monarchy (and federalism)
- The Prime Minister and the Crown
- The American system: Congress, the president, and the Republic
- Midterm Preparation

Readings: Chapter 12: pp.270-274; 276.
Chapter 14: pp. 309-320

22 & 24: Political Process: Elections and Parties

Readings: Chapter 9: pp. 196-200; pp. 202-220
Chapter 10: pp. 221-243
BrightSpace: Reading # 12

29: Politics and the Media

Readings: Chapter 8: pp. 178-195

December

1: Is Politics in ‘Crisis’?

- Do ‘politics’ matter?
- Final Exam Preparation

Readings: Chapter 3: pp. 72-79
Chapter 20: 443-459
Chapter 17: pp. 390-398
BrightSpace: Reading # 13

Final Exam: See Registrar’s Timetable
