

# Introduction to Canadian Politics

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Visiting Lecturer from the University of Ottawa

**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of the foundations of Canadian political life. Formal institutions such as the constitution, federalism and the parliamentary system are covered in the first part of the course. The second part focuses on more 'dynamic' issues such as electoral politics, as well as contentious political debates such as Indigenous rights, multiculturalism and language policy (particularly in Québec). At the end of the course, students will be expected to be able to:

1. Understand the political history of Canada
2. Reflect on tensions within the Canadian polity
3. Engage with contemporary Canadian political debates

**Format:** The course will consist of 12 in-class hours, held during the weeks of March 12<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>. Classes will consist of both formal lectures and discussion/participation from students.

## Lecture Schedule and Readings:

### Lecture 1: Historical Foundations

- Horowitz, Gad. 1966. "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation." *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, vol. 32, pp.143-71

### Lecture 2: Governing Institutions

- Government of Canada, "How Canadians Govern Themselves." Available at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/section-08.asp#system>

### Lecture 3: Elections

- Blais, André. 2005. "Accounting for the Electoral Success of the Liberal Party in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 821-40.

### Lecture 4: Party Discipline and the Electoral System

- Videos on electoral systems:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7tWHJfhiyo>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT0I-sdoSXU>
- Galloway, Gloria. 2013. "Is Canada's party discipline the strictest in the world? Experts say yes." *Globe & Mail*, 7 February. Available at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/is-canadas-party-discipline-the-strictest-in-the-world-experts-say-yes/article8313261/>

Lecture 5: The Charter Revolution

- Jackman, Martha. 2006/07. "Canadian Charter Equality at 20: Reflections of a Card-Carrying Member of the Court Party." *National Journal of Constitutional Law*, vol. 20, pp. 115-27.

Lecture 6: Québec

- Béland, Daniel & André Lecours. 2006. "Sub-state nationalism and the welfare state: Québec and Canadian federalism." *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 77-96.

Lecture 7: Multiculturalism and Canadian "identity"

- Banting, Keith. 2010. "Is There a Progressive's Dilemma in Canada? Immigration, Multiculturalism and the Welfare State." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 797-820.

Lecture 8: Colonialism and Present-Day Indigenous Politics

- Mitchell, Terry & Charis Enns. 2014. "The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Monitoring and Realizing Indigenous Rights in Canada. CIGI Policy Brief no. 39. Available at: [https://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/58103/IHSJ\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_for\\_CIGI.pdf](https://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/58103/IHSJ_Policy_Brief_for_CIGI.pdf)

**Evaluation:** Students will be required to submit a 4-page (15000 characters) paper, due 3 weeks following the end of the course. Papers must be written in Times New Roman 12 point font, with justified margins. Students may use any recognized citation style so long as sources are fully and consistently cited. Papers will be submitted online through Moodle.

Students will be asked to answer one of the following questions:

- *Unlike most European social democratic parties, the NDP has never formed government federally in Canada. What reasons underlie the party's historic setbacks?*
- *Is the Canadian Prime Minister too powerful? Why or why not?*
- *Canadians like to say they live in a fundamentally tolerant country. Is this true? Make sure to reference multiculturalism, Québécois nationalism and indigenous rights in your answer.*
- *Should Québec one day become a separate country from the rest of Canada? Why or why not?*

The paper will be marked out of 100 points, based on the following criteria:

- Has the question been answered? (10 points)
- Quality and thoughtfulness of the answer (30 points)
- Clarity of the writing (30 points)
- Link to course material (30 points)