

COURSE SYLLABUS

POL 2811Y1 - 2025

M.A. Research Seminar II

Political Development and Canadian Democracy

Instructor: Dr. Julian Campisi

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-12pm @ SS3124

Seminar: Tuesdays, 13-15h (1-3pm)

Location: SS2104

Email: julian.campisi@utoronto.ca

Course Overview & Objectives:

This course is intended for M.A. students to meet the main research requirements of the program. The primary purpose of the seminar is to provide an opportunity for students to design and conduct an independent research project on a topic of their choice. Topics chosen may fit within the major themes of the course in the broader fields of Comparative Politics, Canadian Politics or Public Policy, but equally students are encouraged to define their own topics outside of the course topics. Students should discuss their research interests with the instructor, their peers, and other professors in the department.

A key objective of this course is thus quite practical: to assist students to produce a Masters Research Paper by the end of the year. This will include a proposal which identifies what research question you want to tackle in your major paper; lays out the reason for taking on that topic, and it outlines a plan for tackling it over the span of a few months. Accordingly, this course is designed to assist students with their choice of a research topic, building off their interests in other MA classes. It will also help with framing the MRP appropriately in terms of conceptualization and research design, and in identifying useful methodologies and appropriate resources and research materials.

Format:

The seminar format will provide a collegial setting within which students can read and critically analyse key aspects of diverse literature; present and discuss their research; hone their presentational skills, gain useful feedback from peers and instructors; and develop a variety of writing and communication skills useful in their future academic or professional lives.

The format will vary during the year, and we will meet bi-weekly (every other week) for a total of 12-13 classes. The *Fall* semester will involve a number of standard colloquium-style sessions dealing with elements of research, practicalities and varieties of project types, topic selection, and more. In doing so, we will use and refer to literature across sub-fields in political science not only on research methodology and conceptualization, but most weeks this will be supplemented

with illustrative cases drawn from, intermittently, literature in Canadian politics, public policy, and comparative politics and development. In the *Winter* term, we also meet every other week or so, focusing on proposal drafting and peer review, with students presenting their work in progress as it evolves. We will also aim to have guest speakers and workshop leaders join us where possible in both semesters. Final submission of the MRP will follow later in Spring and Summer, with individual meetings upon request. The MRP should be approximately 10,000 words.

Evaluation & Requirements:

Evaluation	Date
Participation & Class Discussion (15%)	Ongoing
Proposal & Presentation + Peer review (15%)	Winter 2026 Peer Review Sessions in March
Final MRP (70%)	April-August 2026

In the Department of Political Science at the Graduate Level, marks are always recorded as letter grades* (A, A-, B+, B, etc).

Participation (15%) Ongoing

Since the class is organized as a seminar, a portion of the marking scheme is reserved for presence and active participation during bi-weekly classes as much as possible. Students will be expected to lead the discussion of a particular reading at least once during specific weeks. We will schedule the reading leads during the first week or two. Students will be asked, for their specific reading, to lead the class with a critical analysis (5 mins) and set of discussion questions for us to take up together. This will be conducted in a collegial manner and no formal presentation is necessary.

MRP Proposal (15%) Winter 2026

Each student *is required to*:

1. **2MT (2 minute topic)** Produce a half-page preliminary statement of research interest/initial topic ideas and present a 2MT informal presentation to class (**due** early **January**)

The statement/2MT should briefly describe your research interests and ideally address the following questions:

What is the preliminary problem you wish to investigate, explain or understand?

What are you curious about? If you have an idea, what is your research question? How did you come up with it? Is there an article that accomplishes something similar to what you want to do in your MRP/ how will it differ?

2. Develop a 1250 word **MRP proposal**. **Deadline: March 2nd**

The proposal should i) outline your formalized research question, ii) situate that question in the broader literature, including why your question responds to a puzzle, debate or gap in the literature (lit review), and iii) depending on the stage of your research, identify preliminary answers your question (i.e., your argument, propositions, and/or hypotheses) and propose a research design or brief methodology you plan to utilize; iv) outline the main sections of your MRP. We will also hold proposal writing seminars put on by experts from CTL in January before it is due, in order to help you develop the proposal.

2b. Peer Review March 2026. We will meet to present our proposals and peer review with other students from the 1st MRP seminar section, and from the Munk MGA Program. More details on the Peer Review Activity TBD.

2c) 3MT (3 min thesis) Based on the peer review and instructor feedback, students will edit their work, and later present their main MRP question and argument overview in max 3 minutes to our class March 31 based on the SSHRC 3MT competition format. i.e.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/events/3minute-thesis/index.html>

Final MRP (70%) Spring/Summer

Final MRP papers (approx. 10k words, double spaced) based on proposal ideas and feedback will be due from April-August depending on graduation plans. More details TBD.

POLICIES

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Students at this level should already have a thorough understanding of what is meant by the term “plagiarism” and the meaning of “academic integrity” more generally. Students should review the University’s policies and resources on the matter which can be found on its website, and in particular the sheet “How Not to Plagiarize” located at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

All of the policies and procedures surrounding academic offences are dealt within one policy: The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (the ‘Code’). The full text of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters can be found in your Faculty Calendar or online at www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.html...

Ignorance of the rules does not excuse cheating or plagiarism.

All instances of academic misconduct will be forwarded to the University for further review and discipline. For more information, please visit the website of the Center for Teaching Support and Innovation at the University of Toronto:

[Academic Integrity at the University of Toronto](#). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me. For your benefit, however, here is just one example of an academic offence:

- A student who includes word-for-word a sentence or a part of a sentence from a source, and although they cite the source as a reference at the end of the sentence and in the bibliography, they do not include the relevant passage within quotation marks. This is an example of plagiarism (see The Code) because it claims somebody else's writing as your own. Changing a few words in a sentence does not solve this problem. If the writing is from a source, and not from you, it belongs in quotation marks (i.e., “ ”).

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to *turnitin* for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the database. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).”. See more- <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/smart-strategies/> for ‘smart strategies’, and <https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/plagiarism>

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

Students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit.

Students may **not** use artificial intelligence tools for taking tests, writing research papers, creating computer code, or completing major course assignments. However, these tools may be useful when gathering information from across sources and assimilating it for understanding. The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.

Recording of Classroom Material by Students

Recording or photographing any aspect of a university course - lecture, tutorial, seminar, lab, studio, practice session, field trip etc. – without prior approval of all involved and with written approval from the instructor is not permitted.

Illnesses and late work

The University of Toronto launched a unique and centralized tool to report illnesses and other situations leading to absences, the Absence Declaration. For any situations affecting your ability to complete term work in time (COVID, cold, flu, other illness or injury, family situation), please fill in the Absence Declaration on ACORN. You will be able to save a copy. Attach the copy of

your Absence Declaration to your work, and it will be taken into consideration. Please contact the Professor in advance if you are not able to submit on time.

Accessibility & Accommodations

Classes at the University of Toronto are meant to be welcoming environments for students of all abilities. Should you require assistance, please contact the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

Students may request reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods, as outlined in University policy. They should advise the Professor at the **earliest opportunity**, so that appropriate arrangements may be made, and should have documentation to support their requests. Should students require an accommodation because of religious observance reasons, please contact the Professor at the earliest opportunity.

Class Schedule and Readings

Required Readings are found in the schedule below, make are taken from a selection of various sections and chapters of books, articles, and other materials (see Quercus modules for pdfs). Some readings may be familiar from methods or other courses. Some will be more relevant for some subfields than others. Their purpose is to provide a wide range of resources and assistance in developing different types of research projects. You should consult with peers and professors to identify the literature most suited to your own project.

Some readings may be subject to change

Fall Term

*Wk 1 we will all meet together as a full MA cohort on *Thurs September 4 11am SS3037 (then we will split up)

Course Introduction

Michael Keating and Donatella della Porta, 2010. 'In Defence of Pluralism. Combining approaches in the social sciences'

King, Keohane and Verba, 1994. Designing Social Inquiry Ch. 1

1. Wk 2 Tuesday September 9 Thinking About the Discipline of Political Science

Guest speaker – former MA Student

Bertill Ollman, “What is Political Science? What Should it Be??”

Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralist Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2008. Ch. 1 (Intro)

Harry Eckstein, “Unfinished Business; Reflections on the Scope of Comparative Politics,” *Comparative Political Studies* 31 (August 1998): 1-16.

2. Wk 4 September 23 Practicing Political Science: Comparative, Canadian & Policy

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) *Why Nations Fail*. (Preface and Ch. 1)

Alan Cairns. 1974. “Alternative Styles in the Study of Canadian Politics,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7:1 (March), 101-28 plus responses by Ward, Mallory, Van Loon and Whittington, 128-34.

Richard Simeon. 1976. “Studying Public Policy,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9:4 (Dec), 548-580.

3. Wk 6 Oct 7 Research Traditions and Concept Formation

*Research Librarian Presentation

Jonathan Moses and Torbjorn Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*, Chapter 1

Pater Mair (2008) *Concepts and Concept Formation* (Chapter 10) in Della Porta and Keating (eds).

Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64 (Dec., 1970): 1033-1053

D. Smiley 1974. “Must Canadian Political Science be a Miniature Replica?” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9:1 (February), 31-42.

4. Wk 8 Oct 21 Puzzles & Research Design

Philippe Schmitter, 2012. “The Design of Social and Political Research” (Chapter 14) in Della Porta and Keating (eds).

Gustafsson and Hagstrom, “What is the point? Teaching graduate students how to construct political science puzzles,” *European Political Science*, 2018.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) Why Nations Fail. (Ch. 2 & 3)

Wk 9 **Reading Week: No Classes**

5. Wk 10 Nov 4 Research Questions & Comparisons

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. 2002 'The Craft of Research', 2nd ed. Ch. 3-4 (pp. 35-71)

L. White et al. eds. 2008. The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science. Vancouver: UBC Press. Ch. 1-2

Draft Research Q*

6. Wk 12 Nov 18 Case Selection & Using Evidence

Thomas Pepinski, 2019. "The Return of the Single Country Case Study," Annual Review of Political Science

Vennesson, P. 2008. 'Case studies and process tracing: theories and practices.' (Chapter 12) in Della Porta and Keating (eds).

Jerome Klassen. (2009). Canada and the New Imperialism: The Economics of a Secondary Power. Studies in Political Economy. 83. 163-190.

King, G. 'Survey Research'

<https://gking.harvard.edu/category/research-interests/methods/survey-research>

Linear Models Guide: <https://leanpub.com/linear-models-guide>

7. Conclusion Dec 2 Getting Ready for your Research + Professional Development – Letters of Application. Funding, and Ethics

Della Porta and Keating. 2008. 'Comparing approaches, methodologies and methods. Some concluding remarks', (Chapter 16) in Della Porta and Keating (eds).

TBD

XMAS BREAK

Winter Semester

8. Jan 13 2MT (2 min topic) Roundtable and discussions

*2 min topic presentations -2MT in class.

9. January 27 Writing an MRP Proposal: Big Picture Issues & Completing a Proposal (with Dan Newman)

10. February 10 Proposal Roundtable & 1 on 1 meetings for each student

11. February 24 Progress update on MRP Proposals and Explanation of Peer Review Activity

*March 2 **Proposals due** on Quercus (no class this wk)*

12. March 9/10 or March 16-17 (Mon-Tues) Peer Review Activity Sessions (with other MRP class + Munk MGA)

13. March 31 Last formal class- 3MT presentations of MRP research

April – June: Individual MRP meetings upon request (zoom or in person), MRP due in August