

POL192 F Beyond Voting: Introduction to Citizen Political Participation

Fall 2025 Syllabus

Section: LEC0101

Date/ Time: Tuesday, 9 – 11 AM

Location: UC 67

Course Website: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/404467>

Instructor: Dr. Patricia Mockler

Office Hours: By appointment at:

<https://calendly.com/p-mockler-utoronto>

Land Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Course Overview

Prerequisites: None

Restricted to first year students

Course Description

This course introduces students to citizen political participation in democracies, with a focus on Canadian case studies. It examines theories of political participation and introduces students to a range of methods by which citizens engage in political life including social movements, political party membership, deliberative mini-publics and more. This course examines debates about the appropriate role for citizens in governance and considers barriers to equity in political participation in Canada.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the broad range of activities that are considered political participation
- Critically examine their own political engagement

- Understand the contours of political participation in the Canadian context including knowledge of demographic variation in political participation and the barriers to equality of participation
- Communicate their perspectives on issues in political participation in both oral and written formats

Course format and delivery

This is an in-person, seminar course. The format involves class discussions, in-class written tasks, and weekly preparation that includes readings and audio visual material. It is extremely important that you review all assigned readings and audio-visual material prior to class and come to class prepared to discuss the material.

In this class I will use the following online tools:

- Mentimeter
 - Create and share in class content
 - Facilitate in class discussion
- Quercus
 - Post announcements
 - Accept assignments
 - Share course readings
 - Post lecture slides

Course expectations

This is a seminar course; sessions will be devoted to class discussion, small group work, and written assignments. I will not lecture during course sessions but may offer brief introductory remarks and will facilitate discussion. Sessions will be student-driven. You are expected to attend each session, and complete all weekly preparation materials prior to our class meeting. Please see Quercus for additional guidance on effective seminar participation and the seminar participation grading outline.

Required Materials

All required preparation materials will be posted on Quercus.

Grading and Assessments

Assessment	Percent	Due Date
Seminar Participation	40%	Ongoing

Assessment	Percent	Due Date
Syllabus Quiz	5%	Due September 12 by 11:59 PM.
Reading Reflections	35% (1 @15%, 1 @ 20%)	To be completed in seminar meeting
Discussion questions	20% (10 weeks @2% each)	To be submitted weekly by Tuesday at 8 AM for each substantive class meeting.

Seminar Participation (40%)

Students will attend seminar meetings and are expected to engage with the course readings and demonstrate an understanding of (or at least an attempt to understand) the course content through class discussion. Attendance alone is not sufficient to earn seminar participation grades. Please see the seminar participation guide on Quercus for details on participation grading.

Syllabus Quiz (5%)

Students will complete an online, open-book quiz on the contents of this document. The quiz will be available on Quercus from September 8th to September 12th at midnight. Students are encouraged to consult the syllabus document while completing this quiz.

Reading Reflections 30% (1 @ 15% each, 1 @ 20%)

Students will complete two reading reflections in person, during our regular seminar hours. Students will be asked to select an article from an assigned list (to be provided on Quercus) and answer the following questions in the time allotted:

1. In your own words, what is the main argument presented in this article? (This should be no more 3 sentences).
2. How compelling is this main argument? Do you agree or disagree with the assertions provided? Why or why not?
3. What are the limitations of the article? What considerations are missing from this piece?

4. What does this article suggest about the requirements of a functioning democracy?
5. How does this article connect to the main themes and concepts explored in this course thus far?

Students are allowed to bring a printed copy of their chosen article into the classroom with them to write the reflection. These printed copies must be submitted with the students' reading written reflection and cannot have any hand-written notes on them. Any additional markings on the printed readings may be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Discussion Questions 20% (10@ 2% each).

Students will post at least one question or issue that emerged from the week's assigned readings or audio-visual material, beginning on week 2. These must be posted on Quercus under the "Discussion" tab before 8 AM on Tuesday morning before class. Discussion questions will be visible to other students and may be used in facilitating class discussion during seminar. Discussion questions are not required for weeks in which in-class reflections are taking place – see schedule below.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Sept 2	<p>Skill building: seminar participation & communication tools</p> <p>Main concepts: Defining political participation & Course introduction</p> <p>Preparation material: Samara Canada. (2013). Lightweights? Political Participation Beyond the Ballot Box.</p> <p>Vincent Raynauld, Mirielle Lalancette, and Erin Crandall (2020). Introduction: Identifying and Studying Trends in Canadian Politics. In <i>What's Trending in Canadian Politics?</i> UBC Press.</p>
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<p>Week 2 Sept 9</p>	<p>Skill building: identifying and assessing academic sources & library tools</p> <p>Main concepts: Assessing Democracy in Canada</p> <p>Preparation material: The Agenda. 2025. Is Canadian Democracy Broken?</p> <p>Dawson, Andrew. 2025. "Political Trust and Democracy: Canada in Comparative Perspective." <i>Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes</i>, vol. 59 no. 1, p. 179-187.</p> <p>Syllabus Quiz due online on Friday, September 12 at midnight</p>
<p>Week 3 Sept 16</p>	<p>Skill building: Accessing campus wellness tools</p> <p>Main concept: Participation in Political Parties</p> <p>Preparation material: William Cross and Lisa Young. (2004). The Contours of Political Party Membership in Canada. <i>Party Politics</i> 10 (4).</p> <p>The Agenda. (2021). Do Political Parties Have a Future? https://www.tvo.org/video/do-political-parties-have-a-future</p>
<p>Week 4 Sept 23</p>	<p>Skill building: In- class writing</p> <p>Main concepts: Political Donations</p> <p>Preparation material: Party Money: is it time to change how we finance politics? Episode of "It's Political" with Althia Raj</p> <p>Erin Tolley, Randy Besco, and Semra Sevi. (2022). "Who Controls the Purse Strings? A Longitudinal Study of Gender and Donations in Canadian Politics." <i>Politics and Gender</i> 18 (1). P. 245 – 253, p. 265 – 269 only.</p>
<p>Week 5 Sept 30</p>	<p>Skill building: Reading effectively and efficiently</p> <p>Main concept: Online Political Participation</p> <p>Preparation material: Valérie-Ann Mahéo and Éric Bélanger. 2021. Generation Z: Portrait of a New Generation of Young Canadians and How They Compare to Older Canadians. <i>Elections Canada</i>.</p> <p>Shelley Boulianne. (2020). Transforming the Disengaged: Social Media and Youth in Canada. In <i>What's Trending in Canadian Politics?</i> UBC Press.</p>

<p>Week 6 Oct 7</p>	<p>Skill building: crafting a strong thesis statement</p> <p>Main concept: Civic Engagement and Volunteerism</p> <p>Preparation material: Paula Arriagada, Farhana Khanam and Yujiro Sano. 2022. Political Participation, Civic Engagement, and Caregiving Among Youth in Canada. <i>Statistics Canada</i>.</p> <p>Yiyan Li. 2020. Civic Engagement and Wellbeing Among Female Immigrants in Canada. <i>Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal</i> 52 (1).</p>
<p>Week 7 Oct 14</p>	<p>In-class reflection No assigned preparation material</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct 21</p>	<p>Main concept: Democratic innovations</p> <p>Preparation material: Nicole Curato et al. (2021) <i>Deliberative Mini-Publics: Core Design Features</i>. Bristol University Press. Introduction.</p> <p>Megan Mattes and Joanna Massie. (2024). Failure to Launch: Tracing the Trajectory of Democratic Innovation Adoption in Canada. <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 57 (4). p. 770 – 774 only</p>
<p>Week 9 October 28</p>	<p>Reading Week No assigned preparation material No class meeting</p>
<p>Week 10 Nov 4</p>	<p>Main concept: Interest groups and social movements</p> <p>Preparation material: Suzanne Staggenbord and Howard Ramos. (2023). <i>Social Movements 4th Edition</i>. Oxford University Press. Introduction.</p> <p>The Agenda.(2025). Is Pride Stil a Protest? https://www.tvo.org/video/is-pride-still-a-protest</p>
<p>Week 11 Nov 11</p>	<p>In-class reflection No assigned preparation material</p>

<p>Week 12</p> <p>Nov 18</p>	<p>Main concept: Direct democracy</p> <p>Preparation material: Brian Tanguay. (2024). The Promise of Direct Democracy: Is That All There Is? <i>Canadian Parties in Transition</i> University of Toronto Press.</p> <p>Charlie Buckley. (2025). Yukon will ask its citizens if they want to ditch first past the post in future elections. <i>CTV News</i>. https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/yukon-to-hold-plebiscite-on-ranked-ballot-voting/</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>Nov 25</p>	<p>Flex week No assigned readings. <i>This week is a buffer in case we need to cancel a class meeting.</i></p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>Dec 2</p>	<p>Course wrap-up: Democracy in Canada</p> <p>Preparation material: Environics Institute. (2023). Support for Democracy in Canada.</p> <p>Ayo Sogunro. (2025). Democracy’s Canary: What Anti-LGBTQ Politics Tells Us About Our Future. <i>The Globe and Mail</i>.</p>

Policies & Statements

Communications Policy

I can be reached via email at p.mockler@utoronto.ca. Please include the course code in the subject line of your email message. You can expect a response from me within 3 business days. Please note that I do not respond to messages after 5 PM Monday–Friday, or on weekends or holidays. I strongly encourage you to plan your time with this information in mind and ask questions well in advance of assignment deadlines so that I can provide as much guidance as possible. Please note that I do not answer emails with questions that can be answered with a thorough reading of the syllabus or the course webpage. In addition, substantive questions about course content and requirements should be discussed during my office hours rather than via email. Email should be reserved strictly for time sensitive questions or quick points of clarification.

Office Hours Meeting Policy

Students should use the link on the first page of this syllabus to make appointments. Students can cancel or reschedule their appointments using the link provided in their booking confirmation email. “No show” appointments will result in a final grade deduction of 2% per incident. Appointments may be cancelled up to 10 minutes before the scheduled meeting start time without penalty. This policy is in place to ensure that students who need to meet with me are given the opportunity to do so.

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the course syllabus as needed. The assessment structure will not change, but readings and in-class activities may be adjusted. I will give notice in advance of any changes and amended syllabi will be posted on Quercus.

Missing Class and Late Assignments

Missed in-class assessments will result in a grade of zero except in the event of a documented illness or emergency. Students may miss up to two seminar meetings without losing participation grades. Beyond this, students will require documentation and will need to seek alternative arrangements with the instructor as outlined below.

Accommodation for Emergency Situations

Students who will miss an in-class assessment or more than two seminar meetings for a medical or serious personal reason must submit a request for alternate arrangements via email.

We will require some documentation in support of your specific circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact severity of the illness while protecting your privacy about the details of your situation. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

Other Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>.

Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting

accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

The University provides accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by statutory holidays. Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching team in a timely fashion ahead of upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences and instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations or other compulsory activities at these times. Please reach out to me as early as possible to communicate any anticipated absences related to religious observances, and to discuss any possible related implications for course work.

Equity and Harassment

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights, and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Your mental health is very important. Throughout university life, there are many experiences that can impact your mental health and well-being. As a University of Toronto student, you can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>) such as same-day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops, and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support. Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or visit

<https://uoft.me/mentalhealthcare> to learn about the services available to you.

You can also visit your College Registrar to learn about the resources and supports available: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>

If you're in distress, you can access immediate support:

<https://uoft.me/feelingdistressed>

Academic Integrity and Responsibility

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019)

(<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes

appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, to learn

more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity \(https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity\)](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity \(https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca\)](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca).

Use of AI

Students may not use generative artificial intelligence (e.g. ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) for any portion of this course. The knowing use of generative AI tools for the completion of or to support the completion of course assignments may be considered an academic offense in this course. This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you develop skills in close reading, critical reflection, analysis, and writing.

Re-marking Policy - Timeline and Protocol

Requests for re-grading should be submitted via email and must include a one page memo that explains the case for considering a re-grade. Such requests must **not** be submitted within 48 hours of a grade's release. Re-grade requests will not be accepted more than 14 days following the grade being released. By requesting a re-grade you are accepting that your grade may either go up or down as a result of the requested review.