

POL224H1 S - Canada in Comparative Context

Winter 2026 Syllabus

Course Website: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/426570>

Instructor: Dr. Patricia Mockler

Email: p.mockler@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: By appointment at:
<https://calendly.com/p-mockler-utoronto>

Teaching Team

Head Teaching Assistant:

Eli Rose, eli.rose@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants:

Avia Amon, avia.amon@mail.utoronto.ca

Alexandra Shkandrij, alexandra.shkandrij@utoronto.ca

William Roelofs, william.roelofs@utoronto.ca

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: 4.0 credits, or 1.0 credit in POL/JPA/JPF/JPI/JPR/JPS/JRA courses

Corequisites: None

Exclusions:

POL111H5/POL214H1/POL214Y1/POL214Y5/POL215H5/POL216H5/POL224Y1/POLB50Y3

Course Description

This course introduces students to Canadian politics using a comparative approach. It provides essential knowledge about the variety of political regimes around the world, with concrete examples emphasizing the comparison of Canada with other countries. Topics covered include the evolution of democracies, political institutions, electoral systems, as well as contemporary issues such as cultural diversity, representation, and inequalities.

This course uses the Faculty of Arts and Science' Writing-Integrated Teaching model. A portion of tutorial meetings will be dedicated to developing students' skills in writing, research, and argumentation.

Course Objectives

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

- Articulate the basic components of the comparative approach in political science
- Understand how Canada's unique institutional structure both borrows and differs from other democracies
- Describe the mechanics of Canada's governing institutions and the principles underpinning Canada's political regime
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of core concepts including the state, political economy, power, and ideology
- Develop and provide support for a clear thesis statement
- Communicate understanding and critical analysis of core concepts orally through tutorial discussion

Course Format

This course will consist of weekly lectures and six tutorial meetings throughout the semester. Your attendance at lectures and tutorials is mandatory and will be counted toward your final grade.

In this class I will use the following online tools:

- Mentimeter
 - Create and share lecture content
- Quercus
 - Post announcements
 - Post lecture slides
 - Provide access to non-textbook readings

Required Materials

Textbook:

Patrick Malcomson, Richard Myers, Gerald Baier and Tom Bateman. *The Canadian Regime: an Introduction to Parliamentary Government in Canada, Seventh Edition*. University of Toronto Press, 2021.

Additional Readings: As noted in the course schedule below, additional readings are required. These can be found on Quercus.

Course Webpage: There is a course webpage on Quercus. I will use this page to post lecture slides, readings, additional assessment details, and announcements. You are required to regularly check Quercus for updates.

Grading and Assessments

Assessment	Percent	Due Date
Tutorial Participation	15%	Ongoing
Syllabus Quiz	5%	January 16 th , 11 PM, on Quercus
Essay Proposal	15%	February 4 th , 11 PM on Quercus
In-Class Essay	30%	March 11 th . 3 PM – 5 PM, Location TBD
In-Person Final Exam	35%	April Final Exam Period

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 January 12 to January 16 at 11 PM. Students are encouraged to consult the syllabus document while completing this quiz.

Tutorial Participation (15%)

Students will attend all tutorial 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 tutorial participation grades. Teaching assistants are responsible for tracking tutorial participation and assigning these grades. Students are encouraged to check in with their teaching assistants mid-semester regarding their tutorial participation grades.

Essay Proposal (15%)

Students will submit a detailed research essay proposal. The proposal should outline the student's topic, their working thesis, arguments in support of the thesis, and at least 8 sources used to inform the argument. The proposal should be 3-4 pages double spaced.

In-Class Essay (30%)

Based on their submitted and graded research proposal, students will write a research essay during class time. Essays should have a clear thesis statement, provide evidence to support the argument, synthesize multiple sources of information, and include the students' own critical analysis. Students may bring an aid document to help in their writing. This document must be no more than 1 page double spaced, 12 pt font, 2.54 cm margins, single sided. All aid documents will be submitted at the end of the in-class

essay in order to verify compliance with these rules. Please note that the use of laptops, tablets, and cellphones will not be allowed during writing time in class. The grading rubric for this assignment is available on Quercus.

Final Exam (35%)

The final exam will cover all material covered in lectures and course readings. The date and time of the final exam are to be set by the Registrar and will be released later in the term. This exam will consist of 75 multiple choice questions.

Course Schedule

Week	Description
Week 1 Jan 7	Course Introduction & The Comparative Approach Please read the syllabus before our first class meeting No tutorial meetings
Week 2 Jan 14	Understanding Constitutions Richard Albert, "Introduction: The Values of the Canadian Constitutionalism" in Richard Albert and David R Cameron eds., <i>Canada in the World: Comparative Perspectives on the Canadian Constitution</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 1–15. <i>The Canadian Regime</i> , Chapter 2: The Constitution No tutorial meetings
Week 3 Jan 21	Class canceled due to weather No tutorial meetings

<p>Week 4 Jan 28</p>	<p>Governing Difference: Federalism</p> <p>Thomas O. Hueglin, “Working Around the American Model: Canadian Federalism and the European Union” in Linda White, Richard Simeon, Robert Vipond, and Jennifer Wallner, eds., <i>The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science</i>. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008): 140–157.</p> <p><i>The Canadian Regime</i>, Chapter 8: Federalism</p> <p>Tutorial Meeting</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb 4</p>	<p>Electoral System Design and Consequences</p> <p>Michael Gallagher and Paul Michell, “Introduction to Electoral Systems” in M. Gallagher and P. Mitchell, eds. <i>The Politics of Electoral Systems</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 3–23.</p> <p>Louis Massicotte, “Canada: Sticking to First Past the Post, for the time Being” in <i>Ibid.</i>, 99–118.</p> <p>Tutorial Meeting</p>
<p>Week 6 Feb 11</p>	<p>Political Parties and Party Systems</p> <p>Richard Johnston, <i>The Canadian Party System: An Analytic History</i> (UBC Press, 2016): p 3 - 12.</p> <p><i>The Canadian Regime:</i> Chapter 7 Political Parties</p> <p>Tutorial Meeting</p>
<p>Week 7 Feb 18</p>	<p>Reading Week</p> <p><i>No assigned readings</i></p>
<p>Week 8 Feb 25</p>	<p>Indigenous People and the Politics of Recognition and Reconciliation</p> <p>Martin Papillion, “Framing Self- Determination: the Politics of Indigenous Rights in Canada and the United States,” in L. Turgeon, M. Papillion, J. Wallner, S. White eds., <i>Comparing Canada: Methods and Perspectives on Canadian Politics</i> (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 27–49.</p> <p>Taiaiake Alfred, “Reconciliation as Recolonization” in T. Alfred and A. Rogers, eds., <i>It’s All about the Land: Collected Talks and Interviews on Indigenous Resurgence</i> (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024): 145–165.</p> <p>Tutorial Meeting</p>

<p>Week 9 Mar 4</p>	<p>The Politics of Race, Gender, and Inequality</p> <p>Debra Thompson, “The Comparative Study of Race: Census Politics in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain” in L. Turgeon, M. Papillion, J. Wallner, S. White eds., <i>Comparing Canada: Methods and Perspectives on Canadian Politics</i> (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 73–94.</p> <p>Tutorial Meeting</p>
<p>Week 10 Mar 11</p>	<p>In class essay 3 PM–5 PM</p> <p>Location: EX 100</p>
<p>Week 11 Mar 18</p>	<p>Power in Presidential and Parliamentary Systems / The Politics of Judicial Review</p> <p>Mark Tushnet, <i>Weak Courts, Strong Rights</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008): 18–42.</p> <p><i>The Canadian Regime:</i></p> <p>Chapter 4 The Crown and its Servants</p> <p>Chapter 10: The Judiciary</p> <p>Tutorial Meeting</p>
<p>Week 12 Mar 25</p>	<p>Flex Week</p> <p>No assigned readings</p> <p>No tutorial meetings</p>
<p>Week 13 Apr 1</p>	<p>Exam Review</p> <p>No assigned readings</p> <p>No tutorial meetings</p>

Policies & Statements

Communications Policy

Your teaching assistant is your first point of contact for course-related matters. We strongly recommend asking substantive questions about course content and requirements in their scheduled office hours. Email should be reserved strictly for time sensitive questions or quick points of clarification.

I can be reached via the message function on Quercus. You can expect a response from me within 4 business days. Please note that I do not respond to messages after 5 PM Monday–Friday, or on weekends. 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.

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

Attendance is required at all class sessions due to the intensive nature of this course. Missed examinations will result in a grade of zero except in the event of a documented illness or emergency. Missed tutorial participation grades cannot be made up except in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

Accommodation for Emergency Situations

Students who will miss an in-class assignment or deadline for a medical or serious personal reason must submit a request for consideration using the appropriate link below.

Essay Proposal:

<https://forms.office.com/r/qeFytfq2Zz>

In-Class Essay:

<https://forms.office.com/r/V4KiFRfh8b>

Please note that requests sent via email or through Quercus will not receive a response. 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 to me or to 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.

Requests for accommodation made on or after an assignment's due date, or after the missed lecture will not be considered. Due date extensions will not usually be granted for work lost due to computer crashes or the loss of a computer file. Please back up your work regularly and keep backup copies until marked assignments have been returned.

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/college-registrars-offices) (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>)

[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 learning and practicing the concepts in 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 critical reflection, analysis and writing.

Re-marking Policy - Timeline and Protocol

Requests for re-grading should be submitted to the Head TA at the following link: <https://forms.office.com/r/cEnd2PU69x>

Requests for re-grading must include a one page memo that explains the case for considering a re-grade and must **not** be submitted within 48 hours of a grade's release. Re-grade requests will not be accepted more than 10 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.