



## **POL356H1F: Canadian Political Parties and Elections**

Faculty of Arts and Science  
Department of Political Science

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### **Land Acknowledgement**

We 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 Description**

Elections and political parties play a key role in Canadian politics. In this course, we will evaluate the purpose and goals of elections as it relates to democratic representation in Canada. We will also analyse the development of political parties in light of those goals. By the end of the course, students will develop a strong knowledge of federal and provincial elections and political parties, as well as their impacts on the lives of people in Canada. Topics include historical and theoretical perspectives, representation, ideology, leadership contests, financing, candidate selection, party discipline, and electoral reform.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Students will develop a strong understanding of major issues in the field of Canadian political parties and elections by attending lectures, engaging with class activities and participating in brief discussions during the lecture hours.
2. Students will strengthen their research skills and written communication skills by producing an interesting and relevant written essay outline and final essay. The essay outline and essay will interrogate a topic of their choice assigned by the professor and make a persuasive argument about said topic.

3. Students will develop analytical skills and communication skills by writing a take-home final exam at the end of the term. The exam will require students to think broadly about key themes of Canadian political parties and elections and tie together information from across multiple weeks of the course.

### **Course Requirements**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Syllabus Quiz	3%	September 11 at 5 pm Makeup date: September 25 at 5 pm
Essay Outline	20%	October 9 at 5 pm
Essay	40%	November 13 at 5 pm
Meme Assignment	2%	November 20 at 5 pm
Final Exam	35%	TBD

**Syllabus Quiz:** Before our second class, please read the syllabus and complete the short syllabus quiz, available in Quercus. The quiz will ask you to demonstrate your comprehension of the course syllabus. It is an open-book quiz (you can refer to the syllabus while answering questions). You are welcome to work with a classmate on the quiz if you wish – the purpose of the quiz is to ensure that you are aware of key course policies.

**Essay Outline (600 words + reference list):** The essay outline will be based on a topic you select from a list of topics provided by the professor. Include your thesis statement, main points of discussion, and the evidence you will use to support your arguments. In your references, list 5-7 sources, at least half of which should be peer reviewed. Remember to use your sources meaningfully to support your points.

**Essay (3000 words + reference list):** The final essay should make a convincing and sophisticated argument about a key debate in the study of Canadian political parties and elections. You should use at least 10 high quality sources; your reference list should be expanded after your essay outline feedback. It is strongly recommended that you write the essay based on your essay outline, unless you have compelling reasons for switching topics (in that case, it is recommended that you consult with the professor). Please see Quercus for more detailed instructions about the essay.

**Meme Assignment:** In the second-last week of class, submit a meme to the Quercus folder titled “Meme Assignment.” The meme should be related to some aspect of the course material. Please indicate in your submission note if you do not want the meme shared with the class or shared on social media, or if you do not want it credited to you. In addition to submitting to Quercus, feel free to share your meme on social media with the hashtag #POL356.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will encourage you to make connections across course themes and investigate key aspects of Canadian political parties and elections. You will develop and share informed opinions in your answers to the questions. The exam will involve an element of choice – out of a list of five questions, you will choose three to answer in an essay format. You will have three hours to write the exam. It will be an open-book format: you may bring as many paper materials as you wish to the exam, but no electronic devices. Please note that AI should not be used to prepare your exam materials, and the proctors may check your materials. If you are

registered with Accessibility Services and require accommodations for the exam, please be sure to register with Accommodated Testing Services at least 14 days before the exam.

### **Assignment Submission Method**

Assignments must be submitted online, through Quercus. If students run into a technical issue with Quercus submission close to the deadline, they should email their completed work to [elizabeth.mccallion@utoronto.ca](mailto:elizabeth.mccallion@utoronto.ca) before the deadline to prove that it is complete. They should then upload their work to Quercus as soon as possible after the deadline once the technical issue is resolved.

### **Late Policy and Missed Term Work**

In the interest of a Universal Design for Learning, assignments will have a 72-hour grace period after the deadline where no late marks are deducted. Students do not need to request an extension of up to three days (if an extension longer than three days is needed, please reach out to the professor via email). Assignments submitted after the 72-hour grace period will receive a penalty of 5% per day. Assignments submitted more than one week after the due date will not be accepted without approved accommodations.

Please note that the grace period *does not* apply to the final exam, which must be written within the scheduled three-hour time block. Students who require exam accommodations are reminded to register with Accommodated Testing Services at least 14 days before the exam.

### **Regrade Policy**

You may request a regrade of your work. Requests for a regrade may not be made within 48 hours of receiving feedback and must be made within two weeks of receiving feedback.

**If the TA originally graded your work:** You must submit a written request (max 1 page) to the TA explaining the reason that you think your work should be regraded. The request for the regrade must be based on the manifest content of the work, not on external factors (such as the effort you put in, the grade you need to get into another program, etc.). If the TA does not agree to change the grade or if you are unsatisfied with the TA's resolution, you may ask the TA to escalate the appeal to the professor. The TA will send the professor a fresh (ungraded) copy of your work and she will assign it a new grade.

**If the professor originally graded your work:** You must submit a written request (max 1 page) to the professor explaining the reason that you think your work should be regraded. The request for the regrade must be based on the manifest content of the work, not on external factors (such as the effort you put in, the grade you need to get into another program, etc.). The professor will take another look at your essay and consider the points made in your appeal.

Remember that if work is regraded, there are three possible outcomes: the grade may be higher, it may stay the same, or it may be lower than the original grade. After the regrade, the original grade will be erased, and the new grade will stand.

Please note that if you are unsatisfied with the professor's decision at the end of the regrade process and you have made every effort to understand her reasoning, you have the right to apply

for a Special Consideration Request to the Academic Department (the first level is an appeal to the Undergraduate Coordinator).

## Weekly Topic Outline

### ***Week 1 (September 4) – Introduction to the Course***

Please familiarize yourself with course policies in the syllabus.

Centre for Learning Strategy Support. 2025. “Using AI Tools for Learning at UofT.” <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/using-ai-tools-for-learning-at-u-of-t/>

### ***Week 2 (September 11) – Elections and Political Parties as Instruments of Democracy***

Cross, William P., Rob Currie-Wood and Scott Pruysers. 2022. *The Political Party in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press. → **Please read Chapter 1, “Political Parties and Their Place in Canadian Democratic Life,” pp. 3-21.**

Anderson, Cameron and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. 2005. “Conceptions of Political Representation in Canada: An Explanation of Public Opinion.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38(4): 1029-1058.

Cochrane, Christopher. 2015. *Left and Right: The Small World of Political Ideas*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press. → Please read Chapter 8, “The Rise of Left/Right in Canadian Politics,” 145-174.

Snagovsky, Feo. 2022. “Troubling Trends in Canadian Democracy.” *Policy Options*. December 2. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2022/threats-canadian-democracy/>

### ***Week 3 (September 18) – Canada’s Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform***

Cairns, Alan C. 1968. “The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921-1965.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1(1): 55-80.

Williams, Melissa S. 2017. “Indigenous Representation, Self-Determination, and Electoral Reform.” In A. Potter, D. Weinstock, and P.J. Loewen (eds.), *Should We Change How We Vote? Evaluating Canada’s Electoral System*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press. 126-138.

Blais, André, Jean-François Daoust, Ruth Dassonneville, and Gabrielle Péroquin-Skulski. “What is the Cost of Voting?” *Electoral Studies* 59: 145-157.

Dawood, Yasmin. “Is a Constitutional Amendment Required for Electoral Reform?” *Policy Options*. June 27. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2016/is-a-constitutional-amendment-required-for-electoral-reform/>

#### ***Week 4 (September 25) – NO CLASS***

*Please use this time to work on your essay outlines.*

#### ***Week 5 (October 2) – Canada’s Party System***

Johnston, Richard. 2016. *The Canadian Party System: An Analytic History*. Vancouver: UBC Press. → Please read Chapter 8, “System Dynamics, Coordination, Fragmentation,” pp. 187-213.

Carty, R. Kenneth. 2016. *Big Tent Politics: The Liberal Party’s Long Mastery of Canada’s Public Life*. Vancouver: UBC Press. → Please read Chapter 3, “Four Eras, Four Liberal Parties,” 34-49.

Godbout, Jean-François and Bjørn Høyland. 2015. “Unity in Diversity? The Development of Political Parties in the Parliament of Canada, 1867-2011.” *British Journal of Political Science* 47: 545-569.

Lachance, Sarah, and Edana Beauvais. 2024. “Group-Based Affect and the Canadian Party System.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 65-82.

#### ***Week 6 (October 9) – Candidate Selection and Campaign Financing***

*Essay Outline Due*

Koop, Royce, and Amanda Bittner. 2011. “Parachuted into Parliament: Candidate Nomination, Appointed Candidates, and Legislative Roles in Canada.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties* 21(4): 431-452.

Tolley, Erin. 2023. “Gender is not a Proxy: Race and Intersectionality in Legislative Recruitment.” *Politics & Gender* 19(2): 373-400.

Pruysers, Scott, Rob Currie-Wood, and Tobias Gerhard Schminke. 2025. “Public Dollars, Private Discontent? Exploring Support for Direct State Funding of Political Parties in Canada.” *Canadian Public Administration* 68: 83-99.

Crandall, Erin with Kody Blois. 2022. “Local Party Fundraising.” In A. Marland and T. Giasson (eds.), *Inside the Local Campaign: Constituency Elections in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 266-278.

#### ***Week 7 (October 16) – Contesting Elections***

Stephenson, Laura B., Andrea Lawlor, William P. Cross, André Blais, and Elisabeth Gidengil. 2019. *Provincial Battles, National Prize?* Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press. → **Please read Chapter 7, “Influencing the Masses.”**

Small, Tamara A. and Thierry Giasson. 2020. "Political Parties: Political Campaigning in the Digital Age." In T.A. Small and H.J. Jansen (eds.) *Digital Politics in Canada: Promises and Realities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 136-158.

Sevi, Semra, Vincent Arel-Bundock and André Blais. 2019. "Do Women Get Fewer Votes? No." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 52: 201-210.

Lawlor, Andrea and Erin Crandall. 2022. "Public Opinion toward Non-Party Campaign Spending in the UK and Canada." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties* 32(2): 449-468.

### ***Week 8 (October 23) – Parties in the House of Commons***

Malloy, Jonathan. 2023. *The Paradox of Parliament*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. → Please read Chapter 3, "Parties," 39-66.

Godbout, Jean-François. 2020. *Lost on Division: Party Unity in the Canadian Parliament*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. → Please read Chapter 5, "How Members Vote," pp. 92-119.

Roy, Jason J. and Christopher Alcantara. 2020. *Winning and Keeping Power in Canadian Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. → Please read Chapter 6, "Parliamentary Configurations and Assigning Responsibility."

Huo, Cynthia and Jonathan Malloy. 2023. "Extreme Partisanship is Infecting Committees, and We Should be Worried." *Policy Options*. March 20. Available at: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2023/house-committees-extreme-partisanship/>

-----**READING WEEK – OCTOBER 30 – NO CLASS**-----

### ***Week 9 (November 7) – Partisanship and Independence in the Senate***

VandenBeukel, Jason Robert, Christopher Cochrane and Jean-François Godbout. 2021. "Birds of a Feather? Loyalty and Partisanship in the Reformed Canadian Senate." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 54: 830-849.

McCallion, Elizabeth. 2022. "From Private Influence to Public Amendment? The Senate's Amendment Rate in the 41<sup>st</sup>, 42<sup>nd</sup>, and 43<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Parliaments." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 583-599.

Rayment, Erica and Elizabeth McCallion. 2023. "Contexts and Constraints: The Substantive Representation of Women in the Canadian House of Commons and Senate." *Representation* 60(1): 117-133.

## **November 11 – Last Day to Drop Fall Courses**

### **Week 10 (November 13) – Party Leaders and Message Control**

#### *Essay Due*

Bittner, Amanda. 2018. “Leaders Always Mattered: The Persistence of Personality in Canadian Elections.” *Electoral Studies* 54: 297-302.

Thomas, Melanee. 2018. “In Crisis or Decline? Selecting Women to Lead Provincial Parties in Government.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 51(2): 379-403.

Au-Yeung, Ronaldo, and Alsu Tagirova. 2024. “Beyond general elections: How could foreign actors influence the prime ministership?” *International Journal* 79(1): 149-159.

Marland, Alex. 2020. *Whipped: Party Discipline in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press. → Please read Chapter 5, “Message Discipline,” 125-156.

### **Week 11 (November 20) – Party Policy Development**

#### *Meme Assignment Due*

Flynn, Greg. 2011. “Rethinking Policy Capacity in Canada: the Role of Parties and Election Platforms in Government Policy-Making.” *Canadian Public Administration* 54(2): 235+

Wesley, Jared J. 2011. “Staking the Progressive Centre: An Ideational Analysis of Manitoba Party Politics.” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 45(1): 143-177.

Biswas-Mellamphy, Nandita, Tyler Girard and Anne Campbell. 2023. “Interpreting Crises through Narratives: The Construction of a COVID-19 Policy Narrative by Canada’s Political Parties.” *Critical Policy Studies* 17(1): 142-161.

### **Week 12 (November 27) – Final Assessment Review**

*Please come prepared with questions about the course material and the final exam.*

## Course Policies

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see <https://academicintegrity.org/about/values>). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University's policies and procedures on academic integrity (<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>).

### Artificial Intelligence Policy

The POL356 artificial intelligence policy was co-developed by students in the Week 1 lecture on September 4, 2025. Students agreed that AI can be used to support their learning on the essay outline, essay, and meme assignment.

Regarding AI for writing support, students decided that they can use Grammarly for editing text that they have written themselves. They may not use large language models (LLMs) to generate or edit text. Students encouraged their colleagues to make use of the Writing Centre, the professor's office hours, and their friends' goodwill to resolve any issues with rewording ideas for clarity.

When it comes to using AI to support students' research, they decided that it was acceptable to use LLMs as a jumping-off point for research. Students may generate lists of potential sources related to their topic, but they are ultimately responsible for checking the veracity of their sources. Students should not use AI to generate or test the ideas in their essays.

Students can use LLMs to check their assignments against the checklist provided by the professor in the assignment instructions, but students decided that they should *not* use AI to check their essays against the rubric, as this creates too much of a risk of AI introducing new ideas.

All assignments must include an AI statement (see sample statements on Quercus). Students who use AI in their assignments must include an AI appendix (see example on Quercus).

**Students are accountable for the work they submit. Any breach of academic integrity, whether the result of AI use or not, will be reported to the Student Academic Integrity Office. Departure from the course AI policy set out above may constitute a breach of academic integrity in this course.** When using AI to support your learning, be particularly careful not to commit the academic offences of concoction or plagiarism.

### **A WARNING ABOUT PLAGIARISM**

**Plagiarism is an academic offence with a severe penalty.**

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. In essence, it is the theft of the thoughts or words of others, without giving proper credit. You must put others'

words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words. Plagiarism is unacceptable in a university. What the university calls "plagiarism", non-university institutions might call "fraud".

The University of Toronto provides a process that faculty members must initiate when they suspect a case of plagiarism. In the Department of Political Science, suspected evidence of plagiarism must be reported to the Chair; in most cases, the Chair passes the case on to the Dean.

A faculty member may not mark an assignment or assess a penalty if he or she finds evidence of plagiarism – the matter must be reported. Penalties are assigned by the Chair, by the Dean or by the University of Toronto Tribunal.

The following are some examples of plagiarism:

1. Submitting as your own an assignment written by someone else.
2. Quoting an author without indicating the source of the words.
3. Using words, sentences, or paragraphs written by someone else and failing to place quotation marks around the material and reference the source and author. Using either quotation marks or reference alone is not sufficient. Both must be used!
4. Adapting an author's ideas or theme and using it as your own without referencing the original source.
5. Seeking assistance from a friend or family member in respect to work you claim as your own.

Ignorance of the rules against plagiarism is not a defence; students are presumed to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Students are especially reminded that material taken from the web must be quoted and cited in the same manner as if it came from a book or printed article.

If you are not sure whether you have committed plagiarism, it is better to ask a faculty member or teaching assistant than risk discovery and be forced to accept an academic penalty.

Plagiarism **is cheating**. It is considered a serious offence against intellectual honesty and intellectual property. Penalties can be severe, ranging from a mark of "0" for the assignment or test in question, **up to and including expulsion from the university**.

**Website listed below on avoiding plagiarism:**

'How to Use Sources and Avoid Plagiarism' - available at:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

**\*\*To simplify plagiarism investigations (and to protect yourself from plagiarism accusations), please keep your research notes from your assignments until after you receive grades for them\*\***

### **Turnitin Plagiarism Detection**

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference

database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. 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>).

If you would like to opt out of submitting your assignments through Turnitin, please notify the professor before September 14. Alternate modes of plagiarism checking will be used instead.

### **Accessibility Services**

Students with disabilities may receive accommodation from the University and need to register with accessibility services. Instructors are notified with a request for accommodation and can give the request consideration. For best practices around accommodations, visit Accessibility Services <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/> or email [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca) or Tel: 416-978-8060.

I am more than happy to entertain requests for accommodations, and I encourage students to approach me regarding these requests as soon as possible. I will do my best to accommodate students' requests, including requests for extensions, modified assignments, and changes to the physical classroom environment (including microphones, seating, lighting, PowerPoint slides, etc.).

### **Absence Declaration and Academic Consideration**

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances – *please note that you are not required to share personal medical information with me*. The documentation you provide can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. 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.

### **Writing Centre Support**

All students are encouraged to make use of the writing centres at their colleges. Writing centres will provide you with feedback on your work before submission, and they can give you useful tips for planning and executing assignments. More information about the writing centres at the various colleges can be found here: <https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/>

## **Technology Support for Students**

If you encounter any technical issues during the course, please try restarting your internet browser and restarting your computer. If that does not resolve the problem and you have exhausted all other solutions, please report the technical problem to the course instructor and/or the Information Commons Help Desk, as appropriate.

For Quercus and all other technology support, contact the Information Commons Help Desk: [help.desk@utoronto.ca](mailto:help.desk@utoronto.ca). For more details, visit Info Commons Help Desk, Robarts Library.

## **Online Communication Policy**

I monitor my email from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. Any response to emails outside of that time should not be interpreted as an ongoing commitment to monitor emails during the evenings or weekends. You can expect a response from me within two business days – if you do not hear back from me within two business days, you are welcome to follow up on your email to make sure that I saw it.

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

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.

## **Health and Wellness**

Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Many of these programs are listed at:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>

For Students - U of T

- U of T Health & Wellness [uoft.me/5EB](https://uoft.me/5EB)
- 416-978-8030
- Support if Students are Feeling Distressed [uoft.me/5EC](https://uoft.me/5EC)
- U of T Telus Health Student Support <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/>
- Community Safety Office [communitysafety.utoronto.ca/](https://communitysafety.utoronto.ca/) 416-978-1485
- U of T Safety & Support [safety.utoronto.ca/](https://safety.utoronto.ca/)