

POL491 F Topics in Canadian Politics II: Deliberative Democracy

Fall 2025 Syllabus

Section: LEC0101

Date/ Time: Tuesday, 9 – 11 AM

Location: UC 67

Course Website: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/400565>

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:

POL214H1/POL214Y1/POL215H5/POL216H5/POL224H1/POL224Y1/POLB50Y3; 1.0 other POL/JPI credit in Canadian politics. See the Department's website

<http://politics.utoronto.ca/undergraduate/courses/fallwinter-timetable/> for POL courses by area group.

Course Description

In this course, students will learn about recent developments in the theory and practice of deliberative democracy. The first portion of the course will consist of an examination of the theoretical foundations and key debates in the field of deliberative democracy. Students will then examine the recent expansion of deliberative democratic innovations in established democracies and consider these developments in the context of polarization and democratic backsliding.

Course Objectives

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

- Critically analyze the theoretical foundations of deliberative democracy;

- Explain differences in methods of citizen-engaged policy-making considered under the heading of “democratic innovations”
- Make linkages between the theoretical tenets of deliberative democracy and the practice of democratic innovations;
- Critically assess the purpose and efficacy of democratic innovations and their use by policymakers in established democracies
- Communicate their perspectives on course readings in verbal and written form

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
 - 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	35%	Ongoing
Syllabus Quiz	5%	Due September 19 by 11:59 PM
Reading reflections	30% (1 @10 %, 1 @20%)	To be completed in seminar meeting and final exam period as indicated in schedule below
Attendance at MASS LBP Field Trip/ discussion question	10%	November 10 th class meeting; questions due by 9 AM November 9 th .
Discussion questions	20% (2 @10% each)	Dates to be assigned during first week of class

Seminar Participation (35%)

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 @ 10%, 1 @ 20%)

Students will complete two reading reflections in-person. One will take place during our regular seminar hours, and the other will be scheduled during the final exam period. Students will be required to write an essay-style response that draws on course readings assigned up to that point in the term. Students will be given four example questions ahead of time, two of which will appear as options for answers during the assessment.

Attendance at MASS LBP field trip/discussion question 5%

Our November 10th class meeting will take place at MASS LBP, a local public engagement firm that has run over 50 deliberative mini-publics. We will meet at 3A Gilead Place and hear from MASS LBP’s principal and founder, Peter Macleod. Students will submit one question to ask at this field trip on Quercus by 9 AM on November 9th. Both the discussion question and in-person attendance are required to receive this grade. Students facing logistical challenges should contact the instructor ahead of this class meeting.

Discussion Questions 10%

Students are required to submit 5 – 7 high quality discussion questions for one of our course meeting dates. These questions should consider the main themes that emerge from that week’s readings as a group, should reflect a close reading of the assigned content, and should draw connections to broader themes from the course. These questions will be submitted via Quercus by 9 AM on the Friday before class and may be shared in seminar meetings.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Sept 1	Labour Day No assigned readings No tutorial meetings
Week 2 Sept 8	Course Introduction Core Elements of Deliberative Democracy <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Oliver Escobar and Stephen Elstub, The Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019). “Introduction: the Field of Democratic Innovation.”2. Nicole Curato, David M. Farrell, Brigitte Geissel, Kimmo Grönlund, Patricia Mockler, Jean-Benoit Pilet, Alan Renwick, Jonathan Rose, Maija Setälä, and Jane Suiter, Deliberative Mini-Publics: Core Design Features, (Bristol University Press, 2021), “Introduction.”3. Michael X. Delli Carpini, Fay Lomax Cook & Lawrence Jacobs, “Public Deliberation, Discursive Participation and Citizen Engagement: A Review of the Empirical Literature,” Annual Review of Political Science (2004) 7 315-44.

<p>Week 3 Sept 15</p>	<p>Theoretical Principles of Deliberative Democracy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simone Chambers, "Deliberative Democratic Theory", Annual Review of Political Science 6 (2003) 307-26. 2. Genevieve Fuji Johnson, Democratic Illusion: Deliberative Democracy in Canadian Public Policy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), Ch. 1, 3. Micheline Milot "The Hope for and Illusion of Deliberative Democracy", 3-24. In "Conceptions of the Good: Challenging the Premises of Deliberative Democracy," in David Kahane, Daniel Weinstock, Dominique Leydet, & Melissa Williams [eds.], Deliberative Democracy in Practice (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). 4. Amy Guttmann & Dennis Thompson, Why Deliberative Democracy? (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Ch. 1, "What Deliberative Democracy Means" <p><i>Syllabus Quiz due online on Friday, September 19 at midnight</i></p>
<p>Week 4 Sept 22</p>	<p>Deliberative Democracy in Practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OECD, Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave, "Executive Summary": 16-18. 2. Archon Fung, "Survey Article: Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and their Consequences," Journal of Public Philosophy 11:3, 338-67 3. Graham Smith, Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Ch. 3, "Minipublics: Assemblies by Random Selection", 72-111.

<p>Week 5 Sept 29</p>	<p>Deliberative Polling</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. James Fishkin and Cynthia Farrar, "Deliberative Polling: From Experiment to Community Resource" in John Gastil and Peter Levine, <i>The Deliberative Democracy Handbook</i> [eds.], (New York: Jossey Bass, 2005), 68-80. 2. Genevieve Fuji Johnson, <i>Democratic Illusion: Deliberative Democracy in Canadian Public Policy</i> (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), Ch 3., "Deliberative Polling and Nova Scotia Power Incorporated". 3. Dennis Chirawurah, James Fishkin, Niagia Santuah, Alice Siu, Ayaga Bawah, Gordana Kranjac-Berisavljevic, Kathleen Giles, "Deliberation for Development: Ghana's First Deliberative Poll" <i>Journal of Public Deliberation</i> 15:1 (2019).
<p>Week 6 Oct 6</p>	<p>Indigenous Forms of Deliberation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Martin Hebert, "Indigenous Spheres of Deliberation," <i>The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). 2. Glen Coulthard, "Resisting Culture: Seyla Benhabib's Deliberative Approach to the Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts," <i>Deliberative Democracy in Practice</i> by David Kahane, Daniel Weinstock, Dominique Leydet, & Melissa Williams [eds] (2010):139-145. 3. Kahente Horn-Miller, "What does Indigenous Participatory Democracy Look Like? Kahnawa:ke's Community Decision Making Process" <i>Review of Constitutional Studies</i>, 18:1 (2013).
<p>Week 7 Oct 13</p>	<p>Thanksgiving</p> <p>No assigned readings</p> <p>No lecture or tutorial meetings</p>
<p>Week 8 Oct 20</p>	<p>In-class reflection</p> <p>No assigned readings</p>
<p>Week 9 October 27</p>	<p>Reading Week</p> <p>No assigned readings</p> <p>No lecture or tutorial meetings</p>

<p>Week 10 Nov 3</p>	<p>Citizens' Assemblies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OECD, <i>Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave</i>, "Models of Representative Deliberative Processes," 33- 63. 2. Patrick Fournier, Henk van der Kolk, R. Kenneth Carty, André Blais, Jonathan Rose, <i>When Citizens Decide: Lessons from Citizen Assemblies on Electoral Reform</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Ch. 1, "Power to the People?", 1-21; Ch. 2, "Why Citizen Assemblies and How did they Work?", 21-51. 3. Graham Smith. <i>We Need To Talk About Climate: How Citizens' Assemblies Can Help Us Solve The Climate Crisis</i>, University of Westminster Press (2024) p. 9 – 35. 4. MASS LBP. <i>Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression Final Report 2020-2021</i>.
<p>Week 11 Nov 10</p>	<p>Field Trip: MASS LBP</p> <p><i>Seminar meeting will take place at 9 AM at MASS LBP offices: 3A Gilead Place, Toronto ON, M5A 3C8.</i></p> <p>Readings: TBA</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov 17</p>	<p>Who Makes Decisions?</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Sara McPhee-Knowles, Chair of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amy Lang, "Agenda-setting in Deliberative Forums: Expert Influence and Citizen Autonomy in the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly" in Mark Warren & Hilary Pearse, [eds.] <i>Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly</i>, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 85-106. 2. Patrick Fournier, Henk van der Kolk, R. Kenneth Carty, André Blais, Jonathan Rose, <i>When Citizens Decide: Lessons from Citizen Assemblies on Electoral Reform</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), Ch. 6, "Did the Participants Decide by Themselves?", 94-113.

<p>Week 13 Nov 24</p>	<p>Inequality in Deliberation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Iris Marion Young, "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy" <i>Political Theory</i>, 29:5 (2001), 670-90. 2. Lynn M. Sanders, "Against Deliberation" <i>Political Theory</i>, 25:3 (1997), 347-76. 3. Edana Beauvais, "Discursive Inequity and the Internal Exclusion of Women Speakers" <i>Political Research Quarterly</i>, (2019) 4. Mark Button and Kevin Mattson, "Deliberative Democracy in Practice: Challenges and Prospects for Civic Deliberation", <i>Polity</i>, 31:4, 609-37.
<p>Week 14 Dec 1</p>	<p>Course Wrap up: Deliberation and Challenges to Democracy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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) 2. Archon Fung, "Afterword: Does Deliberative Democracy Have a Role in Our Time of Political Crisis?" <i>Journal of Deliberative Democracy</i>, 16:1 (2020). 3. Nancy L. Thomas and J. Kyle Upchurch, "Strengthening Democracy by Design: Challenges and Opportunities" <i>Journal of Public Deliberation</i>, 14:2 (2018).

Policies & Statements

Communications Policy

I can be reached via email at p.mockler@utoronto.ca. You can expect a response from me within 3 business days. Please include the course code in the subject line of your email. 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-) (<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 \(https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity\)](#) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity \(https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca\)](#).

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.