CLASS SYLLABUS

COURSE TITLE: Governance of Canada  TERM: Spring 2017
COURSE CODE: POLS 204  DELIVERY: Online
COURSE CREDITS: 3  START DATE: May 10, 2017
COURSE SECTION: W01  END DATE: June 23, 2017

Course Description
Introduces students to the main structures and processes of Canadian government, including the Constitution, Parliament, cabinet, federalism, provincial governments, municipal governments, First Nations governments and electoral systems.

Formerly: Formerly POLS 203

Prerequisite(s): 6 credit units 100-level POLS.

Note: Students with credit for POLS 203 may not take this course for credit.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students should be able to:
1. Identify and describe the main structures of Canada's national government.
2. Discuss how the various processes of governance at the federal level work, explain why they are in place and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Course Overview
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the main structures and processes of Canada's national government. Specifically, the course aims to provide students with a detailed knowledge of the Constitution and Canada's federal system as well as the roles that the Crown, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, Parliament and the courts play in the governance of the country. This is a particularly interesting time to be studying the governance of Canada as the governing Liberals are dealing with important questions concerning parliament, the electoral system and others. Furthermore, because the Liberal Party has a majority government, the primary opposition to them comes from the provinces and the courts, rather than the party that is the official opposition, the Conservatives who currently do not have a permanent leader. Thus, during this term you will likely see many of the aspects of Canadian governance that we discuss in this course playing out in contemporary Canadian politics!
In terms of practical components, the course will consist of an article review, a major paper, online discussions and a final exam. Each module contains an article, readings from the textbook and readings in the module itself which are designed to serve as surrogate lectures. You are responsible for reading all three. Each module also contains discussion questions and CLT options (Choose, Learn, Teach; they are explained later in the syllabus) and you are expected to answer some of them online, as well as discuss the answers of your peers.

Your Instructor
Contact Information
The easiest way to contact me is via email, jason.zorbas@usask.ca. Emails will be answered within a 24-hour period (except on weekends when there might be a slight delay) and if yours is not, you can safely assume that something has happened to it. In this case, please resend the same email again. You are also welcome to call or text me on my cell phone, 306-220-1675 and if I don’t answer, leave a message. In the case of both email and text, be sure to identify yourself and the class you are in.

Profile
Hello! My name is Jason Zorbas and I’ll be your instructor for this course. I grew up in northern Ontario but have been a Saskatoon native since 2000. I’m married with three young children and have a deep love of soccer and Canadian politics. Yes, I’m aware that is a very odd combination! I have a B.A. and M.A. from Laurentian University, which is located in Sudbury, Ontario, and a PhD from the University of Saskatchewan. My area of specialization is Canadian foreign policy, and I’m the author of a book on the subject titled Diefenbaker, Latin America and the Caribbean: The Pursuit of Canadian Autonomy.

I’m a firm believer in the idea that you will get out of this course what you put it into it. In other words, if you do all the readings, complete all the assignments and study hard, then you will do fine. However, to really maximize what you get out of this course, you should immerse yourself in Canadian politics for the next two months. Thanks to the Internet, this is a relatively easy thing to do. You can watch the evening news on television or the Internet. Follow political blogs, download podcasts or make a point of checking Canadian political news aggregate sites, such as National Newswatch, on a daily basis. You will quickly discover that many of the things discussed in the course continue to be sources of contention. You will also have much more to bring to the online discussions!

Required Resources
Textbooks

Textbooks are available from the University of Saskatchewan Bookstore: [http://www.usask.ca/bookstore/](http://www.usask.ca/bookstore/)

**Mobile Access**

Blackboard Mobile Learn™ is an app that is available on many devices including iOS® and Android™ for those occasional times when you may want mobile access. It is still recommended that you use a laptop or desktop computer for the majority of your online studies.

**Class Schedule**

**Note:** The articles in each module are available from the U of S Library electronically; just use usearch on the library homepage. [http://library.usask.ca/](http://library.usask.ca/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Evaluation Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria Day Holiday  No evaluations due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Module</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Evaluation Due Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1-2</td>
<td>Midterm Break</td>
<td>No evaluations due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dates | Module | Readings | Evaluation Due Date
--- | --- | --- | ---
June 22-23 | | Review your notes |  |
| Final Exam | | Invigilated | Monday, June 26, 2017 (Exact time TBA) |

*Note: If for any reason the Class Syllabus Reading List does not match the Module Reading List, the Class Syllabus shall be taken as correct.*

### Grading Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussions</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information on literal descriptors for grading at the University of Saskatchewan can be found at: [https://students.usask.ca/academics/grading/grading-system.php](https://students.usask.ca/academics/grading/grading-system.php)

Please note: There are different literal descriptors for undergraduate and graduate students.

More information on the Academic Courses Policy on course delivery, examinations and assessment of student learning can be found at: [http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php](http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php)
The University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter is intended to define aspirations about the learning experience that the University aims to provide, and the roles to be played in realizing these aspirations by students, instructors and the institution. A copy of the Learning Charter can be found at: http://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php

**Evaluation Components**

**DEU Writing Centre - Quality writing help for free!**

Anyone taking a distance class (online, independent studies, televised, or multi–mode delivery) administered by the DEU can use this free service. The Writing Centre provides tools and support to help you write effective essays, reports, or reviews. Simply submit a project draft, and a qualified tutor will assess your work and offer advice to improve your project. Contact the DEU Writing Centre at http://distanceeducation.usask.ca/support/writing-centre.php

**Online Discussions**

| **Value:** | 15% of final grade |
| **Due Date:** | At the end of the course. |
| **Purpose:** | To allow students to articulate their views on the various issues discussed in the modules as well as promote a virtual community/classroom. Here you will have an opportunity to demonstrate not only your understanding of the course material but also examine the insights of your peers and instructor. |
| **Description:** | One of the most important aspects of this course is online participation. There are two ways to participate online: You post responses in the Discussion Forum and CLT (Choose, Learn, Teach) assignments. The CLT is explained in each module. Over the course of the class, you must (at minimum) post an answer to FOUR of the discussion questions (each module has three options) and post at least FOUR responses to another student’s answer. Your answers must be a minimum of 150 words in length each and there is no maximum length. Your response to another student’s answer must be a minimum of 75 words in length. You, must also post at least TWO CLTs. Both posts and CLTs will be graded on your grasp of the material as well as insight and critical thinking. Although grammar and spelling are not graded, very poor grammar and spelling can result in a reduction in marks. You will post the answers and responses in the appropriate sections of Blackboard. For clarification, by the end of the term, you must have posted at least four discussion responses, answered four of your fellow students posts, and completed and posted two CLTs. If you have any questions about this, please contact me. |
Article Review

Value: 15% of final grade
Due Date: See Class Schedule
Purpose: To allow students to submit an early writing assignment and review an article for their major essay.

Description: Ideally, although it is not a requirement, you will choose an article that relates to your essay topic to review. The article MUST be an academic article and you must include it with the review when you submit it. The review itself should be 2-3 pages, double spaced (between 500-1000 words). In the review, you must discuss the article’s main argument, its strengths, weaknesses and what you think overall. Also, be sure you read the assignment submission and late policies later in this section.

Major Paper

Value: 30% of final grade
Due Date: See Class Schedule
Purpose: To allow the students to investigate an aspect of the course in extensive detail. Also, to improve students’ research and writing skills.

Description: The research essay is the major written assignment. You will be given the opportunity to select any topic that relates to Governance in Canada that interests you. Although you are free to pick a topic from anything that is discussed in the course, if you are looking for ideas for your essay, then you should use the various Discussion questions as a starting point. Be sure to verify your topic with your instructor. The essay is to be approximately 2500-3000 words (10-12 pages) and use the Chicago Manual of Style. You also must include a Works Cited page (not a bibliography).

It is important to note that you are being asked to write an argumentative essay not a descriptive essay. In other words, you will try to prove something. Think of your essay as a law case and the reader as the jury. Your argument is your thesis and it is crucial to your success. A poor argument will often translate into a poor paper. A final note, you should select a topic that interests you. It is a lot more interesting to read, research and write about something you like rather than something that puts you to sleep!

Assignment Submission Policy. The article review and essay are to be submitted in electronic form (MS Word or PDF) via email to jason.zorbas@usask.ca Electronic assignments in alternate software (e.g., Pages, Publisher) will not be accepted. The file name must be your name, followed by the assignment type (e.g., “Jason Zorbas Research Paper.docx”). You will receive a confirmation email from me that will say “Thanks.” If you do not receive this email within 12 hours of submission, you need to contact me via text, phone or email.

Late Assignment Policy. The Political Studies Department’s policy is that late assignments are penalized 10% per week. Exceptions may be made, at my discretion, for students who contact me regarding medical reasons or family emergencies (but not computer-related emergencies) before assignments are due. Documentation will be required in these cases.
### Final Exam

**Value:** 40% of final grade  
**Date:** See Class Schedule  
**Length:** 3 Hours  
**Description:** Invigilated. The instructor will email details prior to exam time.

| Your final exam will be in Saskatoon **UNLESS** you reside more than 110 KM from Saskatoon. For those students that reside more than 110 KM from Saskatoon you will need to complete the *Application for Final Examination* form (https://students.usask.ca/academics/exams.php#Distanceclasses). |

---

#### Integrity Defined

“Integrity is expected of all students in their academic work – class participation, examinations, assignments, research, practica – and in their non-academic interactions and activities as well.” (Office of the University Secretary)

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University of Saskatchewan policies and procedures on Academic Misconduct (http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php) and Non-Academic Conduct (http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/non-academic-misconduct.php).

#### Students with Disabilities

If you have a diagnosed disability (learning, medical, physical, or mental health), you must register with Disability Services for Students (DSS) in order to access DSS programs and supports. <http://www.students.usask.ca/disability> or 306-966-7273 or dss@usask.ca.

For DSS exam accommodations please ensure that you fill out the DSS Exam Accommodation form within the applicable deadlines. <https://students.usask.ca/health/dss/accommodations.php#ExamAccommodations>.

#### Additional Information

**Safe Space: Our POLS Classroom.** This class is designated a “Safe Space” by its instructor: “The University of Saskatchewan’s Positive Space Program is a campus wide initiative that is run by the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Sexual and Gender Diversity, the University of Saskatchewan Students’ Union (USSU) Pride Centre and Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services (DHPS). The purpose of this program is to reduce homophobia and heterosexism and promote a safe, welcoming environment for students and employees who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirited, intersexed, queer or questioning (LGBTT2IQQ). These goals are achieved by having participants in the program display printed material that identifies their area as a ‘positive space.’ A positive space is one that welcomes and supports LGBTT2IQQ individuals, encourages open, respectful communication and eliminates the need for people to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Program reflects...
the University’s commitment to welcome and include all members of the community and create a campus that is free of discrimination.”

**Student Supports.** Students are encouraged to make use of the support services offered through the Student and Enrolment Services Division, Student Learning Services at the University Library, and the College of Arts and Science. For information on Student Learning Services (SLS), please see the SLS web site [http://library.usask.ca/studentlearning/](http://library.usask.ca/studentlearning/). For information on the Student and Enrolment Services Division (SESD)’s developmental and support services and programs, see the SESD web site [https://students.usask.ca/#Studentservices](https://students.usask.ca/#Studentservices).

**Additional information.** More information on the Academic Courses Policy on course delivery, examinations and assessment of student learning can be found at: [http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php](http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php). The University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter is intended to define aspirations about the learning experience that the University aims to provide, and the roles to be played in realizing these aspirations by students, instructors and the institution. A copy of the Learning Charter can be found at: [http://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php](http://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php)

**Grading Policy.** The University of Saskatchewan grading system is detailed in full at [https://students.usask.ca/academics/grading/grading-system.php](https://students.usask.ca/academics/grading/grading-system.php). In brief, the following standards are used: 0-49% failure, 50-59% minimal pass, 60-69% satisfactory, 70-79% good, 80-89% excellent, 90-100% exceptional. You are encouraged to visit the official website for full information on the differences between the various levels of performance.

**Grade Appeal Policy.** As per University regulation, a student who is dissatisfied with the assessment of their work or performance in any aspect of class work, including a midterm or final examination, shall follow the procedures set out in the University Council policy on *Student Appeals of Evaluation, Grading and Academic Standing* and the *Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters*. Please carefully review these policies at: [http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/appeals-in-academic-matters.php](http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/appeals-in-academic-matters.php). Students who wish to initiate the first procedural step outlined in the policy, informal consultation, to have an assignment or exam grade revisited must do the following:

a. Within five days of receipt of the assignment grade, submit to me via email a written explanation, between one-half to one page in length (typed and double spaced) explaining why the grade should be revisited and what the grader missed in his/her comments. Along with this explanation, please provide me with an electronic copy (scanned if necessary) of the assignment. (You should retain the original copy.)

b. After submission of the written materials, it is your responsibility to contact me via email to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss the exam/paper and your written submission.
Module Objectives

Module 1: Introduction to POLS 204.3
1. Identify the structure of the Learning Modules.
2. Locate your course syllabus within the course menu.
3. Locate your discussion forums within the course menu.
4. Contribute to the discussion forums.

Module 2: The Constitution I – Elements and Functions
1. Identify what is a constitution and what are its functions
2. Explain the various elements of the Canadian Constitution
3. Describe how Canada’s constitution can be changed.

Module 3: The Constitution II – Historical Evolution
1. Describe the origins of Canada’s two major constitutional documents, the Constitutional Acts of 1867 and 1982.
2. Explain the various reasons why the patriation of the Constitution in 1982 was such a difficult process.
3. Identify the major post-patriation constitutional challenges and issues that occurred and currently exist.

Module 4: Federalism
1. Identify the different types of government systems that are put in place as well as their advantages and disadvantages.
2. Describe the historical evolution of Canadian federalism
3. Explain the two views of federalism in Canada.

Module 5: The Crown
1. Discuss the differences between a Head of State and a Head of Government
2. Explain the roles and powers of the Governor General.
3. Describe controversial decisions and events that have involved the Governor General.

Module 6: The Prime Minister
1. Explain how the Prime Minister is selected and who can occupy the post.
2. Identify the various powers of the Prime Minister.
3. Describe the role the Prime Minister’s Office plays in Canada’s political system.
Module 7: The Cabinet

1. Explain who can be appointed to Cabinet and what criteria are a part of cabinet selection.
2. Describe how Cabinet solidarity works.
3. Describe the principle of ministerial responsibility and its importance to a democratic society.

Module 8: Parliament

1. Identify who fills the House of Commons and what it is they do.
2. Describe how a bill becomes law in Canada.
3. Explain the purpose of the Senate
4. Describe the nature and history of Senate Reform

Module 9: The Judiciary

1. Explain the different types of laws and legal systems that exist in Canada.
2. Describe the role of the role of the Supreme Court of Canada plays in Canada’s legal and political systems.
3. Discuss the controversies regarding judicial activism.

Module 10: First Nations Government

See Blackboard.

Module 11: Provincial and Municipal Governments

See Blackboard.

Acknowledgements

Instructional Design and Course Development
Course designer Jordan Epp was instrumental in getting the course completed and helped in numerous ways to make this a much better course than it would have been otherwise.

Treaty Acknowledgment
We acknowledge we are on Treaty Six Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Course Funding
I would like to thank Frank Bulk, program manager of Technology Enhanced Learning Programs (TEL) and acknowledge the funding from TEL which made this course possible.