



Department of Political Science

Website: <https://poli.ucalgary.ca/>
(Winter 2023)

POLI 321 (L01) – Politics and Government in Canada	
Pre/Co-Requisites	
Instructor: Melanee Thomas	Lecture Location: ST 141
Email: thomasm@ucalgary.ca	Lecture Days/Time: MWF 9-950
Office: SS 714	
Office Hours: appointment are mandatory. Book at https://thomasm.youcanbook.me	

COURSE DESCRIPTION

POLI 321 introduces students to the constitution, political institutions, and the social, cultural, behavioural, and electoral foundations of the Canadian political process. It also highlights for students the areas where Canadian political science excels, falls flat, or ignores as a field.

I will often make references to current events in Canadian politics. To facilitate the discussions that stem from these events, students are responsible for keeping up to date with current events in Canadian politics via an outlet of public record (e.g., the CBC, a national or local newspaper of record, such as the Calgary Herald or Globe & Mail, newswire services such as the Canadian Press). Those interested in the “inside baseball” of Canadian politics may also wish to follow programs/podcasts such as CBC’s *The House*.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students should:

- Identify and critique key elements of the Canadian political process, using appropriate language and vocabulary;
- Begin to be able to identify and critique aspects of Canadian political science, using appropriate language and vocabulary;
- Begin to be able to identify and understand the difference between assumptions and evidence, both on the part of authors and consumers of research in the social sciences in general, and in political science in particular. This includes beginning to identify and understand how your own values, beliefs, and preferences structure your reactions to, and analyses of the Canadian political process and Canadian political science;
- Accurately read, summarize, and cogently write about an assigned text.
- Begin to identify and use appropriate empirical evidence to analyze the Canadian political process.

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no “standard” textbook for this course. Outlining why is one of the writing assignments assigned to the class, outlined below.

Instead, all the readings assigned to the class will be available via the Reading List/Leganto tool on D2L. Some of these readings will be addressed directly in class; all of them may be included in Content

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Quizzes, also outlined below.

GRADING SCHEME

This course uses **specification grading** for individual assignments, and **contract grading** to determine final grades. Each is outlined below.

Specification grading means that each assignment is assessed based on its **completeness**. Each assignment is tied to specific content I would like you to learn, and/or skills I would like you to develop, outlined in the learning objectives listed above. Your grade thus comes from you submitting that work, and its assessment focusses first on completeness. Performance is still relevant, but is secondary to the assessment. Students will be provided with an explicit list of the criteria they need to meet for their work to be considered complete for each assignment. These criteria focus on the skills and content students need to learn in this class to use it effectively as a pre-requisite for more advanced classes.

Based on this, there are FOUR possible grades for most assignments:

1. **Missing/not submitted:** will be assessed a 0.
2. **Incomplete:** parts of the assignment are missing (e.g., the instructions were not followed), and/or the assignment fails to show a good faith effort to meet the some or all of the completeness criteria, as outlined in the assignment guide. It may be submitted on time, but does not conform to some of the directions related to the assignment's scope (e.g., length, engagement with sources, etc.). Any work that is otherwise Complete or Needs Improvement that violates the Academic Integrity policy will be assessed as Incomplete, and not eligible for revision. Where applicable, Writing Assignments submitted as PDFs will not be assessed and will be graded instead as Incomplete.
3. **Needs improvement:** the assignment shows a good faith effort to meet all the completeness criteria, as outlined in the assignment guide, but does not yet meet some of them. It is submitted on time, but does not conform to some of the directions related to the assignment's scope (e.g., length, engagement with sources, etc.).
4. **Complete:** the assignment meets the standard of completeness as outlined in the assignment sheet. It is submitted on time, and conforms to any directions related to the assignment's scope (e.g., length, engagement with sources, etc.).

Contract grading means that final grades are determined by the amount of work that is **completed**, rather than on a subjective assessment of its quality by whoever is grading your work. In other words, in POLI 321, you will determine your grade by fulfilling/completing a contract of work for the term. **Work must be complete for it to count towards your final grade.** To help you with this, each assignment guide will include a checklist of what needs to be done for work to be marked as complete.

If an assignment is marked "Needs Improvement," it can be moved to complete through the following two steps:

1. Revise the assignment based on the feedback received within **ONE WEEK** of receiving the feedback.
2. Include a response memo outlining the changes you made and why.

To ensure an equitable workload for me and the TAs, you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit your work to move an assignment from "Needs improvement" to a "Complete" **TWICE** throughout the term. Revisions are not available for work that is not submitted, or marked as Incomplete.

I have a few reasons for wanting to shift grading in this direction. First, some students in POLI 321 may be

worried that if their views or identities are not shared by me, the TA, or their classmates, then they may not achieve the grade they would like to. Shifting the focus from subjective performance to completed work is designed to alleviate that. I want to assure you that if you complete the work, you will do well in this class. Second, I think grades should reflect when you learn a lot over the course of the term (vs. already being good at a subject from the start). The assignments set out in the contract are designed to assess that learning process. Third, I think you deserve to have the autonomy and ability to adjust your workload based on your own goals and circumstances. Importantly, I think you deserve some privacy in determining that for yourself. This is why students aren't required to disclose to me or the TAs the grading contract they would like to fulfill, or which assignments they choose (not) to do. Note well that this autonomy cuts both ways, as students are expected to take responsibility for their choices, even if they don't like the consequences of them. This means that students are expected to manage their schedules, ask questions to clarify content or instructions, and so on. Extra revisions, extra assignments, or any other assessment or accommodation NOT already listed elsewhere in this syllabus will not be granted. Fourth, many of you will likely be working to contracts in the future, so understanding the opportunities and consequences of working to a contract under time constraints builds valuable skills you may use down the road.

To help you determine which contract you wish to work to, I have set out in advance the requirements for a letter grade in each range. If you complete the assignments listed for each grade range on the contract – that is, your work meets the requirements for **complete** work, as set out below and in the assignment guides on D2L – you will get that grade. My side of the contract is to ensure you have the information you need to know what is considered to be complete for each assignment. I will provide you with detailed instruction sheets that include information about what constitutes acceptable complete work on each assignment, as well as the list of criteria the TAs will be using to assess your work. Along with each instruction sheet, you'll have a self-assessment checklist that you can use to make sure your submission includes all the features it needs to meet the requirements for completeness.

I know this might feel like a lot to have an unfamiliar grading system applied like this in a class. It asks you to trust me to hold up my end of the contract. I appreciate your willingness to trust me in this.

POLI 321 GRADING CONTRACT

Below, you'll find a brief description of the assignments that can count towards your grade. Full assignments guides and assessment criteria for each type of assignment will be posted on D2L. All work should be uploaded to D2L; more information will be provided in each assignment guide.

- **Reading and Writing:** there are **FOUR** writing assignments students can choose to complete. All are designed to be narrative, written assignments (e.g., full sentences and paragraphs):
 - 1) "Why no textbook?" assignment (~500 words). Due **February 1**.
 - 2) Book review – Memoir (~1000 words). Due **February 15**.
 - 3) Book review – Equalization (~1000 words). Due **March 15**.
 - 4) Research-based Op-Ed column. Due **April 5**.

*As noted above, any Reading and Writing Assignment that violates UCalgary's Academic Integrity Policy will be assessed as Incomplete, and will not be eligible for revision. Given that, I **strongly** advise students familiarize themselves with that policy. The Student Handbook, Academic Integrity courses and workshops, and so on can be found here: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.*

- **Content Quizzes:** there are **SEVEN** content quizzes students can choose to complete. All are open book multiple choice tests administered on D2L, with a portion of the questions pulled from lecture material, and a portion pulled from the readings. **To earn a Complete on any given Content Quiz, students must earn at least a C-(60%).** Each is due before 1159 PM on the following dates:
 - 1) January 27
 - 2) February 3
 - 3) February 17
 - 4) March 3
 - 5) March 17
 - 6) March 31
 - 7) April 14

- **Participation:** there are **THREE** participation assignments students can choose to complete. These are a blend of multiple choice and written assignments:
 - 1) Syllabus quiz: an open-book, multiple choice test on the content of the syllabus. Due **January 23** by 1159 PM.
 - 2) Learning and time management objectives + end-of-term reflection. These are narrative assignments (~500 words total, in full and complete sentences, across two assignments).
 - a. Objective setting: due **January 25**.
 - b. Reflection: due **April 10**.
 - 3) Positionality outlines and reflections. These are narrative assignments (~500 words total, in full and complete sentences, across two assignments).
 - a. Positionality outline: due **January 27**.
 - b. Reflection: due **April 12**.

GRADE RANGE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete **all** the work for a contracted grade to earn it, across each type of assignment, as outlined below.

To earn an A+ in this course, you must **complete** all possible work in each category listed above: all 4 Reading and Writing Assignments, all 7 Content Quizzes, and all 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn an A in this course, you must **complete** all 4 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 6 of the seven Content Quizzes, and all 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn an A- in this course, you must **complete** all 4 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 6 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 2 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a B+ in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization AND least 2 of the other Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 6 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 2 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a B in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization AND least 2 of the other Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 2 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a B- in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization AND least 1 of the other

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Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 2 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a C+ in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization AND least 1 of the other Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 1 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a C in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization AND least 1 of the other Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 4 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 1 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a C- in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization, at least 4 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 1 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a D+ in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization, at least 3 of the seven Content Quizzes, and at least 1 of 3 Participation Assignments.

To earn a D in this course, you must **complete** the Book Review – Equalization, at least 2 of the seven Content Quizzes, at least 1 of 3 Participation Assignments.

As the course instructor, I reserve the right to assign a grade of F to any student who fails to submit enough **complete** work to meet the minimum threshold for a D grade set out above.

The best advice I can offer is this: once you choose the grade contract you will work towards, plan out an explicit schedule with deadlines *and* sufficient time to complete the components of each assignment (e.g., reading, drafting, editing). While revisions are available, past experience shows that students do best when their work is Complete the first time. Given this, please do your best to ensure your work is Complete when you submit it.

Please note there is no registrar-scheduled final examination for this course, and there are no extra credit assignments. Students are not required to complete all assignments to pass this course.

The letter grades used in this course can be converted to the University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System using the following scale:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be submitted via D2L, to the specifications outlined in each assignment guide. This helps ensure the TA and I have enough time to provide you with useful feedback before the next assignment is due.

Because grades are tied to the completion of assignments, assignments that are not handed in on time are considered incomplete. Each assignment has an automatic 48-hour grace period; work submitted

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after this grace period will be considered incomplete. You do not need notify me to use this grace period, **but there are no additional extensions beyond circumstances that merit accommodation (see below)**. Please note that these grounds typically do **not** include schedule management.

ACCOMMODATIONS and COVID-19

TAs may not grant extensions or accommodations. Instead, students are encouraged to speak with me as early as possible if they encounter any situation or circumstances that are making it difficult for them to meet the course requirements.

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) should contact me as soon as possible, as this facilitates us arranging the support you need.

Accommodations for acute illness and emergencies, as well as accommodations on protected grounds (such as, but not limited to race; colour; ancestry; place of origin; religious beliefs; gender — including pregnancy and gender identity; marital status; family status; source of income; and sexual orientation) will be addressed in accordance with University of Calgary policy (see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>).

The risk from COVID-19 remains very real. Given that, my actions and decisions will be guided by the following principles:

1. Health and wellbeing are my first priority: yours, your families', and mine
2. Our classroom needs to feel like a safe place, physically and intellectually
3. Fairness means taking students' circumstances into account

We all need to be mindful of keeping one another healthy. If you have not yet been fully vaccinated for COVID-19, I strongly encourage you to do so. It will help keep us all safe.

Please consider always wear a mask in class. If you or someone in your household is feeling ill, ***please do not come to class***. In that circumstance, contact me as soon as possible so accommodations can be arranged.

Writing Statement:

Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, including this one, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be considered in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library) or at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS

A course reading and content schedule is available on D2L.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Absence From a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at: https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/P22_deferral-of-term-work_lapseGrade.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Reappraisal of Grades:

For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Academic Misconduct:

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students' academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>.

Academic Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act:

Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Evacuation Assembly Points

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points> and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

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Important Dates:

Please check: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

Important Contact Information

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman
Phone: 403-220-6420
Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Student Wellness Services:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.