



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF ARTS

POLI 429 L01
Electoral Behaviour
Winter 2022

INSTRUCTOR: Melanee Thomas
OFFICE: SS 714
EMAIL: thomasm@ucalgary.ca
OFFICE HOURS: <https://thomasm.youcanbook.me/> -- appointments are mandatory
DELIVERY METHOD: In person
COURSE DAY/TIME: MWF 100 to 150 PM
COURSE LOCATION: ES 054
PRE-REQUISITES: POLI 321 or POLI 399

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Politics in most representative democracies revolve around elections, and how people think, feel, and act in them. This course focuses on the factors that shape voting behaviour in Canada, and the debates highlighted throughout the term will be examined in light of recent Canadian federal elections.

By the end of the course, students should:

- Understand the dynamics and psychology of individual electoral behaviour;
- Understand the common research methods used in studying electoral behaviour and a basic understanding of how to interpret these methods;
- Understand how to derive empirical expectations of electoral behaviour and/or election outcomes based on prior research;
- Understand the historical and institutional context for elections;
- Begin to be able to step outside of individual preferences to understand broader generalizations in electoral behaviour;
- Be able to see past journalistic accounts of elections and campaigns to foundational aspects of Canadian political behaviour.

COURSE FORMAT

This course typically follows a lecture format, though some sessions will be run as seminars if enrolment permits. Students are expected to complete readings prior to class sessions, and to arrive prepared to discuss the material.

COVID-19

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 always wear a mask in class and during office hours, if we meet in person.

If you or someone in your household is feeling ill, ***please do not come to class.***

Here's what I can promise you: I have been triple vaccinated since December (all mRNA). I will always wear a mask in class, and if I am not feeling well or am confirmed to be sick, I'll switch our in-person sessions to Zoom to avoid coming to campus. I'll follow known best practices to keep each other safe: vaccines, masking, distancing, and staying home when unwell. I hope and trust that I can expect the same from all of you.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Due Date	Weight
Top Hat	In class, most classes	10%
Book review	February 16, to Dropbox on D2L	20%
Midterm examination	March 4, on D2L	15%
Research Project Choice	February 9 on D2L	Pass/fail
Research Project	April 4 to Dropbox on D2L	35%
Final examination	Scheduled by registrar, on D2L	20%

GRADE SCALE

A+	=	90-100	B+	=	75-79	C+	=	63-66	D+	=	53-56
A	=	85-89	B	=	70-74	C	=	60-62	D	=	50-52
A-	=	80-84	B-	=	67-69	C-	=	57-59	F	=	0-49

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>.

LATE POLICY

Extensions will only be granted for the Book Review, Research Paper or Research Projects in exceptional, documented instances of illness or personal/family emergencies. Late work will be deducted a letter gradation per day (A to A-, A- to B+, and so on) including weekend days. **Reviews, Papers, and Projects will not be accepted 7 calendar days after the due date.**

EMAIL AND OFFICE HOURS

Please feel free to email me with questions throughout the term. I'll do my best to answer within 24-48 hours. A handy guide on how best to structure those emails can be found here:

<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-afcf64ae0e4087>.

Appointments are mandatory for office hours. The best way to book is through thomasm.youcanbook.me. This ensures that your time is officially blocked off in my calendar, and I also find this is one of the best ways for me to learn students' names. Of course, if there is an emergency or if your question is urgent and on campus, you should feel free to stop by my office without an appointment.

TOP HAT

Students are responsible for ensuring they are registered on the Top Hat system, and that their responses/presence is properly recorded by the system. Top Hat questions may appear in some, but not all lectures. Top Hat questions may address lecture content, or quiz students on assigned readings. A portion of some questions may be attributed solely to participation (i.e. simply providing an answer, even if it's wrong, may = a part of a point). Students who are not present may ask for these participation marks, but only in exceptional, documented instances of illness or personal/family emergencies.

BOOK REVIEW

Students are required to review the following book:

Mason, Lilliana. 2018. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

The book is available at the bookstore, but for ebook readers, there should be a copy at the library. Ebooks are also available for purchase directly from the publisher. Instructions for format, length, and content of the review are available on D2L.

PROJECT

You must choose from **ONE** of the options listed below. Whichever option to you choose, you are strongly encouraged to meet with me well before the due date in order to ensure that you submit your best work – to do this, use thomasm.youcanbook.me to make an appointment.

NOTE: You **must** provide the requested information about your project by **February 5** on D2L (see below). Failure to do so results in a 10-point deduction off the final grade for the assignment. When you read this, send me a gif of a kitten to confirm you have read this portion of the syllabus.

For each choice, you must provide citations for all sources that you have used. These should be cited in the text using the following format: (Smith, 2015: 96) with the full bibliographical reference appearing as an appendix to your report. Every student **must** provide a preliminary bibliography and a brief (one to two paragraphs) summary of your proposed topic and, if relevant, group members, by **February 5** to D2L.

Option 1: Individual Term Paper

- Students selecting this option will write a term paper on their choice of topic that relates to electoral behaviour or public opinion in Canada. The paper should be no more than 3500 words. Please include the word count on your title page. Your bibliography does not count toward the work limit.
- Your paper should address a clear question, synthesize the academic literature on the topic and develop a well-reasoned response to your motivating question. You may choose, if you wish, to address your question by comparing Canada with another country. You are also expected to do additional reading and research.

Option 2: Individual or Team Paper with Data Analysis

- For this assignment, students can choose to complete the project on their own OR they can form teams of two to four members. You will formulate a research question and then conduct original research in

order to come up with an answer. Your research method could involve the analysis of existing data (e.g. from the Canadian Election Studies <http://www.queensu.ca/cora/ces.html>) or statistics from official sources or the collection of your own data through e.g. interviews, a survey, a content analysis of election coverage. If your research will involve interaction with human participants, you MUST first obtain ethics certification. This is a relatively straightforward process but should be initiated as early in the term as possible in order to allow time for the approval process.

- Your report must identify a clear research question and must include a review of the relevant academic literature, an explanation of your research methods, an analysis of your findings and a concluding discussion. The length of your report will vary depending on the size of your team: one student (between 3500 and 4000 words); two members (4000 to 5000 words), three members (5000 to 6000 words, four members (6000 to 7000 words). These word counts exclude bibliographic references.
- To do well on this project, it is particularly important that you consult with me. I will be happy to provide guidance but I can only do this constructively if you consult me well before the submission deadline and particularly while you are designing your research and analyzing your data.
- You may assign responsibilities as you wish among team members. Every member of the team will receive the same grade for the written report and must submit a signed peer evaluation form to confirm that all group members contributed equally and productively to the project. This form is available on D2L.

Option 3: Group Project – Party Strategist Option

- For this option you will form a team of four members. Each team will select one federal political party and then assume the role of campaign strategists preparing for the next federal election. Your team will prepare a report that draws on the academic literature to analyze the strategic challenges that confront your party and that recommends a strategy for the party as it prepares for the next election.
- In preparing your report, you will be expected to draw on what you have learned during the course from both class discussions and course readings. You are also expected to do additional reading and research. Be sure to provide supporting evidence for your analyses and recommendations and to explain and justify any assumptions that you are making. You are welcome to consult me about sources and, of course, to discuss your ideas as you work on the project.
- The expected length is between 6000 and 7000 words, excluding bibliographical references.
- You may assign responsibilities as you wish among team members. Every member of the team will receive the same grade for the written report and must submit a signed peer evaluation form to confirm that all group members contributed equally and productively to the project. This form is available on D2L.

Option 4: Group Project – Media Analyst Option

- For this option you will form a team of four members, and select one region of Canada (Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, Alberta, British Columbia) and then assume the role of media analysts preparing for the next federal election. Your team will prepare a report that draws on the academic literature to analyse the strategic challenges that confront each party in your region and to assess each party's electoral prospects.
- In preparing your report, you will be expected to draw on what you have learned during the course from both class discussions and course readings. You are also expected to do additional reading and research. Be sure to provide supporting evidence for your analyses and recommendations and to explain and justify any assumptions that you are making. You are welcome to consult me about sources and, of course, to discuss your ideas as you work on the project.
- The expected length is between 6000 and 7000 words, excluding bibliographical references.
- You may assign responsibilities as you wish among team members. Every member of the team will receive the same grade for the written report and must submit a signed peer evaluation form to

confirm that all group members contributed equally and productively to the project. This form is available on D2L.

MIDTERM and FINAL EXAMINATIONS

The midterm and final exam will be open book, and held on D2L. The midterm is designed to be completed within 50 minutes and will cover all the material covered in class to that point; the final is cumulative and designed to be completed within 2 hours. Students will be required to complete the midterm and a final during a 24 hour-period, but will not be timed. The final exam will open 24 hours prior to the END time of the exam, as set and scheduled by the registrar.

Both the midterm and the final exams may consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer sections, and essay questions.

REQUIRED READINGS

Most of the assigned readings for any given topic or class session are academic journal articles. Each article can be accessed on campus or with your University of Calgary VPN from the library, or from Google Scholar. These readings are marked with an “*”. Other readers are chapters available from e-books in the library. These readings are marked, “***E-book, available from the library.***” Finally, readings that are not available in an online format are on reserve at the library (**Reserve**). Our time in class will be best spent if you take the time to read the material in *before* coming to class. Students should feel free to use the required readings as a starting point for their research paper.

COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS:

Please refer to the schedule on D2L

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at ucalgary.ca/registrar). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit ucalgary.ca/registrar.

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

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.

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>.

Reappraisals

The University Calendar states that for reappraisals of graded term work:

“A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, test, etc.) has been unfairly graded, may have the work reappraised as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor **within ten business days** of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall take the matter to the head of the department offering the course **within 2 business days of receiving the decision from the instructor**, who will arrange for a reappraisal of the work **within the next ten business days**. The reappraisal will only be considered if the student provides a detailed rationale that outlines where and for what reason an error is suspected.” See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

The University Calendar states that for reappraisal of academic assessments (final grades):

“A student may request a reappraisal of a final grade. The only element that will be considered is the final assessment(s) that makes up the final mark (e.g., final examination, final project, and final paper). The exception is when a grade for a piece of graded term work is made available to students after the last day of classes for the term in which the course is scheduled; that grade may also be considered in a reappraisal of the final grade.”

“A student seeking a reappraisal of a final grade should first attempt to review the final assessment with the department or faculty offering the course. After which the student shall obtain a Reappraisal of Final Grade form from ucalgary.ca/registrar (under Student Forms). The student must indicate exactly what error was made in marking the final assessment and/or in computing the final grade. The reappraisal will only be considered if the student provides a detailed rationale that outlines where and for what reason an error is suspected.” More information is available at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

University Regulations

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html.

Student 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. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

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 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

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.

Required Access to Technology

Please see the University's resource page at https://ucalgary.service-ow.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afbb2e144b031

Copyright Legislation

As stated in the University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, "students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and requirements of the copyright act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy." <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf> and <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>

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)

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

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 www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

For program planning and advice, visit the Arts Students' Centre in Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580 or email artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit arts.ucalgary.ca/advising for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit their office in the MacKimmie Tower, MT 116.

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/>

