

**Political Studies 111.3 (62)**  
**Democracy in North America**  
**St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan, Winter 2010**

Instructor: Dr. David McGrane  
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**Course Description**

This course is intended to introduce students to the study of politics through focusing on the theme of “Democracy in North America.” Several key concepts in political studies will be discussed such as ideologies, the state, political institutions, electoral systems, societal cleavages, the law, public policy, and the bureaucracy. Specifically, these concepts will be examined through a comparison of Canada and the United States to illustrate how these two countries are both different and alike in several ways. It is hoped that students will gain an understanding of political studies that will be useful both in their future academic endeavours and in their lives as citizens.

**Course Requirements for Winter Term**

- 1.) 25%: Mid-term Exam on Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- 2.) 40%: 8 page paper research paper based on topics to be distributed by the instructor which is due in class on Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.) 35%: A final exam on all readings and lectures of the second half of the course. Date and location to be announced.

Papers should be in hard copy format. E-mailed assignments to the instructor will not be accepted. The Political Studies Department’s policy is that late assignments are penalized 10% per week. All assignments must be submitted by the day of the final exam or they will be considered incomplete. Failure to complete all required course work will result in a final grade numeric grade of 49% and the along with the grade comment of INF (Incomplete Failure). All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date and late assignments must be submitted at subsequent classes or the day of the final exam at the very latest. Exceptions may be made, at the instructor's discretion, for students who contact the instructor regarding medical reasons or family emergencies before assignments are due. Documentation will be required in

these cases. Please note that computer problems are not considered emergencies, so be sure that the computer you use is in good working order, and that you back up your work on a floppy disc and/or print out rough work and essay drafts.

Concerns about the marking of assignments are welcome. If the student has concerns about the mark that they received for an assignment, they are asked to submit a written memo of a half page to the instructor explaining their concern at the beginning of the class after the assignment has been handed back to the student. The instructor will then report back to the student on their concern.

### **Plagiarism**

The St. Thomas More Faculty Council has adopted the following policy on plagiarism:

“St. Thomas More College follows the rules regarding Academic Dishonesty as delineated in the University of Saskatchewan Calendar. Of these, plagiarism is a particularly serious offence that involves presenting another person’s writing, ideas or creative work as your own. When quoting, paraphrasing, describing, presenting, summarizing or translating the work of others, you must acknowledge the source of the information you use, which includes ensuring that the reader can differentiate between your words and the words of others. Sources may come in print, electronic, digital, visual or oral form, and may be provided by a published author, fellow student, artist, or Internet site. Purchasing papers is not permitted. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism; when in doubt, consult your professor.” For further information see [www.usask.ca/honesty/](http://www.usask.ca/honesty/).

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student who is registered with the Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS), you may apply for unique services or arrangements to complete the requirements for this course. Normally, these services will be provided through the DSS office. If you have not yet registered with that office, please do so as quickly as possible.

### **Required Texts**

Larry Johnston, *Politics: An Introduction to the Modern Democratic State, Third Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007).

David Thomas and Barbara Boyle Torrey (Editors), *Canada and the United States: Differences that Count, Third Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2008).

Book of Course Handouts available in pdf format on PAWS.

## **Reading Schedule**

**All readings are required. Read the whole chapter unless otherwise stated.**

**Week 1, Introduction to Political Studies:** Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to class, Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 1, Johnston, “The Study of Politics and its Objects”,

**Week 2, Introduction to Political Studies:** Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 2, Johnston, “Methods and Approaches” and Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 3, Johnston, “The Emergence of Liberal Democracy”, only p. 79-91. **Paper Topics will be handed out this week.**

**Week 3, Ideology and Political Philosophy:** Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 4, Johnston, “Political Philosophy”, only p. 95-101 and Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>: Chapter 5, Johnston, “Ideology”, only p. 133-166.

**Assignment for Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>:** Take a test on your own ideology at <http://www.politicalcompass.org>. Print it out and bring it to class.

**Week 4, The State and the Canadian Parliamentary System:** Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 7, Johnston, “The State: Functions, Institutions, Systems, Constitutions”, Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 8, Johnston, “Parliamentary Systems” and “Demokistan Case Study” in Course Handouts on PAWS (pages 5-8).

**Week 5, The American System of Government and Electoral Systems:** Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chapter 9, Johnston, “Presidentialism”, only p. 281-287, Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 13, Johnston, “Electoral Systems and Party Systems”, only p. 373-382 and 390-398.

**Week 6, Electoral Participation:** Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>: Movie: *Slacker Uprising*, Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>: Michael Martinez, “Turning out or Tuning Out? Electoral Participation in Canada and the United States” Chapter 16 in *Differences that Count*.

**Week 7:** No classes. Reading Week.

**Week 8, Midterm Examination and Discussion of Final Paper:** Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, **MIDTERM EXAM**, Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>: Paper topics to be distributed and a “How to write a paper” workshop will be given by the instructor. Read the readings in the folder entitled “How to Write a Paper” on PAWS. *This class is optional. If you feel that you are strong in these areas you do not have to attend.*

**Week 9, Cleavages:** Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chapter 12, Johnston, “Cleavages”, Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup>: Gerard Boychuk, “Race, Territorial Integration, and Public Policy in the United States and Canada”, Chapter 5 in *Differences that Count*.

**Week 10, Cleavages:** Tuesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>: Barbara Boyle Torrey, “Population Tectonics: Births, Deaths, and Immigration in North America”, Chapter 4 in *Differences that Count*, Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>: Kathy Brock, “Rhetoric, Reality, and Rights: Comparing Canadian and American Aboriginal Policy”, Chapter 12 in *Differences that Count*.

**Week 11, Judicial Review:** Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>: Johnston, Chapter 16, “Justice, Law, and Politics” only p. 473-480 and Christopher Manfredi and Mark Rush, “Unexpected Convergences: Judging Democracy in the Canadian and US Supreme Courts”, Chapter 10 in *Differences that Count*, Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>: Movie: *Escape to Canada*, **(PAPER DUE)**

**Week 12, Public Opinion and Public Policy:** Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>: Michael Adams, “Canadian and American Values Divergences: The Narcissism of Small Differences?” Chapter 2 in *Differences that Count*, Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>: Johnston, “Public Policy, Legislation, and the Bureaucracy”, Chapter 15.

**Week 13, the Environment and the Welfare State:** Tuesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>: Debora VanNijnatten, “Environmental Policy in Canada and the United States: Climate Change and Continuing Distinctiveness”, Chapter 17 in *Differences that Count*, Thursday, April 1<sup>st</sup>: Chapter 17, Johnston, “The Rise (and Fall) of the Welfare State”

**Week 14, Health Care and Review of course:** Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>: Robert Evans, “Extravagant Americans, Healthier Canadians: The Bottom Line in North American Health Care”, Chapter 6 in *Differences that Count* and Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>: Review.