Class schedule: Monday, 11h30-14h30
Desmarais Hall, room 11161

Office hours: Monday 14h30-16h30
DMS 11101B (Director’s office, within the secretariat)

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OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examination of the political institutions of democratic societies and their implications for the formulation and implementation of public policy. Study of Canada in a comparative perspective. Topics include the organization of the executive and decision-making in government, the relationship among the political executive, the Public Service and the legislature, and policy implementation by the Public Service. Current trends in public management, such as new modes of service delivery, citizen engagement and consultation, and performance-based management.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course focuses on the political and administrative institutions and processes that guide and structure the formulation and implementation of public policy in democratic societies. In this context, its general objective is to ensure that students understand the purpose, nature and effects of the institutional and normative framework provided by the constitutions of liberal democracies on their governments and administrations. While an emphasis will be placed the workings of Canadian institutions, the experience of other democratic countries will also be considered, partly to place the Canadian experience in a comparative context but also to draw our attention to broader principles or phenomena that can be found across democratic polities.
At the end of the semester, students should be able to describe and discuss, in a critical and sophisticated manner, the main principles, processes and institutions that guide policy-making and public administration in democratic societies. In particular, they should be able to describe and discuss critically the complex relationships among the various institutional components of the democratic state, the key political and bureaucratic decision-making processes associated with policy-making in some of those states, and the implications of the contemporary trends that are currently transforming those processes and relationships.

In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, the course also seeks to help students develop some of the analytical and writing skills that they will find essential in the workplace. Professionals in the field of policy-making must be able to communicate, in a clear and succinct manner, their analysis of complex issues, often under severe time constraints. Accordingly, as part of the course, students will be challenged to hone their research and writing skills by completing two policy-oriented assignments. These assignments should help students better understand the particular challenges involved in communicating policy analysis in a professional environment.

**ASSESSMENT METHODS**

The student’s final mark will consist in the sum of five elements:

1. Mid-term exam 25%
2. Final Exam: 30%
3. Briefing Note 1: 15%
4. Briefing Note 2: 15%
5. Participation: 15%

a) **Mid-term Exam**

The mid-term exam will take place on October 17. It will consist in a three-hour in-class exam. Notes and reading material will not be permitted. It will cover both the material presented during lectures and covered through the readings. The exam will be worth 25%.

b) **Final Exam**

For the final take-home exam, students will be asked to write short analytical essays responding to a set of questions provided at the end of the semester. The emphasis will be placed on the material covered after the mid-term (through lectures and readings), but material covered in the first part of the course could also be included. It will take place during the official exam period (December 9 to 22) at a time to be determined later in the semester. The exam will be worth 30% of the final mark.

c) **Briefing Notes**

The capacity to quickly research a complex policy, administrative or governance problem, identify the facts and arguments of most import and relevance, and effectively communicate in writing one’s findings and views in a succinct and clear manner from the viewpoint of decision-makers are important skills for policy advisers and analysts as well as for those who, outside the bureaucracy, seek to influence policy-making. In order to help students acquire these skills and familiarize themselves with this type of professional writing, students will be required to write two briefing notes over the course of the semester.
Each briefing note must be a maximum of five pages in length (single space and including the title page) and conform to a strict template that will be provided in class. The template is adapted from one currently used by a department of the Canadian Public Service. Students will be assigned mandatory topics early in the semester and they will be provided with a brief scenario that will place the exercise in context. The briefing notes will be evaluated based on several criteria, including the quality of the research informing them, the strength of the analysis and argumentation that they offer, and the precision and clarity of the writing.

The deadlines for submitting the briefing notes are the following:

1. Briefing Note 1: **October 3rd**
2. Briefing Note 2: **November 21st**

The briefing notes must be submitted directly to the professor, in class, on the day that they are due. Each briefing note will be worth 15% of the course’s final mark. **Briefing notes that are submitted late will not be accepted and the student will receive a mark of 0/15 for the assignment.** The only exceptions that may be made to these rules will be for medical reasons and, in these cases, the professor may require the student to provide a medical certificate obtained at the counseling or health services of the University of Ottawa (located at 100 Marie-Curie).

d) Class participation

The success of a graduate course depends in good part on the active participation of students. In this perspective, students are **required to be present at each class** and they must come prepared to engage in class discussions, having completed the mandatory readings and given some thought to the issues to be discussed in class. In class, all students should actively participate in the discussion and they may be called upon by the instructor to share their analysis of the week’s readings with their classmates. Occasionally, some students may also be asked to prepare questions for invited guest speakers or present the outcome of discussions held in breakout groups. Participation in class discussions will be marked and worth 15% of the final mark.

**TEXTBOOK AND READINGS**

The M.A. in Public and International Affairs Program admits students from a significant variety of backgrounds and even students who have taken courses in political science in undergraduate studies have typically received varied exposure to the study of Canadian government and public administration. To help students quickly acquire the necessary foundations, or refresh their memory, the course will make use of a textbook on Canadian public administration and students should purchase it from the University’s bookstore (located at the University Centre, 85 University St.). The textbook is: David Johnson (2011) *Thinking Government: Public Administration and Politics in Canada*, 3rd edition, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

The textbook’s publisher is also making a website available as a complementary source of information and learning support: [www.thinkinggovernment.com](http://www.thinkinggovernment.com). For example, the website contains an additional chapter on administrative law, a glossary, some case studies, additional figures and tables, as well as links to other sites that can be useful to further explore the topics that are covered.
In addition to the textbook, we will be using a mix of journal articles, book chapters and books. This material will be available through the University’s library (either through its reserve service or electronic resources). However, for greater ease of use, you may want to purchase the following books:


However, these books have not been ordered through the library and you must find them on your own.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND MANDATORY READINGS**

1. *Introduction (September 12)*
   - Survey of the course outline, schedule and requirements.
     - Discussion of the briefing note exercises
   - The logic of parliamentary government and the “Westminster model”.
     - Responsible Government and its core conventions

   **Readings:**


   **Part I: Democratic Institutions and Decision-Making in Canada**

2. *Parliament: Representation, Accountability and Policy (September 19)*
   - Representation, electoral rules and electoral mandates
     - Guest lecture on lessons from the 2011 election campaign
   - Parliament and its relationship to the political executive

   **Readings:**


3. Cabinet Government: The Prime Minister, Ministers and the Bureaucracy (September 26)
   - The Prime Minister and the Ministry
   - The cabinet, central agencies and the cabinet decision-making process
   - Ministers, Deputy Ministers and departments
   - In-class exercise on “What makes an effective minister?”

   Readings:
   § Johnson’s *Thinking Government*, chapters 3 and 4.

   For the in-class exercise:

4. Administrative Law and Constitutional Checks on the Executive (October 3)
   - The nature and some principles of administrative law
   - The federal-provincial division of powers, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and judicial review

   Readings:
   § Johnson’s *Thinking Government*, additional chapter on administrative (available on the website www.thinkinggovernment.com).
Monday, October 10 is the Thanksgiving holiday.

5. In-class midterm exam (October 17)

Monday, October 24 falls during the reading week.

Part II: Comparative Government and Administration: Issues and Trends

6. The Democratic Deficit: Ethics, Responsiveness and Performance (October 31)
   - Lecture on trust, scandals and the evolution of ethics regulation in Canada
   - Seminar discussion of Pippa Norris’ Democratic Deficit.

   Readings:
   § Johnson’s Thinking Government, chapter 9.

7. Bureaucratic Politics, Organizational Design and Decision-Making (November 7)
   - In-class discussion of excerpts from The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara (award-winning documentary about the former US Secretary of Defense’s views on war and government decision-making)
   - Seminar discussion on Steve A. Yetiv’s Explaining Foreign Policy.

   Readings:
   § Johnson’s Thinking Government, chapters 5 and 10.

8. HR, Merit and the Relative Independence of the Public Service (November 14)
   - Lecture on the merit principle, the personnel system and bureaucratic independence
   - In-class exercise on politicization, loyalty and the democratic rights of public servants

   Readings:
   § Johnson’s Thinking Government, chapter 7.


- Lecture on the budget process and financial management in Canada
- Seminar discussion of Donald F. Kettle’s *Deficit Politics*.

**Readings:**


10. Communication, Media and the Practice of Government (November 28)

- Guest lecture on the role and practice of communication in contemporary government
- Seminar discussion of Christopher Hood’s *The Blame Game*.

**Readings:**


11. All-Powerful Leaders?: The Concentration of Power in Modern Executives (December 5)

- Guest lecture on decision-making and relations at the apex of government
- Seminar discussion of the book by Poguntke and Webb on the presidentialization of politics.

**Readings:**

- Thomas Poguntke and Paul Webb, eds. (2005) *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, chapters 1 and 15 as well as one or two other chapters (country studies) of your choice. (Note: this is an eBook available through the library’s catalogue.)


12. Performance, Public Management and Administrative Reforms (December 7)

- Lecture on administrative reforms and the search for performance in public management
In-class exercise or guest lecture on the challenges of performance-based management in the area of foreign aid policy

Readings:

§ Johnson’s *Thinking Government*, chapter 8.


Faculty of Social Sciences’ Statement on Academic Fraud

**Beware of Academic Fraud!**

Academic fraud is an act committed by a student to distort the marking of assignments, tests, examinations and other forms of academic evaluation. Academic fraud is neither accepted nor tolerated by the University of Ottawa. Anyone found guilty of academic fraud is liable to severe academic sanctions.

Here are a few examples of academic fraud:

- engaging in any form of plagiarism or cheating;
- presenting falsified research data;
- handing in an assignment that was not authored, in whole or in part, by the student;
- submitting the same assignment in more than one course, without the written consent of the professors concerned

In recent years, the development of the Internet has made it much easier to identify academic plagiarism. The tools available to your professors allow them to trace the exact origin of a text on the Web, using just a few words.

In cases where students are unsure whether they are at fault, it is their responsibility to consult the University’s Web site at the following address; you will find « Tools for Writing Papers and Assignments » to [http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/writing_tools.asp](http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/writing_tools.asp)

Persons who have committed or attempted to commit (or have been accomplices to) academic fraud will be penalized. Here are some examples of the academic sanctions which can be imposed:

- a grade of « F » for the assignment or course in question;
- an additional program requirement of between three and 30 credits;
- suspension or expulsion from the faculty.

Last session, most of the students found guilty of fraud were given an « F » for the course and had between three and twelve credits added to their program requirement.

For more information, see:

[http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/newsletter/fraud_e.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/newsletter/fraud_e.html) and