

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Introduction to Political Science

Course Number and Section:

POLISCI

1020E 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the scholarly and academic study of politics – the exercise of power by, over, and with others. We will study politics in formal institutions such as legislatures, polling stations, and bureaucracies, and in spaces where people assemble to resist oppression and pursue their interests, from social media to the streets. A major aim of this course is to build a critical vocabulary or language for interpreting politics. This means learning to think like a political scientist and approach political questions as matters for scholarly investigation. This course pursues this by introducing students to political ideas in historical context; critically examining political speech and discourse in mass media; examining how institutions such as parliament, parties, elections, and bureaucracies shape, and are shaped by, the arrangements of power in our society; studying systems of domination – such as colonialism, racism, sexism, and ableism – and how social actors contest and resist these systems; and situating our local political life and struggles within the broader context of global politics. In doing so, this course provides a selective but broad window into the contemporary study of politics, and an introduction to the academic field of political science and its subfields, including Canadian Politics, International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Political Theory.

Learning Outcomes:

Define politics and political science, and explain why they are distinct

Define and explain key theories, concepts, and ideas in the field of political science

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Explain the implications and importance of multiple theoretical and conceptual lenses on the study of politics

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Locate, read, annotate, summarize, digest, and ultimately use scholarly literature

Reflect on how theoretical and scholarly engagement with the field may have changed their perspectives

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Critical Concepts, 6th Edition. Edited by Janine Brodie, Malinda Smith, and Sandra Rein.
Oxford University Press.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
seminar participation (Fall)		7.5
seminar participation (winter)		7.5
midterm exam	Dec. Exam Period	20
final exam	April Exam Period	30
Article Deep Dive	10/14/2025	5
Research Proposal	11/19/2025	10
Literature Review	03/06/2026	20

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Sunday, August 17, 2025