

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Introduction to Political Science**

Course Number and Section: POLISCI 1020E 551

Instructor Name(s): Jennifer Mustapha

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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:

POL1020 introduces students to the study of politics. The course focuses on political ideas and concepts (sovereignty, power, justice, freedom etc.); political frameworks & ideologies (liberal, conservative, socialist etc.); political institutions (democracy, constitutions, electoral systems, branches of government etc.); political identities and mobilization (resistance struggles, protest movements, interest groups); international politics (organizations, human rights, conflict, trade etc.) and development of critical research and writing skills. Emphasizing Canadian, comparative, and international examples, we will study how politics happens in formalized settings and also in unexpected spaces where people assemble to pursue their interests. A major aim of this course is to 'level-up' your political vocabulary and to provide you with the contexts, skills, and tools you need to interpret and evaluate today's political issues and challenges. Because we are studying politics in an era of rapidly spreading disinformation and misinformation, and because there is a pervasive lack of awareness around the limitations and costs of generative AI, this course will also prioritize the development of information literacy and intellectual discernment skills. There will be a strong emphasis on identifying and engaging with reputable news sources and political science frameworks in order to make sense of current developments at home and abroad.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students should have, and be able to demonstrate, familiarity with the basic concepts and questions that animate the scholarly study of politics.
- Students should have, and be able to demonstrate, a basic understanding of the various approaches, theories and tools that political scientists use to study politics.
- Students should have developed their organizational and time-management skills and be able to demonstrate their research abilities to search for, gather, review, and evaluate materials relevant to the study of politics.
- Students should be able to convey their knowledge of political issues with clear, critical, and reflexive communication in a variety of forms and styles.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK- Critical Concepts, 6th Edition (Oxford University Press), eds. Janine Brodie, Sandra Rein, & Malinda S. Smith. Students must use 6th edition. Textbook available at bookstore in both e-book (\$48.00) and paper (\$119.35) formats (link below).

Other course materials are available through the UWO library and/or links on OWL.

[https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?
campus=HC&term=W2025&courses%5B0%5D=551_HC/POL1020E](https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=HC&term=W2025&courses%5B0%5D=551_HC/POL1020E)

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Participation T1	ongoing	10
In Class Quiz 1	10/22/2025	10
Essay Topic Reflection	11/12/2025	5
'What's Your Take?' Post	12/09/2025	5
Essay Research Reflection	01/21/2026	5
In class Quiz 2	02/04/2026	10
Essay Thesis and Bibliography	02/25/2026	5
Final Essay	04/01/2026	20
Participation T2	ongoing	10
Final Exam	TBD April Exam Period	20

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

Tuesday, August 12, 2025