POLI 369: CANADIAN ELECTIONS  
September 4th – December 4th, 2019  
Mondays 6:00-8:50pm  
in Cornett Building A225  

Instructor: Dr. Grace Alexandra Lore (she/her).  

Office Hours: Mondays, 4:00-5:30. David Turpin Building A334.  

Email: glore@uvic.ca  

**Note! Syllabus subject to small changes between now and Monday September 9th and throughout the term based on the election!**

Course Description:  
Canadian elections have offered students of Canadian politics a great deal to think about over the past few decades. After spending the 2000s moving away from the Liberals and towards the Conservatives and New Democrats, voters suddenly reversed course in 2015 elevating the Liberals to government from third place, throwing the Conservatives into opposition, and reducing the NDP to a third party. This is not the first time Canadian voters have decided to remake the Canadian party system.

In the run up to – and in the middle of – the 2019 federal Canadian Election, this class will explore the dynamics of Canadian elections. The course covers the institutional and political contexts that are important to Canadian elections. We investigate key actors like voters, candidates, and the super stars of elections – party leaders. We explore the way campaigns – both local and national - shape elections, and how voters’ identities (regional, gender, and cultural), economic conditions, and parties’ strategic positions affect voters’ choices.

We dedicate significant time to watching and seeking to understand the 2019 election, including watching leaders debates and coverage on election night.

Readings:  

Additional readings are available online through the UVic library website or on CourseSpaces as pdfs. The course also makes use of videos, news articles, and other sources that can all be found online. The links are found in the syllabus and will be posted to CourseSpaces.
This course has several learning objectives. These include the following

1. Students will understand how historical and institutional contexts impact and shape Canadian elections.
2. Students will develop an understanding of the underlying factors that shape Canadians’ vote choice and participation, including identity, the economy and partisanship.
3. Students will learn about strategic party behaviour, issue ownership, and how parties position themselves and emphasize certain issues.
4. Students will understand the role of party leadership and patterns of political candidacy.
5. Students will develop an understanding of the way campaigns interact with the above underlying factors to shape Canadian election results.
6. Students will draw on course material to understand the 2019 election campaign and outcome.
7. Students will complete several assignments that require pulling on academic research/evidence to understand current political events and analyze political punditry and coverage.

Assignments and Evaluations:

Class participation and engagement: 10%
Event engagement and analysis: 15%
Curation Project X 2: 20% each
Take home “midterm”: 15%
Final “Paper”: 20%

Class participation – 10%

Your class participation grade will reflect a mix of attendance and contribution to class discussion.

The University is committed to promoting and providing a positive and supportive learning and teaching environment for all its students and instructors. Your contributions to class should be curious, respectful, and open-minded. Be mindful of the language you use and how you engage with both myself and your peers.

If speaking in class is a challenge for you, please make an appointment to meet with me. We can discuss alternatives for your engagement and contribution.

*Any student attending fewer than 70% of scheduled class sessions will not be permitted to write the final exam or get credit for the course.*
Event Engagement and Analysis – 15%

During an election campaign there are a number of opportunities to get involved, engaged, and informed. Want to get involved with a party or candidate? Get in touch with the campaign, you could door knock, or work a canvassing table, or other fun things! Not partisan or not interested in getting involved in the politics of it all? Attend an all-candidates debate or a meet-your-candidate event. Maybe there is an event discussing the election on campus? Or an event put on by an interest group?

Attend the event and then write approx. 300 words describing the event (briefly) and then offer some reflections based on course content and material. Critical thinking, reflection, and engaging with the material are key to a good grade. Maybe you saw something that is consistent with something we’ve learned… or maybe you hear something that runs in contradiction to course content. Maybe you learned about important dynamics, party/candidate/citizen considerations, or campaign issues we haven’t discussed.

You can do this any time, but you need to submit the analysis within three days of attending the event. (Almost) no exceptions. The writing is not meant to be onerous or overly formal. Too much distance from the event will weaken your response and analysis.

Assignments will be accepted until December 3rd. Not sure if an event or activity is appropriate? Ask me.

Curated Project –20% x2

You need to sign up for two classes for which you will create a curation of articles, images, punditry, memes, analysis, videos, or anything else that helps us understand the current election. Please see the assignment description and example.

Curations are due Monday at 12:00pm on the day of the class for which you signed up. There is a 10% late penalty if your assignment is submitted afternoon and no assignments will be accepted after class begins.

Curations are due before class, which means you will need to thoroughly read all assigned readings and think through and research patterns for this election before we discuss it in class.

You may work in groups or work alone. If you sign up and submit as a group, you will all get the same grade – no exceptions. Choose your group/partners wisely. Please note the different assignments requirement for group assignments.

A maximum of 11 individuals and 5 groups can sign up for each class. Sign up by
September by 13th using the link on Course Spaces.

Midterm (Take Home) October 17-18th – 15%

You will receive a take home exam on Thursday October 17th at 12:00pm. You must submit it by Friday October 18th at 12:00pm.

Final “Paper”, December 6th at 12:00pm – 20%

Stay tuned for details on this final assignment.

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

Use of laptops and phones
Please use common sense and considerate of yourself, your classmates, and your instructor. Use your laptop for taking notes or following along with the lecture. Please don’t use your phone. (Pro Tip: there’s a 75% chance I can see you texting).

Academic Integrity & Grades
Please review the University’s grading scale and important information about academic integrity at the end of this syllabus.
Lecture and Reading Schedule:

Class 1 Monday September 9th – Introduction, History, and Canadian Political Institutions

In this class, we will discuss the course themes, objectives, and expectations. We will also walk through a brief history of recent Canadian elections and the political institutions that are relevant to electoral dynamics.

Readings:

Dominance and Decline – Chapter 1: Introduction

Class 2 Monday September 16th – Understanding Context and Analyzing the Analysis

This week will pick up on political institutions and the implications for electoral outcomes, voter consideration, and party strategy. We will also talk about polls, measurement error, and what we mean when we say ‘public opinion’.

Readings:

Dominance and Decline – Chapter 8: Strategic Considerations


Class 3 Monday September 23rd – Voters, Participation, Partisanship, and Vote Choice

In this class we will look at voters – how, when, and why do they participate in electoral politics? How do they vote? And why? What is the role of partisanship in Canada? … What does partisanship even mean in Canada?

Readings:


Samara Canada. (2019). *You have our Attention: Youth Political Engagement in Canada.* Available at: https://www.samaracanada.com/docs/default-source/reports/you-have-our-attention-by-the-samara-centre-for-democracy.pdf?sfvrsn=7207052f_6

**Class 4 Monday September 30th – Campaigns, from Tecumseh Corners to the National Stage**

This class we’ll look at the dynamics of the campaign and the importance of both the local and national campaigns.

*Readings:*


**Class 5 Monday October 7th – Candidates and Leaders**

Today we look at candidates – who they are and how they come to be on the ballot – and leaders – the superstars of the campaign. This class is also the proposed date for the leaders’ debate. Depending on timing of the debate we may watch it in class.

*Readings:*


Class 6 Monday October 14th –NO CLASS

Thanksgiving

MIDTERM DUE Friday October 18th at 12:00pm

Class 7 Monday October 21st – ELECTION NIGHT

It’s Election day!... I think. The election is set for this day, but ‘fixed’ election dates are not exactly ‘fixed’. If everything goes ahead as planned, we’ll be watching the election. If not, we’ll be nimble and adjust as necessary!

Class 8 Monday October 28th – Election debrief, and Catholics & Quebec

This week we will talk through election outcomes, your midterms, and what we do (or do not) understand about Canadian elections based on the election outcome.

Gidengil et al. Dominance and Decline. Chapter 10: Election Dynamics and Québec.


Class 9 Monday November 4th – Issue Ownership and… Does the economy matter?

Today we will be discussing issue ownership – do parties own issues? How does this affect options for campaigning and voter recruitment? How much dopes the economy matter? What did this look like in 2019?

Readings:


**Class 10 – Monday November 11th – NO CLASS**

Remembrance Day/Reading Break

**Class 11 Monday November 18th – Indigeneity and Identity**

This week, we will be spending a bit more time thinking through the impact of identities that matter to political behaviour and outcomes in Canada – gender, Indigeneity, ethnicity, newcomer status, religion (mostly Catholicism!), and Quebec.

*Readings:*


**Class 12 Monday November 25th – Third Parties, Continuity, and Change**

This is the last week of new content. We will take a look at some of the big picture of Canadian elections – third parties, minor parties, natural governing parties, and continuity and change.

*Readings:*


PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar.

Please see the (revised) academic integrity policy: [http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)

PERCENTAGE GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fating Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The percentage grading scale applies to all Faculties at the University of Victoria.
2. The percentage grades should be associated with a letter grading schema.
3. A percentage grade for an N grade should be assigned in the following manner:
N GRADE: If a student has not completed the exam, or has not completed the course requirements, but has submitted course requirements that total more than 49% of the total grade for a course, an instructor will assign a percentage grade of 49%.