



University  
of Victoria

# POLI 320 Canadian Constitution

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**Instructor Spring 2023:** Dr. Matt James

**Course delivery:** POLI 320 will be delivered on campus and face-to-face.

**Prerequisite:** None

## **Course Description:**

This course examines the constitution of Canada: the formal rules and informal understandings that govern—or are supposed to govern—the making of policy, application of law, and distribution of rights and freedoms in this country. In relation to this focus on the constitution, we will study Indigenous-settler relations, Quebec-Canada relations, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, federalism, and more. The course will also emphasize a fundamental point about constitutions in general and Canada's constitution in particular. This point is that constitutions are always changing and that this change tends to be shaped by socio-political conflict and struggle. What this emphasis on conflict and change means for the course is that we will place significant emphasis on the socio-political struggles that have helped to bring about key changes in the Canadian constitution and in its interpretation and application.

## **Course outcomes/objectives:**

- Understand Canadian governing structures, rules, conventions and principles of rule interpretation
- Explore the socio-political conflicts that inform the constitutional aspects of Canadian contemporary politics
- Develop written and verbal communication skills through essay writing and a mock constitutional conference
- Build independent research skills

## **Topics may include:**

Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Quebec  
Capitalism  
Diversity  
Social movements and equality  
Indigenous self-determination and land

*This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is not an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.*