POLS*3210(01)
The Constitution and Canadian Federalism

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
Department of Political Science
Winter 2018

Instructor: Dr. Mark Harding

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lecture: T/TH 2:30-3:50pm
(RICH 2529)

Course Description:

This course examines the history, evolution, and continuing relevance of federalism in Canada. It will introduce students to the origins of the federal idea, and how the Fathers of Confederation sought to create a uniquely Canadian form of federalism. It will then move to a history of the development of federalism in Canada, with emphasis on early judicial decisions by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the “mega-constitutional politics” from the 1970s-1990s, and Quebec’s place in Canada. Finally, it will explore the how Canada’s federal framework and system of intergovernmental relations affect policy outcomes in areas such as health care, climate change, and indigenous land claims.

By the end of this course, students should be able to identify and critically evaluate the relevant political and scholarly debates, past and present, that surround the importance of Canadian federalism and its influence on political and social life. Students should be familiar with the historical development of Canadian federalism and the way in which the judiciary, intergovernmental relations, and individual political personalities have shaped (and been shaped by) federalism. Finally, students should be able to effectively communicate, in both oral and written form, how federalism structures how Canadians govern and are governed in the twenty-first century.

Course Requirements:

The course grade will consist of a combination of a short written assignment, mid-term tests, a final paper, and a final exam.

Required Texts:


Additional readings, including articles, chapters, and online commentaries, will be on CourseLink.