This course covers a variety of items of interest to the student of federal public administration, with provincial references occasionally added. It reviews administrative structures, the impact of federalism on public administration, the instruments of government and public personnel administration. Throughout, and especially in the paper topics, we will reflect on how public administration issues are framed in public discourse. There will be an emphasis on readings and discussion in this course, with a lecture/seminar arrangement.

Students will be also expected to keep up-to-date on current events in Canada.

TEXTS:

The **assigned texts** for this course are:


Recommended texts for this course (ie, no need to buy, but useful) are:


MARKS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>See topics p. 24 *</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Essays handed in late will be marked down 5% a day.
READINGS AND PAPERS: Students will be expected to keep up to date with readings. The readings marked with an asterisk (*) are particularly recommended. Many parts of course meetings will be operated as seminar sessions, with presentations done in a similar fashion to those at conferences like those of the Canadian Political Science Association. That is, there will be a "paper deliverer" whose responsibility is to prepare a paper for the last part of the lecture period, and a "discussant" whose responsibility is to critique the paper. The paper should be delivered in about a 15 minute presentation (that is, you "talk to" your paper rather than "reading from" it), and the discussant should take about 5 minutes. The deliverer should provide the discussant and the instructor with a copy of the paper on at least the Friday before the presentation, and provide enough copies for members of the class, on the night of the class. There will be no delays of presentations.

Essays must be at least 2500-3000 words. They can be single-spaced. There should be at least 10 books and 5 articles used (not just listed in the bibliography). This is to encourage you to have a good review of the literature and of different approaches/solutions to problems that are identified in it. Papers must be typed, double-spaced and use correct footnote and bibliography form. Page length does not include footnote, bibliography or title pages.
Research is important.

PART I: A BASIC INTRODUCTION TO CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

TOPIC 1. THE HISTORY OF CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION


TOPIC 2. GENERAL DESIGN - THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT


Discussion topics

What do the following statutes do, how do they create departments, and which ones:

1. Self-standing statutes  (Example: Department of Justice Act)  2. Substantive statutes  (Financial Administration Act, 1985; Salaries Act, 1985; Ministers and Ministries of State Act, 1968

Be able to explain what the following measures entail, and how they supplement the statutory mandates of ministers: party platforms; instrument of advice (some call them “mandate letters”) issued by the Prime Minister; mission statements; Part III of the Estimates; ministerial testimony; annual reports; Royal Commission reports.

Be able to explain the differences between the following forms of departmental structure:

– one minister/one deputy (the “traditional pattern”)
– the CEIC model (1976-1993) [Canada Employment Insurance Commission]
– departments one nominal deputy minister, but with many officials of de facto deputy minister rank (that is, who report directly to the minister for a sector’s management)

Explain the essence of the “unity of service” models.

Short assignment:

**What are the characteristics of each “cluster of power in the executive government”? Give short, capsule descriptions of each of the elements which made them up as of the time of writing (eg the PCO), and what binds them together. What agencies and departments were in what cluster at the time of writing, and WHAT DO THE CLUSTERS LOOK LIKE TODAY (ie, what agencies and departments fit into what cluster).**
TOPIC 3. THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE/ THE DEPARTMENTAL EXECUTIVE


Savoie, Donald. 2008. Court Government and the Collapse of Accountability in Canada and the United Kingdom. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. JF 51 S29 2008 See especially chapters 1, 2, 12, and 13. See also Savoie, Donald J. Governing from the Centre, chs. 7 8 and 9 JL 75 S386 1999

Kernaghan - The Text, chs. 8 and 15


Discussion topics

You should be able to say what the significance of each of the following sections of the Constitution Act, 1867 is: section 11, section 63, section 64, section 92(1); and section 45 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Explain as well the difference between the “dignified executive” and the “efficient executive.”

Outline the similarities and differences in federal and provincial cabinets.

Be able to define and describe these stages of cabinet development: 1) the unaided or departmental cabinet, 2) the institutionalized cabinet, and 3) the prime minister-centred cabinet. Establish what has been said to have been their major eras of predominance. What do you think is the determining evidence about the current stage of development of the federal cabinet?

Outline some representative guidelines for successful cabinet operations offered by commentators and task forces in each of the three stages of cabinet development. What does the reading conclude when it says that, in regards to the question of whether or not there are any “meta-lessons” (overarching lessons) arising from this research?

What are the traditional roles of the Deputy Minister in Canada? What are some new ones? Is the modern (post Federal Accountability Act) federal Deputy Minister acting in his role as "accounting officer" the same as the U.K.-style accounting officer?

TOPIC 4. ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE AND VALUES


David Johnson, Ch. 12. “Public Sector Accountability: Responsibility, Responsiveeness and Ethics”


Discussion topics:

What is the meaning of ministerial responsibility (in both the collective and individual sense); public service anonymity; and political neutrality; and are these concepts meaningful any more?

What values did the following public service eras and landmarks emphasize: the 1867 (Confederation) to 1918 period; The Glassco Commission (established 1960); The Lambert Commission (established 1978); the Public Service 2000 white paper of 1990); and Kernaghan’s 1994 study of the emerging public service culture?

Do you agree with Kernaghan that formal statements of values are needed for federal and provincial governments? Explain your answer. What has happened subsequently in the area of government’s approach to “values and ethics”?

Review some arguments for and against recognizing broad ranging political rights for public servants. Which side do you agree with?

Review some arguments for and against public service anonymity. Which side do you agree with?

What public administration values and conventions does Justice Gomery adopt in his first report? His second report?

What actions has the federal government taken since the Tait Report, to build a values and ethics foundation for the public service?
Describe in detail, by filling out both columns in the following template, the nature of the political neutrality model in its ideal form, and how it evolved in Canada, according to Kernaghan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ideal-type political neutrality model</th>
<th>Evolution of the political neutrality model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Separation of politics and administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Merit, not patronage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No political partisanship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No public comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ministerial responsibility and public service anonymity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example Only
6. Tenure in office

TOPIC 5. THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

*Dwivedi and Gow, *From Bureaucracy to Public Management*, chapters Four to Six, inclusive

*Peter Aucoin, “Beyond the ‘new’ in public management reform in Canada: Catching the next wave?” in the Handbook


Discussion topics

Aucoin describes these as the “minimum” elements of the New Public Management. Can you distinguish from other readings (like Dwivedi and Gow, Zussman, and others, what some additional elements of the NPM might be?

Outline the major elements of the Canadian model of public administration reform, explain the nature of each of these elements, and signify how each element of the Canadian model differs from the standard NPM model (according to Aucoin).

Is the NPM appropriate for governance in Canada? Give a balanced review of the pros and cons of the NPM phenomenon. You can make reference to the article by David Zussman in the course article collection called “Alternate Service Delivery” to get some favourable examples and comments about (some aspects of the New Public Management. You may refer to the famous exchange between Sanford Borins and Donald Savoie in Canadian Public Administration for assistance, if the above material is too obscure for you.
### THE CANADIAN MODEL OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM DISTINGUISHED FROM THE NPM MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENET OF CANADIAN MODEL</th>
<th>EXPLANATION OF THE TENET</th>
<th>HOW DIFFERENT FROM NPM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The importance of government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The role of government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The functions of governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The management of government</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. The political-bureaucratic divide

You can use the above chart as a template for answering this question.

**TOPIC 6. PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION/ JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION**


Carl Baar, “Judicial Administration,” in the Handbook
Discussion topics

What leads Thomas to conclude that “clearly there is life left in the doctrines of collective and individual ministerial responsibility, but the widespread public perception today is that the Canadian political system lacks real accountability. . . .”?

What is the nature of the “implicit bargain between public servants and the ministers they serve” and what developments have made this bargain hard to maintain as a central organizing concept?

As well, the following are obviously elaborations and evaluations of the scrutinizer role: “Obstacles to Parliamentary Surveillance of the Bureaucracy,” “Access to Information Act,” “Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations,” “Characteristics of Members and How they view their work” and “The Senate.” Summarize the findings of the article as regards each of these sections.

Considering the evidence presented, as well as additional evidence you may be able to muster, what answer would you give to the question “Does Parliament play a meaningful role in controlling the public service?”

Research what initiatives were undertaken by Prime Ministers Chretien, Martin and Harper to strengthen the role of Parliament vis-à-vis the Public Service, and evaluate the relative success of each.
Outline, in the author’s view, what is the meaning of each of the parliamentary roles in relation to the public service and what is the relative effectiveness of each of the roles. You can use the following template to organize your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Meaning of Role/How role carried out</th>
<th>Effectiveness of Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy maker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutineer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are there arguments for strengthening the first four parliamentary roles that are usually dismissed as “formal” (legitimation, policy maker, creator, financier)? Offer some for and against this notion.

TOPIC 7. BUDGETING IN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS


Andrew Graham, Canadian Public-Sector Financial Management (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007). Most of this, and especially chs. 5,6,8,10. And Appendix 1 and 2. HJ 9921 G73 2007
Discussion topics:

Outline what the author describes about each of the functional, disciplinary, and level-related aspects of budgeting.

Identify which factors have impacted the development of budgeting in Canada. Show what effect all of these factors have had, or could have on the development of budgeting in Canada. Make reference to the works by Prince and Good.

What were the major phases of budget reform in Canada, what reforms took place at each phase, and how did the reforms reflect the themes in the description (below)? Make reference to the works by Prince and Graham.

What do you think makes it so difficult to settle on one particular budgeting format and “stick with it”? You can come to your own conclusions, but make reference to the material in the Prince article to use as clues to finding an answer to this question.

Review what some of the themes of budgeting there are in your own provincial government budgets of the last half-decade. You can use the web or go to the provincial government in question in the book “Career Public Service” edited by Evert Lindquist and published by IPAC, 2009.

Do you agree with Good’s view of the past and probable future of budgeting in the in Canada? Can you perceive any other probable outcomes?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the phase: Major themes</th>
<th>Description of reforms that took place</th>
<th>How the reforms reflect the themes in the description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Before the 1940s: a concern for budgetary integrity and control at the micro level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 1940s to 1970s: embracing macro level planning and management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mid 1970s to mid 1990s: critiques of the macro and the rise and fall of mezzo budgeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Budgeting in the post deficit era

TOPIC 8: THE FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.

Bill C-2 The Federal Accountability Act (Legislative Summary by Library of Parliament)

Canada, Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program & Advertising Activities,
Restoring Accountability: Recommendations (Ottawa: The Commission, February 1, 2006). Also known as the “Gomery Commission Report, Phase II”. Go to site for main reports and three volumes of research reports:

Federal Accountability Act and Action Plan: Assorted Publications:
http://www.faa-lfi.gc.ca/index_e.asp
Go to original version and print off the “pdf” version at bottom left
http://www.faa-lfi.gc.ca/docs/ap-pa/ap-pa00_e.asp

Discussion topics

1. What are the various parts to the Federal Accountability Act?
2. Are the FAA reforms radical or incremental?
3. Do they represent a step ahead or a step back?

PART II: SPECIAL TOPICS

TOPIC 8 EXECUTIVE FEDERALISM/FISCAL FEDERALISM/SOCIAL UNION


**Discussion topics**

Has the evolution of federal provincial finance been so as to lead to centralization, or decentralization?

How is executive federalism related to the models of cabinet government?

Describe what is included in the SUFA, COF and Open Federalism concepts.

Have these recent innovations (SUFA, COF, Open Federalism) had any effect? Good or bad? Also consider the electoral payoff, general election of 2008.

**TOPIC 9 THE ROLE OF ROYAL COMMISSIONS**

Christopher Dunn “An Introduction to Royal Commissions in Canada” (on reserve)
Discussion topics

Have royal commissions had any meaningful effect in Canadian history?

Should royal commissions be de-emphasized?

TOPIC 10 WORKPLACE EQUITY

Kernaghan, ch. 24.


Discussion topics

Was employment equity a necessary reform?

Can we speak about winners and losers when talking about workplace equity?

TOPIC 11 PUBLIC SECTOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND STRIKE RIGHTS

Discussion topics

What are the historical antecedents to modern collective bargaining?

What are the effects of modern collective bargaining legislation?

THURSDAY SEMINAR SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTATION DATE/ Week</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PAPER GIVER AND DISCUSSANT(S) (max. 3 per seminar) name and email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
<td>History of the public sector</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td>The design of the public sector</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK3 Jan 29</td>
<td>Is cabinet government in Canada's federal and provincial governments too centralized?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 4 FEB 5</td>
<td>Is the federal government’s public administration culture Dysfunctional?</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 5 FEB 12</td>
<td>Is the New Public Administration (NPM) the answer or the problem for Canadian Public Administration?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 6 FEB 19</td>
<td>1. Has parliament lost control of the public service to the executive? What is to be done?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 7 FEB 23-2520 (MTB) CLASS FEB 26</td>
<td>Has Ottawa made progress on the design of the budgeting system over the years, or are there so many problems that it is not working?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 8 MARCH 5</td>
<td>Is the Federal Accountability Act a step ahead, or a step back?</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 9 MAR 12</td>
<td>1. Is executive federalism “workable”?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Does the federal “spending power” need to be limited, by constitutional means?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 10 MAR 19</td>
<td>Is it Time to Re-Commission Canada? Are Royal Commissions a Waste of Time and Money?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 11 MAR 26</td>
<td>Is Canada’s Employment Equity policy the Answer or the Problem?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 12 APRIL 2</td>
<td>Should there be full collective bargaining and strike rights for public servants? Are there alternatives?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**PLAGIARISM GUIDE**

"Plagiarism means taking material written by another and offering it as one's own. Copying others' work is the most complete failure possible," (Perrin, *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, Third edition).
The material copied may consist of a few phrases or sentences, or an entire passage of paper written by someone else. The source may be a published book or article, or the work of another student. It applies equally to "research papers" and to "thought or opinion essays." Whatever its form (and the rules of scholarship do not generally recognize degrees) plagiarism constitutes two kinds of failure: (1) Failure to perform the basic tasks expected in any paper--original mental effort and expression. (2) Potentially, the moral failure of dishonesty. Although it is conceivable that a person might copy another's words without attribution out of ignorance of proper practices, this is not an acceptable excuse in university work. Objective evidence of plagiarism carries with it the presumption of dishonest motives.

In short, it is better to try to do one's work, even if this results in an apparently poor product, than it is not to try at all, substituting someone else's efforts for one's own.

Memorial University Calendar regulations (Procedures Governing Academic Dishonesty - Undergraduate Students) specify that the penalty for plagiarism is at least a reduction of grade for the work (assignment) concerned, and in the case of repeat offenses may be probation, suspension or expulsion in addition to the grade reduction (General Regulation V). The Political Science Department will apply this regulation to its full extent and regards plagiarism as a far more serious failing than non-completion of assigned work. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the General Regulations.

Complicity in plagiarism (e.g., knowingly allowing one's work to be copied or doing work to be submitted in another student's name) is considered equivalent to plagiarism.

If there is any question as to what constitutes plagiarism and what constitutes proper attribution and documentation of facts, ideas, and words obtained from other sources, the student should consult his or her instructor as well as any standard manual on composition and style (for example, James D. Lester, Writing Research Papers, 5th edition, pp 77-81).

Web sources describing what constitutes plagiarism, and related matters, can be found at:
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html
http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism/introduction.htm
http://www.writing.nwu.edu/tips/plag.html
http://west.cscwc.pima.edu/~bfiero/plag.htm
http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~africa/citation.html

You may be interested in this University of Toronto site which gives us "Advice on Academic Writing." Various types of assignments are covered.

http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/index.html

**Rules for Writers**

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don’t start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They’re old hat)
6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
10. No sentence fragments.
11. Contractions aren’t necessary and shouldn’t be used.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it’s highly superfluous.
14. One should NEVER generalize.
15. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
16. Don’t use no double negatives.
17. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
19. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
20. The passive voice is to be ignored.
21. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
22. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
23. Kill all exclamation points!!
24. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
25. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth shaking ideas.
26. Use the apostrophe in it’s proper place and omit it when its not needed.
27. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, ‘I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.’
28. If you’ve heard it once, you’ve heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
29. Pun are for children, not groan readers.
30. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
31. Even If a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
32. Who needs rhetorical questions?
33. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

And finally...
34. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
HOW TO
Write Notes and Bibliographies
in Turabian (Humanities Format)

Overview

When information is quoted or referred to in a paper, a footnote or endnote is given to identify the sources of the quotation or information. These notes refer to citations listed in the bibliography at the end of the paper. The bibliography is the list of the full works used to write the paper and is arranged alphabetically.

The format and content of footnotes and endnotes are the same. It is the location of the note in your paper that determines whether it is an endnote or a footnote. Endnotes are at the back of the paper under the heading NOTES. Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page where the information is quoted or referred to. They are separated from the text of the paper by a short line. Footnotes let the reader refer to your citation without having to flip to the back of the paper.

Both types of notes are linked to the quotation(s) or reference(s) by sequential Arabic numbers. The first lines of the notes are indented the same amount as the paragraphs in the paper. Each note is single spaced with a blank line between notes. The numbers used before the notes themselves may be superscripts with no period (e.g. ¹), but regular size with a period (e.g. 1.) is preferred.

Books

Book, 1 author
Note:


Bibliography:


Book, multiple authors
Note:


Bibliography:


Edited Book
Note:

Bibliography:

Chapter, or article, in book

Note:


Bibliography:


Articles

Journal article, 1 author

Note:


Bibliography:


Journal article, multiple authors

Note:


Bibliography:


Journal article, online

Note:

Bibliography:

Newspaper, or magazine article, no author
Note:

Bibliography:

Newspaper or Magazine article, online
Note:
   Rarely included.

Internet & other

Web site, entire
Note:
   10. Yale University, History Department home page, http://www.yale.edu/history/.

Bibliography:
Yale University. History Department home page. http://www.yale.edu/history/.

Web page, with author
Note:

Web page, no author
Note:
Unpublished paper, thesis, or dissertation
Note:
Bibliography:

Personal Communication
Note:
Bibliography:
Personal communications are typically omitted from the bibliography unless they are archived and available to others. For example:

Course lecture, speech, or academic talk
Note:
Bibliography:

Book review
Note:
Bibliography:

Useful Guides

Examples in this guide are taken from these books (which are available at the Information and Research help Desk):

AWARDS FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Scholarships, Bursaries, and Awards Administered By the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards for Which Undergraduate Students Already in Attendance at the University May Qualify
http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=SCHO-0110

Scholarships, Bursaries, and Awards Available for Undergraduate Students for Study Outside Newfoundland and Labrador
http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=SCHO-0745 (several for Harlow)

Scholarships, Bursaries, and Awards Administered By Other Authorities
http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=SCHO-0772

Web Sources

Policy Wonk's Paradise

You will probably not have use for most of these sites in this course, but if you are in the policy business, or taking more advanced political science courses in the future, you will find these sites interesting (and featuring access to studies). This is like my "Letterman Top 10 List" of Favourite Sites for free policy analysis stuff:

1. the C.D. Howe Institute:
3. Institute for Research on Public Policy - see "research" and other items on the sidebar:
   http://www.irpp.org/research/index.htm
5. Queen's School of Policy Studies http://qsilver.queensu.ca/sps/WorkingPapers/
5. Canadian School of Public Service (federal): go to http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/index_e.asp and then http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/main_e.html
6. Unity Link (national unity studies) http://www.uni.ca/index_e.html
9. CBC Archives: Politics and Economy (You can also access general CBC news, and Newsworld, by following links.) http://archives.cbc.ca/IDT-1-73/politics_economy/

Book Review Assignment and Guidelines

Value: 30%

The book review assignment is on the date noted. Note the penalty for late assignments.


The reviews should be about 2000 words long, and typed, preferably. A cover page would help. General guidance on doing a book review is found on the Elizabeth II Library Website at:

http://www.library.mun.ca/guides/how_to/index.php (Go to “Write a book review” on the list and click on it.)

This is the same information which is available in handout form at the kiosk near the QE II reference desk.

The following is information which you may also find useful.

- The purpose of a book review is to help the student develop analytical skills in reading. This means something more than merely summarizing the book; instead it involves being able to discern the message, structure, strengths and weaknesses of works you read.

- The format at the beginning of the review should include basic information like the book's title, author(s) name(s), place of publication, publisher's name, and date, and the length of the book. A typical heading for a review in the Canadian Journal of Political Science, for example, reads as follows:

  The Political Economy of Dictatorship
  Ronald Wintrobe
Now for the fun part; the analysis. The thing to remember is that a review is a very personal thing; it is your view of a piece of literature. You are matching wits with the author or authors. If you like the work in question, you should be able to enunciate clearly your reasons why. If you do not like it, you should be able to say why not. Much of the rest of this box consists of hints about how to verbalize this like/dislike.

Another quick note; the following can seem a bit dry to some, but reviews can actually be very exciting to writer and read. To get a sense of how interesting reviews can be, the next time you are in the MUN Library, or other academic library, go to the periodicals on display, and look up some standard political science journals like, for example:

- Canadian Journal of Political Science
- Canadian Public Administration
- Canadian Public Policy

These reviews are basically doing the same job you are being asked to do; see how the pros do it before you do your own. One often learns by example. Read several of the reviews in a row; by the end of this process, the following material will make more sense.

**Components of a Book Review**

There is no standard way to do a review. However, successful reviews often involve many of the following "components":

1. The review should outline the purpose or objective of the book. In other words, what is the problem the authors have identified and how do they propose to deal with it? Note that there may be more than one purpose, or more than one problem, as well.
2. Identify the thesis of the book.
3. Summarize what evidence the authors show to prove the thesis.
4. At this point, the student might ask what to review, briefly, what are the critical concepts and definitions used, and what is the basic methodology used.
5. Briefly outline the conclusion to the book.
6. Critically analyse the argument.
   - Is it logical? (That is, are there fallacies in argument? See Canadian Political Debates, pages 17-18 for a brief descriptions of some common fallacies in argument.)
   - Is it balanced? (That is, are opposing viewpoints considered or overlooked?)
7. Critically analyse the evidence.
   - Does the book balance opinion and fact?
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- Are respectable, unbiased sources used, or do the authors either overlook the major works in the area, and concentrate merely on writers who think the same way they do?
- Is the evidence substantive, or is it light and sporadically presented?

8. Critically analyse the conclusion.

- Does it refer to the thesis and maintain that it is proved?
- Does the conclusion follow from the evidence, or does the evidence point to another conclusion or set of conclusions?


- Do the authors contribute significantly to a certain "school" of thought?
- Are they starting a new approach?
- How favourably does this school (or approach) compare to others in the same field?
- Will the authors contribute something valuable or harmful to national political dialogue?
- What is the significance of the work in question to the larger field of political science?

10. In the case of more than one book being reviewed,

- consider if the diagnosis of the "problem" is similar or different for each book/author
- consider if the authors handle the categories (from 1-9 above) better than each other
- according to these other criteria, which is the better book (academically) and why?

I hasten to add that a good book review will NOT consist of merely jotting down some answers to these questions. They are provided merely to get you started, and to think analytically. Combine these interrogations with the directions provided for the book reviews.