

ISSUES IN CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Course Outline

INSTRUCTOR ADDRESS: AQ 6034 ahheard@sfu.ca Telephone: 778-782-3043

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A central focus will be the structure of the Canadian constitution and the federalism system it creates. While federalism accommodates a kind of institutionalized pluralism, the constitutional boundaries between communities become in themselves an on-going source of political tension. It is important to appreciate why we have a federal division of powers, how the division between the federal and provincial governments has evolved over the years, what practical consequences flow from a federal division of governmental structures, and why federalism has continued to be a focus of discontent. The failure of the national Parliament to provide effective regional representation will be examined, especially with respect to the electoral system. Federalism is a starting point in this class to examine a wide variety of issues in Canadian politics.

With this broad background, the class can look at intergovernmental clashes over policy control that are played out through jurisdictional disputes and the power of the federal purse. Considerable attention will be given to drives by certain communities to re-create or leave the Canadian federation. Aboriginal self-government will be examined for potential changes that differing self-government proposals may entail. Significant attention will be given to the strong challenge from Quebec nationalist forces for the long-term prospects and consequences of separation.

Students will engage in a variety of writing assignments: a book review, commentaries that fit the style of newspaper editorial pages, and a research paper. In addition, students will work through various exercises in speed reading and oral presentations, which may include short presentations in large lecture halls. Students may write their term papers on almost any topic related to Canadian politics and government.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

H. Bakvis, G. Baier, and D Brown, *Contested Federalism: Certainty and Ambiguity in the Canadian Federation*.

Philip Resnick, *The Politics of Resentment: British Columbia, Regionalism, & Canadian Unity*.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Book Review (1)	1500 words	15%
Essay	4000 words	55%
Written Opinions (2)	800 words	10% each
Oral Participation		10%