

BROCK UNIVERSITY
POLI 3P11 - Local Government
Fall 2017

Instructor: Jason Sykes
Office: Plaza 338
Email: jsykes@brocku.ca
Lectures: Monday, Wednesday 1 – 2 pm, TH256

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Local governments deliver the majority of the services we receive and are responsible for many of the policies which shape our daily lives. Despite their importance, most know very little about them. This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to local government. We will explore the function, purpose, operations and financing of local government, in addition to exploring conceptualizations of power and democracy at the local level. Students will complete assignments that explore long-standing and contemporary challenges in local governments and the choices local decision-makers often face.

REQUIRED TEXT: Tindal, Tindal, Stewart, Smith, *Local Government in Canada*, Ninth edition (Nelson, 2016).

COURSE COMPONENTS:

Seminar participation	30%
Seminar presentation	5%
Local Issues Assignment	10% (Due Nov 20th, in Lecture)
Paper	25% (Due Nov 29th, 4pm Essay drop box)
Final examination	30%

The last date on which you can withdraw from this course without academic penalty is November 7th, 2017. You will have your grade for seminar participation for the first half of the course (15%) by October 31.

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION:

Seminars are a very important component of this course and not simply due to their weight in the grading scheme. Seminars supplement and expand on the material covered in the course and generate new perspectives and approaches to the material. Students need to be aware that **seminar participation is not synonymous with seminar attendance**: your attendance at seminars is the very **minimum** expectation and attendance alone will **not** earn you a passing seminar participation grade. Students are expected to come well prepared for seminars by completing the weekly readings and reflecting upon them. It is **not** enough to read only part of the assigned seminar material weekly. Each portion of the material is designed to compliment the rest of the assigned group. Ideally students will attend seminar with questions or comments about the assigned material prepared. Students are also expected to engage their discussions in a respectful manner, feeling free to explore and debate a variety issues, but never resorting to personal slights or attacks. Students will not engage in distracting or disrespectful conduct in seminar including texting and/or other personal use of social networking or internet sites during seminars. Such behaviour may result in a mark of zero in seminar.

SEMINAR PRESENTATION:

Each student will have the responsibility to lead one seminar over the duration of the semester (usually with another student). The student(s) must prepare a list of questions related to the assigned material and post it on Sakai at least 24 hours before the seminar. The student(s) leading the seminar will guide the other students through the questions and facilitate discussion. The questions must be designed in such a way as to cover all the material and provoke discussion in class. Students are encouraged to create questions which integrate all the readings assigned for a given week, including those covered in lectures.

Final Examination: The final examination will be a three-hour test scheduled in the December examination period. **DO NOT BOOK VACATION UNTIL THE EXAM SCHEDULE HAS BEEN POSTED.** No accommodation will be given to students who have booked vacation during the December exam period.

Local Issues Assignment:

Students will be required to explore local media. They should collect newspaper and other local media articles **over the course** of the semester at a rate of at one article per week. For online articles these should be printed and time stamped. These articles should cover topics of local government and governance. On the last day of class, students will be asked to submit these articles along with a brief (150-200 word) commentary on each article. Students' commentary should focus on issues discussed in the course. Some questions students might consider in their commentary include: Why is this issue important to the local community? Who has the jurisdiction to address the issue? What are the possible solutions to this issue? What are the potential roadblocks to solving this issue? Who are the stakeholders and who has the greatest influence over this issue? Have governments handled this issue appropriately? Which issue(s) covered in the course does this article touch on or demonstrate? Students should not feel restricted to this list of exploratory questions.

Research Paper Assignment: Details will be posted on Sakai.

Policy on Late Essays/Assignments: Essays submitted after 4:00pm on the due date will be assigned a penalty of -3% per day up to a maximum of 7 days late. Essays that are submitted more than 7 days late will be assigned a grade of 0 (Zero). Accommodations will be made for students who require them per the university policy posted at the end of this syllabus.

Course Outline:

Week 1: Introduction – Syllabus, Expectations, Questions and Answers (Sept 6)

No Lecture Reading.

Seminar Reading : No Seminars

Week 2: Municipal Government, Globalization, Neoliberalism (Sept 11)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 1

Seminar Reading: Introductions, Presentation assignments

Week 3: Legacy of the Past and Pressures of Today (Sept 18)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapters 2 & 3

Seminar Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapters 2 & 3

Week 4: Local Government Restructuring (Sept 25)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 4

Seminar Reading: Roger Keil and Douglas Young, "A Charter for the People? A Research Note on the Debate about Municipal Autonomy in Toronto" in *Urban Affairs Review* Vol 39, No 1 (Brock Library Super Search)

City Managers' Office, *City of Toronto Act*, City of Toronto:

<https://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=013e7873580a3410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=24eb7873580a3410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD#>

Mendelson, Rachel, "The Law said we could think big. So why didn't we?" *Toronto Star*, March 2, 2014. Available: https://www.thestar.com/bigideas/2014/03/02/the_law_said_we_could_think_big_so_why_didnt_we.html

Week 5: Understanding Local Government Restructuring (Sept 30)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 5

Seminar Reading: Kushner, Joseph; Siegel, David "Are services delivered more efficiently after municipal amalgamations?" *Canadian Public Administration*, Summer 2005 Vol 48 (Brock Library Search)

Week 6: Local Government Functions and Intergovernmental Relations (Oct 2)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 6

Seminar Reading: David M. Cameron "Provincial Responsibilities for Municipal Government" *Canadian Public Administration* Vol 23, No 2 (Brock Library Search)

Christopher Stoney, Katherine A.H. Graham "Federal-Municipal relations in Canada: The changing organizational landscape" *Canadian Public Administration* Vol 52, No 3. (Brock Library Search)

READING WEEK / THANKSGIVING: October 9 – 13 – No Classes

Week 7: Municipal Government Finance (Oct 16)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 7

Seminar Reading: James Cowan "Raise My Property Taxes Please" *Canadian Business*, Vol 86 Issue 7, p23 (Brock Library Search)

Jayson Myers "A Tax is a Tax is a Tax" *Canadian Business*, Vol 71, Issue 17

<http://proxy.library.brocku.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=1201797&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Jeffords, Shawn "Toronto council approves road tolls", *Toronto Sun*, Dec 13, 2016

Available: <http://www.torontosun.com/2016/12/13/toronto-council-approves-road-tolls>

Benzie, Robert "Kathleen Wynne stopping John Tory's plan for tolls on DVP, Gardiner" *The Toronto*

Star, Jan 26, 2017 Available: <https://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2017/01/26/kathleen-wynne-stopping-john-torlys-plan-for-tolls-on-dvp-gardiner.html>

Week 8: Municipal Governing Structures (Oct 23)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 8

Seminar Reading: David Siegel, “Politics, politicians, and public servants in non-partisan local governments” *Canadian Public Administration* Vol 37, No 1 (Brock Library Search)

Michael Ashton, Joseph Kushner and David Siegel “Personality traits of municipal politicians and staff” *Canadian Public Administration* Vol 50, No 2 (Brock Library Search)

Week 9: Rural Politics and Planning (Oct 30)

Lecture Reading: None

Seminar Reading: Jacob, Lipton, Hagens, Reimer “Re-thinking local Autonomy: Perceptions from four rural municipalities”, in *Canadian Public Administration* Vol 51, No. 3 Sept 2008 (Brock Library Search)

Week 10: Municipal Government Ethics and Values, NPM (Nov 6)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 9

Seminar Reading: Royson, James “Rob Ford's escape shows Ontario needs to revamp conflict of interest law: James”

http://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2013/06/21/rob_fords_escape_shows_ontario_needs_to_revamp_conflict_of_interest_law_james.html

Magder v Ford. **Read Especially Introduction and Background

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/114454163/rob-ford-conflict-of-interest-decision>

Toronto Integrity Commissioner report on Magder v Ford:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-56203.pdf>

Toronto Star: “Overhaul municipal conflict rules, inquiry head urges”

http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2011/10/03/overhaul_municipal_conflict_rules_inquiry_head_urges.html

Grewal, San “Are Ontario's scandal-plagued cities due for greater oversight?” *The Toronto Star*, Nov 7, 2014 Available:

https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/11/07/are_ontarios_scandalplagued_cities_due_for_greater_oversight.html

Municipal Conflict of Interest Act: Available: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m50>

Week 11: Municipal Elections and Public Participation (Nov 13)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 10

Seminar Reading: Joseph Kushner, David Siegel and Hannah Stanwick “Ontario Municipal Elections: Voting Trends and Determinants of Electoral Success in a Canadian Province” in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol 30 No. 3 (Brock Library Search)

Environmental Defence “Under the Influence: Election Funding in Ontario's Greenbelt”

http://www.greenbeltalliance.ca/sites/default/files/reports/VoteSmartReport_FINAL.pdf

Week 12: Municipal Policy-Making (Nov 20)

Lecture Reading: Tindal and Tindal Chapter 11

Seminar Reading: David Rider, Daniel Dale “Ford Moves to Privatize Garbage Collection” Toronto Star, Feb 7, 2011

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/934406--ford-moves-to-privatize-garbage-collection>

John Bonnar “Report calls cost efficiencies of contracting out Toronto's garbage collection 'fictional'”

Rabble.ca <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/johnbon/2011/05/report-calls-cost-efficiencies-contracting-out-toronto%E2%80%99s-garbage-coll>

Ben Dachis “Free The Garbage Hostages” C.D. Howe Institute

http://cdhowe.org/pdf/opeds/Dachis_GM_Jul17.pdf

Rick Mathews “Detroit Bankrupt: To see Detroit's Decline, Look at 40 Years of Federal Policy”

<http://www.policymic.com/articles/45563/detroit-bankrupt-to-see-detroit-s-decline-look-at-40-years-of-federal-policy>

Week 13: Course Wrap up (Nov 27)

Lecture Reading: No lecture readings

Seminar Reading: No Seminars – Work on your papers !

Week 14: Final Exam Review (Dec 4)

Lecture Reading: No Lecture readings

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: As part of Brock University's commitment to a respectful work and learning environment, the University will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all members of the university community with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations related to a documented disability to participate in this course, you are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services in the Student Development Centre (4th floor Schmon Tower, ex. 3240). You are also encouraged to discuss any accommodations with the instructor well in advance of due dates and scheduled assessments.

Academic Accommodation due to Religious Obligations: Brock University acknowledges the pluralistic nature of the undergraduate and graduate communities such that accommodations will be made for students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event. Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements.

Medical Exemption Policy: The University will accommodate students whose studies become interrupted, or who may be unable to complete academic work, due to an incapacitating medical condition. In these situations, the student must complete the Brock University Student Medical Certificate or in case of a concussion, the Brock University Student Health Services Medical Concussion Certificate) and include any relevant medical documentation to support his/her request for academic accommodation based on medical grounds. The University

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY NOTICE

All slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams and other course material created by the instructor in this course are the intellectual property of the instructor. A student who publicly posts or sells an instructor's work, without the instructor's express consent, may be charged with misconduct under Brock's Academic Integrity Policy and /or Code of Conduct, and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.