

POLS*3440*DE01 Corruption, Scandal & Political Ethics**Credit Weighting:** 0.5**Pre-/Co-Requisites:** Requisites:
5.00 credits
- Must be completed
prior to taking this
course.**Restrictions:****INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION****Name:** Professor David B MacDonald**Email:** david.macdonald@uoguelph.ca**Office Location:** 508 MacKinnon Hall
Political Science Department**GENERAL DETAILS**

This course will introduce students to the phenomenon of political corruption and the study of its incidence. Attention will be paid to historical examples, contemporary scandals, and analytical articles, dealing with the nature, causes and effects, and proposed cures of political corruption, and the ethical dilemmas inherent in political life. The focus will be primarily on Canada, the United States, and Great Britain, with some other examples included as well. The course balances theory, history, and current events.

This course approaches political corruption and ethics from two directions – the theoretical and the practical. Students will draw on assigned readings and videos, weekly lectures by the instructor (called "From the Professor") and news coverage in newspapers and on television. The Internet will be a valuable resource for detailed and current information about some of the subjects. Students will be asked to pay particular attention to social media and the roles that "fake news" and other forms of disinformation are assuming in election campaigns.

The subject matter ranges from historical (Canada's first great political scandal, the Canadian Pacific Railway Scandal of the 1870s, which led to the defeat of the Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government) to contemporary – including the use of social media by unscrupulous politicians who are intent on misleading and manipulating the electorate. In between, we will look at such controversies as the Profumo sex-and-security scandal in 1960s Britain, the Diefenbaker-era Munsinger affair in Canada, the 1970s Watergate scandal in Washington that destroyed the presidency of Richard M. Nixon, the highly publicized Bill Clinton-Monica Lewinsky affair, and the scandal-ridden presidencies of Donald J. Trump. We will also examine a range of Canadian scandals, including the Sponsorship affair, the Toronto computer-leasing scandal, the Airbus scandal involving former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. We will also look at some recent controversies involving the Liberal government, for example: SNC Lavalin and the WE Charity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe how corruption infects the political system;
2. Analyze corruption in a historical context and recognize the difference between corrupt behaviour and conduct that is merely outrageous or shocking;
3. Explain the ethical dilemmas and conflicts inherent in political life for all public office holders;
4. Assess actual situations, including war and national security crises, when political leaders find themselves compromising their ethical standards in the interest of the public good;
5. Evaluate the mechanisms employed in Canada to achieve transparency, accountability and honest government;
6. Assess the ability of the news media to serve as "society's watchdog"; and
7. Define the impact of social media on the political system.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Short Essay
Term Paper
Debate
Quizzes
Take-home Final Exam

REQUIRED READING

There is no required textbook for this course but there are weekly readings online.

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