DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS*3440: Corruption, Scandal, and Political Ethics

Credit Weighting: 0.50 **Pre-/Co-Requisites:** 5.00 credits **Restrictions:**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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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.

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.

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

Long essay, weekly online quizzes, and a final exam. All modes of assessment are online.

REQUIRED READING

There is no required textbook for this course. For this course, you will be required to access course reserve materials through the University of Guelph McLaughlin Library. To access these items, select Ares on the navbar in CourseLink. Note that you will need your Central Login ID and password in order to access items on reserve.