DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Credit Weighting: 0.5 **Pre-/Co-Requisites:** **Restrictions:**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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GENERAL DETAILS

Description

The relationship between rights and public policy is so fundamental that it hardly seems to need justification. The idea of a right, as moral property, is the basis for liberal democracy and individual freedom. Rights articulate a broad range of citizens' entitlements and also the obligations of states to fulfil them. But the details of the relationship is much more complex. Rights are broadly conceived and are assigned to individuals and groups. They can be, and are, neatly enumerated in constitutions and covenants. Public policies are vast and infinitely complex. They are created through multiple venues and institutions and are often obtuse, contradictory, and incomplete. In some instances, public policy is the outward expression of positive rights – such as the social right to health care. In others, they define domains of negative rights (to be free from certain actions and practices). In this course we will examine the multiple expressions of rights through public policy. We will consider the ways in which rights give rise to public policies and also the ways in which public policies shape rights. We will cover a range of content areas in Canadian and comparative perspectives, such as: civil rights, same sex marriage, abortion policy and politics, reproductive rights, health care policy, LGBTQ rights, Indigenous rights, and citizenship rights and immigration. The course will examine both theoretical and more empirical literatures and approaches.

In this virtual course we will try to replicate as much as possible the seminar experience of the classroom. Students will be expected to

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will emphasize the following learning outcomes:

1. Critical and creative thinking: This course will emphasize analytical inquiry (through consideration of the philosophical and political dimensions of rights and the ways in which they facilitate and constrain public policy; this will also be emphasized through examination of a number of complex public policy issues and debates); creativity, and innovation; and depth and breadth of understanding.
2. Global understanding: We will consider a number of debates and cases in comparative and global perspective; we will consider a number of transnational issues and phenomena.
3. Communicating: We will develop both verbal and written communications skills although in this virtual class we will focus mainly on the development of written skills.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Assignments and Grading (tentative and subject to change)
Weekly reading summaries (15%). Due each day before class.
Post-class discussion summaries and questions (15%). Due after each class.
Lead discussion/ debate (15%)
Research paper proposal (20%)
Final research paper (35%)

REQUIRED READING

Journal articles and book chapters will be available through the library. TBD.