**POLS\*3140**

**The Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Section 01)**

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH**

**Department of Political Science**

**Winter 2021**

Instructor: Professor Troy Riddell

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**Course Description:**

The introduction of the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has changed the Canadian political landscape dramatically. This course will introduce students to the political implications of the Charter through a combination of historical material, judicial decisions, and scholarly debates. The early weeks of the course will introduce the Charter, its historical roots, and place it in a larger context of how Canada is governed. The course will then shift to judicial decisions themselves, as students will become familiar with the development of judicial decision-making over the past three decades and examine how the Supreme Court of Canada has helped to shape public policy in the post-Charter era. The course will examine debates over the appropriate role of institutions (courts, the executive, and legislative branches) in interpreting and applying the Charter and explore how the Charter shapes and is shaped by institutional actors, electoral politics, interest groups and society.

By the end of this course, students should be able to identify and critically evaluate the relevant political and scholarly debates that surround the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and be familiar with key Charter decisions. Students should be familiar with the historical development of the Charter, including the reasons for its successful entrenchment, its influence and popularity, and its continued significance in shaping public policy. Finally, students should be able to effectively communicate, in both oral and written form, how the Charter has changed the way Canadians govern and are governed, particularly with respect to the “judicialization of politics” and the “politicization of the judiciary.”

**Course Requirements** (tentative)

Quizzes 20%

Case Brief 20%

Short paper 30%

Final Exam 30%

**Required Text (tentative):**

MacIvor, Heather. 2012. *Canadian Government and Politics in the Charter Era* (2nd ed) Oxford University Press. (e-book purchase or rental or hardcopy)

Other required material will be posted to Courselink.