

McGill University
Department of Political Science
POLI 426:
Partis politiques et comportements électoraux au Québec

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Office Hours: Wed. 10-11 AM, or by appointment Class Hours: Wed. - Fri., 8:35-9:55 AM

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Course Description

[Français] Dans ce cours, nous examinerons les partis politiques et les systèmes partisans au Québec, avec une attention particulière à leurs développements historiques. Nous allons ensuite aborder plusieurs théories qui permettent d'expliquer le comportement électoral des Québécois-e-s au niveau provincial, fédéral et municipal. Nous concluons en analysant les défis actuels des partis politiques et de la citoyenneté démocratique.

Le contexte **extraordinaire** de l'automne 2019 par rapport à la réforme du mode de scrutin au niveau provincial nous poussera à examiner le mode de scrutin actuel avec une perspective comparée face à la réforme proposée. De plus, l'élection fédérale (Octobre 2019) nous donnera l'occasion de discuter du rôle de la politique québécoise au sein de la politique nationale canadienne. L'étudiant-e pourra d'ailleurs produire un travail final en lien avec l'élection canadienne.

[English] In this course, we will analyze Québec political parties and partisan systems, stressing their historical development. The course then explores various theoretical accounts of Quebecers' voting behaviour at the provincial, federal, and municipal levels. We will conclude by addressing current challenges involving political parties and democratic citizenship.

Given the **extraordinary** context of Fall 2019 regarding the electoral system reform proposition at the provincial level, we will examine the current electoral system with a comparative perspective. Moreover, the federal election (October 2019) will also provide a unique opportunity to discuss the role of Quebec politics in Canadian national politics. It will be possible for the student to work on this election for the final paper.

Important: lectures and most of the readings will be in French (see prerequisites).

Course Objectives

At the end of the semester, successful students will:

1. Understand the current state of political parties and the party system in Québec.
2. Understand the historical development that lead to this state.
3. Master several theories that explain Quebeckers' vote choice calculus.
4. Master theories and empirical tools unique to Québec politics to analyze political parties and voters in municipal, provincial and federal elections.

Prerequisites

- Completed one of the following: POLI 221, POLI 222, or POLI 226.
- Listening and writing comprehension of French are required as lectures and most of the readings will be in French.

Required Material

Some of the readings can be found online, the links for which are embedded in this syllabus - just make sure you have an internet connection and click on the title of the article. The remaining readings are to be found in the following two books:

- Réjean Pelletier (ed.). 2012. *Les partis politiques québécois dans la tourmente*. PUL.
- Frédérick Bastien, Éric Bélanger, and François Gélinau (eds.). 2013. *Les Québécois aux urnes*. PUM.

Both are available for purchase at Le James Bookstore, 680 rue Sherbrooke Ouest.

Evaluations

- Mid-term exam (20%). Week 6.
- Participation to a discussion on the Canadian 2019 election: 10%. Week 8 (10/23 and 10/25).
- Research paper: 35%. Electronic copy due on December 1st before midnight. Must be between 12 and 15 pages in length, typed, double-spaced. Must be written either alone or in pairs. (More details will be provided in class.) Late papers will be assigned a penalty of 5% (2 points) per day including weekends.
- Final exam: 35%. It will cover the entire syllabus. The exam schedule will be available on Minerva.

Schedule

Pelletier (ed., 2012) and Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau (eds., 2013) refer to the books mentioned in the "Required Material" section. Some weeks are on one topic, others are on two different ones. I merged the week's readings when there is only one topic.

Week 1 (09/04): introduction

- Pelletier, introduction.
- Make sure to have the syllabus.

Week 1 (09/06): Westminster-style democracies and the Quebec electoral system

- Pelletier, chapter 1.
- Benoit, Kenneth. 2006. "Duverger's Law and the Study of Electoral Systems." *French Politics*.
- Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau: Chapter 1.

Week 2 (09/11): electoral reform proposals

- [Réforme du mode de scrutin au Québec : le PQ, la CAQ, QS et le PV s'engagent à agir ensemble.](#)
- Massicotte, Louis, and André Blais. "La réforme électorale : profil d'un mode de scrutin mixte approprié au Québec." Dans Crête, Jean (dir.). 2003. *Hommage à Vincent Lemieux: La science politique au Québec. Le dernier des maîtres fondateurs*. PUL.
- Optional reading: Daoust, Jean-François. 2015. [A Referendum Rarely Leads To Electoral Reform](#)

Week 2 (09/13): No class.

Week 3 (09/18): Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ)

- Pelletier, chapter 9.
- Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau, chapter 15

Week 3 (09/20): Parti québécois (PQ)

- Pinard, Maurice. 2005. ["Political Ambivalence towards the Parti Québécois and its Electoral Consequences, 1970-2003."](#) *Canadian Journal of Sociology*.
- Pelletier, chapter 10.
- Optional reading: Mahéo, Valérie-Anne and Éric Bélanger. ["Is the Parti Québécois Bound to Disappear?"](#) *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.

Week 4 (09/25): Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ)/Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ)

- Pelletier, chapter 11.

- Bastien, Bélanger and Nadeau, chapter 12.

Week 4 (09/27): third parties

- Pelletier, chapter 12.
- Hamel, Jacques and Yvon Thériault. 1975. "La fonction tribunitienne et la députation créditiste à l'Assemblée nationale du Québec" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.

Week 5 (10/02 and 10/04): municipal elections in Québec

- Mévellec, Anne and Manon Tremblay. 2013. "Les partis politiques municipaux: la « west-minsterisation » des villes du Québec?" *Recherches sociographiques*.
- Daoust, Jean-François. Nationalism and municipal elections in Québec. Mimeo.
- Couture, Jérôme, Sandra Breux and Laurence Bherer. 2014. "Analyse écologique des déterminants de la participation électorale municipale au Québec", *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.
- Optional reading: Mévellec, Anne. 2014. "Did the 2013 Municipal Elections Destabilize Municipal Politics in Quebec?" *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*.

Week 6 (10/09): Mid-term exam (25%)

Week 6 (10/11): explaining vote choice calculus in federal elections

- During the week, students are invited (not compulsory) to fill their predictions for the federal election that we will discuss on week 9. The class' aggregated prediction of votes for parties will serve as the basis of the discussion.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth, Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Joanna Everitt and Patrick Fournier. 2012. *Dominance and Decline*. Chapter 1: Explaining vote choice, and Chapter 10: Electoral dynamics in Québec. UofT Press.

Week 7 (10/16 and 10/18): explaining vote choice calculus in federal elections and Québec-based parties

- Bélanger, Éric. 2008. "The Rise of Third Parties in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.
- Young, Lori and Éric Bélanger. 2008. "BQ in the House: The Nature of Sovereigntist Representation in the Canadian Parliament" *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*.
- Fournier, Patrick, Fred Cutler, Stuart Soroka and Dietlind Stolle. 2013. "Riding the Orange Wave: Leadership, Values, Issues, and the 2011 Canadian Election." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.

Week 8 (10/23 and 10/25): discussion on the 2019 Canadian election outcomes

- The election will be held on Monday. Students must come to class with knowledge on the (regional and national) electoral outcomes. I will send several links that provide an overview.

Week 9 (10/30 and 11/01): explaining vote choice calculus in provincial elections

- Daoust, Jean-François and Alexandra Jabbour. "An Extraordinary Election? A Comparative Perspective of the Quebec 2018 Election." Mimeo.
- Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau, chapter 12 (revision from week 4).
- Revise the lectures on the PLQ, PQ, CAQ and third parties.
- Daoust, Jean-François. 2015. "Vote stratégique : analyse de l'élection québécoise de 2012." *Politiques et Sociétés*

Week 10 (11/06 and 11/08): No class

Week 11 (11/13 and 11/15): referendums voting and campaign effects

- Mendelsohn, Matthew. 2003. "Rational Choice and Socio-Psychological Explanation for Opinion on Quebec Sovereignty" *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.
- Nadeau, Richard, Pierre Martin and André Blais. 1999. *Attitude Towards Risk-Taking and Individual Choice in the Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty*. *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau, chapters 5 and 6.
- Optional reading: Clarke, Kornberg and Stewart, "Referendum Voting as Political Choice", *British Journal of Political Science* 34:2 (2004)
- Optional reading: Yale, François and Claire Durand. 2011. "What Did Quebeckers Want?". *American Review of Canadian Studies*.

Week 12 (11/20 and 11/22): gender gaps in Quebec politics and democratic issues

- Bastien, Bélanger and Gélinau, Chapters 4, 11 and 13.
- Pelletier, chapter 3.
- Optional reading: Pétry, François, Dominic Duval and Lisa Birch. 2018. "Do regional governments fulfill fewer election promises than national governments? The case of Quebec in comparative perspective." *Party Politics*.

Week 13 (11/27 and 11/29): concluding discussion, revisions and questions

Important dates in December:

- Submission of the final paper online on December 1st, (on myCourse, before midnight).
- Final exam: the official schedule will be available on Minerva.

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Electronic Devices

The current literature recognizes that mobile computer, telephone and tablet tend to inhibit learning. You are allowed to use an electronic device to help you take notes, but it should be kept in mind that the only purpose of using it is to take notes. If you would like to use your electronic device to record the lecture, you need my explicit permission to do so.