

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

**Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam
May 24, 2012**

(Professors Haddow, Loewen, and G. White)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each part. Include in-text author citations where appropriate.

Part A

- 1 Is Canada's international reputation justified as a political system that manages diversity well?
- 2 "Like the political economy approach before it, the identity politics approach has reached the point where it has little left to contribute to the understanding of Canadian politics." Discuss.
- 3 "Too many Canadian political scientists are writing articles on narrowly defined topics and not enough are writing big books that thoroughly explore the main issues of Canadian politics." Discuss.

Part B

- 4 "Although some Canadian political scientists continue to study governmental institutions, such as Parliament, cabinet and the bureaucracy, the Canadian discipline has largely lost interest in government." Assess the validity of this statement and, to the extent you believe it accurate, comment on whether it identifies a problem with Canadian political science.
- 5 Is there more insight to be gained by thinking of Canadian federalism as a dependent or an independent variable?
- 6 Does the Canadian policy literature suffer from paying too little attention to the operation of government institutions, especially the public service?

Part C

- 7 "For all the data that have been collected and analysed on voting behaviour in Canada, we still don't know very much about why Canadians vote the way they do." Discuss.
- 8 Is political culture a useful concept for the analysis of Canadian politics?
- 9 "The Canadian party system literature consists of arbitrary, post-hoc explanations of Canadian electoral history." Discuss.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam
May 26, 2011

(Professors Loewen, G. White and L. White)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each part. Include in-text author citations where appropriate.

Part A

- 1 Making reference to specific subfields of the discipline, discuss whether Canadian political science is more in need of research on topics on which the literature is sparse, or of research which builds on and expands existing literature.
- 2 Making reference to specific subfields of the discipline, discuss why the literature on certain elements of Canadian politics makes substantial use of conceptual-theoretical perspectives, whereas the literature on other elements of Canadian politics is largely atheoretical.
- 3 “What has been described as the ‘comparative turn’ in recent Canadian political science is better understood as a quantitative turn.” Discuss.

Part B

- 4 “In Canada, since the late nineteenth century, society and economy and the attitudes and values associated with them have changed fundamentally, yet the principal institutions of government remain much as they were 120 years ago.” Discuss.
- 5 “In the Canadian context, the ‘democratic deficit’ is a conceptually empty idea.” Discuss.
- 6 Do federalism and the electoral system work at cross purposes in Canada?

Part C

- 7 “Partisan identification is not a useful concept in Canadian politics.” Discuss.
- 8 What social and ideological cleavages best account for Canadian voting behaviour?
- 9 Do the results of the 2011 federal election suggest that Canada is entering a new party system?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam
August 16, 2010

(Professors Skogstad, G. White and L. White)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each part. Include in-text author citations where appropriate.

Part A

- 1 What is gained and what is lost if Canadian political scientists fully embrace 'the comparative turn'?
- 2 You are delivering the final seminar in the field course on Canadian politics. What are the three or four most fundamental lessons about the essential character of the Canadian polity you would wish the students to take away, and why?
- 3 Identify **TWO** subfields of Canadian political science that are especially rich theoretically and empirically and **TWO** subfields in need of more and better research. Discuss why such variation exists in the quality and quantity of research across subfields.

Part B

- 4 Minority government may have become the norm in Canadian politics. If so, what are the implications for the future of Canadian political parties, Parliament, and federalism?
- 5 Alan Cairns predicted that the adoption of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* would have a transformative effect on Canadian political culture and governing. To what extent have such predictions been borne out?
- 6 Reform is once again in the air. Examine the competing ideas and the prospects for major change in any **TWO** of the following: the electoral system; the Senate; the power of the Prime Minister; the role of the Governor-General; judicial appointments.

Part C

- 7 By most accounts, Canada survived the recent economic crisis much better than most other western countries. What role did public policy play in accounting for Canada's superior performance?
- 8 Will Kymlicka informs us that Canada is called on to manage three different dimensions of diversity: Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal, French/English, and multiculturalism. To what extent do responses to the three require different policies and political practices? Might there be a comprehensive approach for reconciling the three diversities?
- 9 Have students of Canadian public policy focused too much on the role of institutions -- to the neglect of other explanatory factors -- in their accounts of policy-making and policy outcomes? Choose either economic or social policy to make your argument.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian government and Politics Major Field Examination
May 20, 2010 – 10 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Professors Haddow, Simeon and G. White

Instructions: Answer **one** (1) question from **each** part (total of **three** questions). Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Please write on alternate lines.

PART A

- 1 It has been said that “the world needs more Canada”. Can this be said of Canadian Political Science? Are there conceptual frameworks or empirical findings from the study of Canadian politics that could usefully be applied to other polities?
- 2 “In previous decades, political economy analyses contributed greatly to understanding Canadian politics, but in recent years little of analytic value has come from applying political economy approaches to Canadian politics.” Discuss.
- 3 “The term ‘identity politics’ is fairly recent, but the substance of what identity politics entails has long been a central concern of Canadian political science.” Discuss.

PART B

- 4 Canada combines federalism with Westminster parliamentary government. What effects do each have on the other?
- 5 How has globalization affected the nature and the role of the state in Canada?
- 6 Is the ‘democratic deficit’ in Canada growing or contracting?

PART C

- 7 In what, if any, sense can we speak of a ‘Canadian political culture’?
- 8 “Regionalism is the most elemental feature of Canadian politics.” Discuss.
- 9 Have Canadian political scientists been too concerned with voting behaviour at the expense of not adequately studying other forms of citizen participation?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government & Politics Major Field Exam
May 22, 2009 – 10a.m. until 1p.m.

Professors Haddow, G. White & L. White

Instructions: Answer **one** (1) question from **each** part (total of **three** questions). Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Please write on alternate lines.

PART A

- 1) Canadian political science has been accused of being atheoretical. Choose one area of the discipline for which you believe the criticism is valid and one for which you believe it does not apply. Justify your choices through references to the literature. What accounts for the difference between the two areas in terms of theoretical underpinnings?
- 2) What are the most pressing gaps in the literature of Canadian political science? Why do these gaps exist?
- 3) You have been asked to address this year's meeting of the American Political Science Association in Toronto on the topic, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Canadian Political Science." What do you say?

PART B

- 4) In Canada is regionalism the cause of federalism or is federalism the cause of regionalism?
- 5) In a series of books over the past decade, Donald Savoie has argued that the principal institutions of Canadian governance have become deeply flawed. Outline Savoie's main arguments and evaluate them.
- 6) "For all the talk of the pervasive and pernicious effects of neo-liberalism on Canadian politics, policy and governance, its actual influence has been relatively modest." Discuss.

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PART C

- 7) To what extent have new modes of citizen participation and the development of new communications media changed interest group politics in Canada?
- 8) What insights can we gain by studying Quebec through the lens of 'identity politics'?
- 9) "At no time in Canadian history have there been as many ways to achieve effective political representation as exist today." Discuss.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

**Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam
August 18, 2008**

(Professors Haddow, Skogstad and L. White)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each part. Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Please write on alternate lines.

Part A

- 1 Canadian political science has been accused of excessive homogeneity in the approaches used and of valuing description over theory building and theory testing. Evaluate this statement while considering scholarship in TWO of the following FOUR areas: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; federalism; political parties; and public policy.
- 2 Is the increasing emphasis given by Canadian political scientists to identity politics a reflection of fundamental changes in Canadian politics or is it better understood as a new analytic approach to longstanding elements of Canadian politics?
- 3 You are designing an upper-year course on Canadian politics, one section of which focuses on four or five books in Canadian political science which have made influential and lasting contributions to the field. What books do you put on the course and why?

Part B

- 4 The recently published book, *The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science* has no chapters on either parliamentary institutions or local/municipal politics. In light of the book's objective of examining the influence of Canadian literature on the comparative literature and the latter's influence on Canadian political science, what might a chapter on EITHER parliamentary institutions OR local/municipal politics look like?
- 5 Has the study of federalism in Canada suffered because of a preoccupation with relations between Quebec and the central government?
- 6 In academic accounts of Canadian federalism, where does the balance lie between political economy and institutionalist perspectives? Has the balance shifted over time? If so, why?

Part C

- 7 Over the past three or four decades, substantial amounts of time, energy and money have been devoted to voting studies in Canada. For all the resulting books and articles, do we really have a good, comprehensive understanding of why Canadians vote as they do?
- 8 Is the Canadian welfare state in retreat? If it is, what explains its decline? If it is not, what explains its persistence?
- 9 How adequate are vehicles of political representation in Canada?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam

May 15, 2008

(Professors Haddow, Skogstad and G. White)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each part. Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Please write on alternate lines.

Part A

- 1) "Neo-liberalism as a set of ideas about the appropriate relationship between individuals, markets and the state has had a pervasive impact on governing practices and public policies in Canada over the past 25 years." Discuss.
- 2) "The fundamental shortcoming of the Canadian political science literature is the unwillingness of scholars who write about Canadian politics to challenge and criticise one another's work." Discuss.
- 3) Over the past 15 years, the Donald Smiley Prize, which is awarded annually by the Canadian Political Science Association for the best book in Canadian political science has gone to the authors of books comparing nationalism in Ireland and Quebec (Garth Stevenson), on the MacDonald Royal Commission (Greg Inwood), on the Saskatchewan CCF Government (Al Johnson), on the HRDC fiasco and the politics of public management (David Good), on the resurgence of indigenous law (John Borrows), on Aboriginal difference and the constitution of Canada (Patrick Macklem), on the republican option in Canada (David Smith), on the politics of public spending in Canada (Donald Savoie) and on unemployment and neoconservatism in Canada (Stephen McBride).

What do the topics addressed by these books tell us about the preoccupations of Canadian political scientists? Does the range of topics accurately reflect the short-term and/or the perennial issues at the fore of Canadian politics and government over the prize's 15-year lifetime?

NOTE: it is not necessary to discuss the specific books mentioned in the question.

Part B

- 4) The recently published book on Canadian political science, *The Comparative Turn*, has chapters on federalism and on the courts but nothing on other Canadian governmental institutions. If you were asked to write a chapter for the second edition of the book rectifying this oversight, what you would say about the Canadian literature on governmental institutions in terms of how non-Canadian literature has influenced it and what it has to offer the study of other political systems?
- 5) Academics and pundits alike refer to a 'democratic deficit' in Canada. Is this an analytically useful term? To what extent does Canada suffer from a democratic deficit?
- 6) "The constitutional, judicial and intergovernmental dynamics of federalism, rather than regional sentiment among Canadians, are the key to understanding the powerful decentralizing forces in the Canadian polity." Discuss.

Part C

- 7) Canadian political scientists have long understood the importance of 'identity', though they may not have used that term. Is the recent emphasis on identity politics really all that different from earlier approaches to Canadian politics? What insights has it provided that could not have been obtained from more traditional ways of looking at Canadian politics?
- 8) Quebec nationalists and Canadian Aboriginal peoples both have political aspirations that challenge the status quo. Compare the methods they have chosen to achieve their aspirations and the success they have achieved.
- 9) The Canadian electorate has been highly volatile for at least two or three decades yet it was only recently that the party system became destabilized. What accounts for this apparent paradox?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam

Monday, 20 August 2007

(Professors L. White, G. White, and Haddow)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each part. Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Please type or write on alternate lines.

Part A

1. At an international symposium on the discipline of political science, you have been asked to speak on the topic: "Notable achievements in Canadian political science." What do you say?
2. You have been asked by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to write a memorandum laying out the three principle issues that will likely dominate Canadian politics over the next 10 years as well as the principle means to study the issues. What do you propose as a research agenda?
3. Canadian political science has been accused of excessive homogeneity in the approaches used and of valuing description over theory-building and theory-testing. Evaluate this statement while considering scholarship in two (2) of the following four (4) areas: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; federalism; political parties; and public policy.

Part B

4. To what extent have the traditional pillars of Canadian constitutional system – federalism and parliamentary responsible government – been transformed by the addition of a third pillar: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?
5. "Despite being Canada's foremost representative political institution, Parliament has attracted relatively little scholarly attention in recent years and most work on it has been descriptive or normative rather than analytical or theoretical." Discuss.
6. "The territorial bias of federalism seriously limits the capacity of Canadian political institutions to respond to the multiple identities and interests that comprise contemporary Canada." Discuss.

Part C

7. "While the Canadian political economy literature has generated unique insights about Canada, it has suffered intellectually from a lack of incorporation of comparative perspectives." Discuss.
8. Analyzing critically the literature on democracy and citizen engagement, to what extent do Canadian political institutions (e.g. Parliament, electoral system, political parties and the party system, intergovernmental relations) suffer from a democratic deficit?
9. For decades, Canadian political scientists have been expending substantial amounts of time and money on national election studies. What has been learned from these studies? Have the gains in knowledge and understanding been worth the effort?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Qualifying Examination

August 22, 2005

Professors G. White, L. White, TBA

Instructions: Answer one (1) questions from each section.

Include in-text author citations where appropriate

Write on alternate lines.

PART A

- 1 “Whereas two or three decades ago, some of the most innovative work in Canadian political science followed a political economy approach, more recently the best work has been located within the identity politics paradigm.” Discuss.
- 2 “A continuing weakness of the Canadian political science discipline is its failure to apply conceptual frameworks and theoretical models developed elsewhere to Canadian situations.” Discuss.
- 3 What don’t we know about Canadian politics? What are the most significant gaps in our knowledge of Canadian politics? Why do these gaps exist?

PART B

- 4 Discuss and explain changes in the nature, extent and influence of citizen engagement in Canada over the past two or three decades.
- 5 Which has been influenced more by the advent of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Canadian federalism or the cabinet-parliamentary system?
- 6 “We have many studies of specific Canadian public policies but don’t have much systematic, generalized knowledge about policy in Canada.” Discuss.

Continued on page 2

PART C

- 7 Is Canada becoming more or less democratic?
- 8 Is globalization having new and different effects on Canadian politics and the Canadian state, or does it simply represent the continuation of longstanding trends?
- 9 In Canada, is regionalism a product of federalism or is federalism a product of regionalism?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Qualifying Examination

May 19, 2005

Professors Bashevkin, G, White, L. White

Instructions: Answer one (1) questions from each section.

Include in-text author citations where appropriate

Write on alternate lines.

PART A

- 1 The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada has allocated substantial funds to encourage research in understudied areas of Canadian government and politics. The Council has asked you to prepare a memo proposing (and justifying) the fields and questions to which it should give priority. What do you write for the Council?
- 2 "In terms of both approach and substance, for most of Canadian political science, Neil Nevitte's 'Decline of Deference' analysis has largely supplanted the Hartz-Horowitz analysis of Canadian political culture. This shift speaks volumes about the development of the discipline over the past three or four decades." Discuss.
- 3 Three or four decades ago, most of Canadian political science could be fairly criticised as overly descriptive and insufficiently theoretical. Are such criticisms still valid today?

PART B

- 4 Those who approach Canadian politics through the lens of 'identity politics' appear to have little in common with those who study voting behaviour and related phenomena. Do analysts from these two schools of thought have anything to learn from one another?
- 5 Does Canada have a 'democratic deficit'? Does the key to improving the quality of Canadian democracy lie in institutional reform or in a shift in political norms and behaviour?

Continued on page 2

- 6 Regionalism remains a primal force in Canadian politics, but do we have good explanations for its persistence in face of such developments as globalization, the rise of identity politics, advances in communications technology, the homogenizing effects of the Charter and the like?

PART C

- 7 “The federalism literature in Canada remains fixated on long-standing issues of federal-provincial relations, paying insufficient attention to other elements of multi-level governance, to the detriment of our understanding of critical issues facing the country.” Discuss.
- 8 Alan Cairns has written that “the mainstream political scientists’ version of the biographer’s disease of identifying with their subjects is to become committed to the defence of the institutions they have long and lovingly studied”. To what extent has this ‘disease’ been characteristic of Canadian political science?
- 9 “Assertions about the decline of the welfare state in Canada are based more on ideological predispositions than on empirical evidence.” Discuss.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Exam

25 May 2004

(Bashevkin, Cameron, TBA)

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each of the following three (3) sections. Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Please write on every other line of the exam booklets.

PART A

1. Many leading works in the field of Canadian politics employ institutionalist, political culture, political economy or regulation school approaches. Assess the extent to which these approaches have dominated research in any two (2) of the following four (4) substantive areas: courts and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, political parties, federalism, public policy.
2. Many observers describe public health care as the “third rail” of Canadian politics. How politically significant is the health care dimension of the Canadian welfare state, and how convincing are claims that social policy standards generally and health care provision in particular are in steep decline?

PART B

3. A number of solutions to the so-called democratic deficit have been proposed in recent years. They include a relaxation of party discipline in Canadian legislatures, enhancements to the role of parliamentary committees and the introduction of electoral changes at federal and provincial levels, as well as reforms to the Canadian Senate. Does the evidence indicate that Canada suffers from a democratic deficit? To what degree would the prescriptions as proposed address the malady as it has been identified?
4. Ran Hirschl’s research on judicial empowerment in Canada and elsewhere suggests that delegating increased powers to courts has had far from benevolent, progressive or redistributive effects. If Hirschl is correct, then how can we explain the enormous popularity of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the relatively solid legitimacy of judges versus politicians in this country?

Please turn over...

PART C

5. Are the Canadian literatures on parties, elections, public attitudes and voting, on one side, and cultural diversity, social movements and interest groups, on the other, mutually reconcilable?
6. Does Canadian research on protest movements provide a satisfactory explanation of the peaks and valleys of social mobilization during the decades since World War II? How would the existing literature, for example, address surges of political activism and engagement, periods of social disengagement, and cycles of violent versus non-violent protest?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Major Field Examination

August 18, 2003

Professors Bashevkin, G. White & L. White

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each section. Include in-text author citations where appropriate. Write on alternate lines.

Part A

- 1) Major changes have transformed Canadian politics over the past three or four decades. Has the Charter been the cause or the effect of these changes?
- 2) What have been the most convincing interpretations in the literature on the changes and continuities in the Canadian state over the past few decades?
- 3) As a discipline, what has Canadian political science done well? What has it not done well?

Part B

- 4) "For nearly four decades, Canadian political scientists have been expending substantial amounts of time and money on national election surveys, but beyond a few broad generalizations, we really don't know much about the voting behaviour of Canadians." Discuss.
- 5) For all the attention paid recently to 'identity politics' is it not still the case that the primal political divisions in Canada are regional?
- 6) What changes have occurred in the nature and political aspirations of Quebec nationalism since the Quiet Revolution? What are the implications of these changes for Quebec's relationship with the 'Rest of Canada'?

Part C

- 7) For increasing numbers of Canadians, Parliament and political parties have become largely irrelevant. Is this a problem or is it an indication that more effective means of citizen engagement are emerging?
- 8) Do the ideas and approaches of 'New Public Management' provide any guidance as to possible changes of the two Canadian political institutions in greatest need of reform, Parliament and federalism?
- 9) Are Canadian state structures too rigid to accommodate the interests of non-traditional players such as Aboriginal peoples and cities?

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Canadian Government and Politics Qualifying Examination

May 21, 2003

Professors Bashevkin, G. White, L. White

Instructions: Answer one (1) question from each section.

Include in-text author citations where appropriate.

Write on alternate lines.

PART A

- 1) Over the past two or three decades, has Canada become more or less democratic?
- 2) The Canadian Political Science Association has received a large donation with which to fund research into the aspects of Canadian politics where our knowledge and understanding are least well developed. You have been asked to write a memo recommending the areas of research to be supported. What do you write?
- 3) You are to address an international symposium on the discipline of political science. Your topic: 'Notable achievements of Canadian political science'. What do you say?

PART B

- 4) There have been obvious and significant changes in Canadian political parties and voting behaviour over the past two or three decades, but when all is said and done, aren't the underlying continuities at least as important?
- 5) Compare the political aspirations of Quebec nationalists, Aboriginal peoples and feminists and the success of the strategies they have employed to realize those aspirations.
- 6) Does the heightened academic attention to 'identity politics' in recent years reflect a fundamental change in the nature of Canadian society and politics or simply new ways of analysing long established social and political phenomena?

PART C

- 7) “The era of constitutional mega-projects in Canada may be over, but important if inconspicuous constitutional changes continue to unfold.” Discuss with reference to federalism and citizen-state relations.
- 8) “A close examination of Canadian public policy over the past two decades suggests that the rhetoric of neo-liberalism has been a good deal stronger than the reality.” Discuss.
- 9) Is the institutional framework of the Canadian state better understood as flexible or rigid?