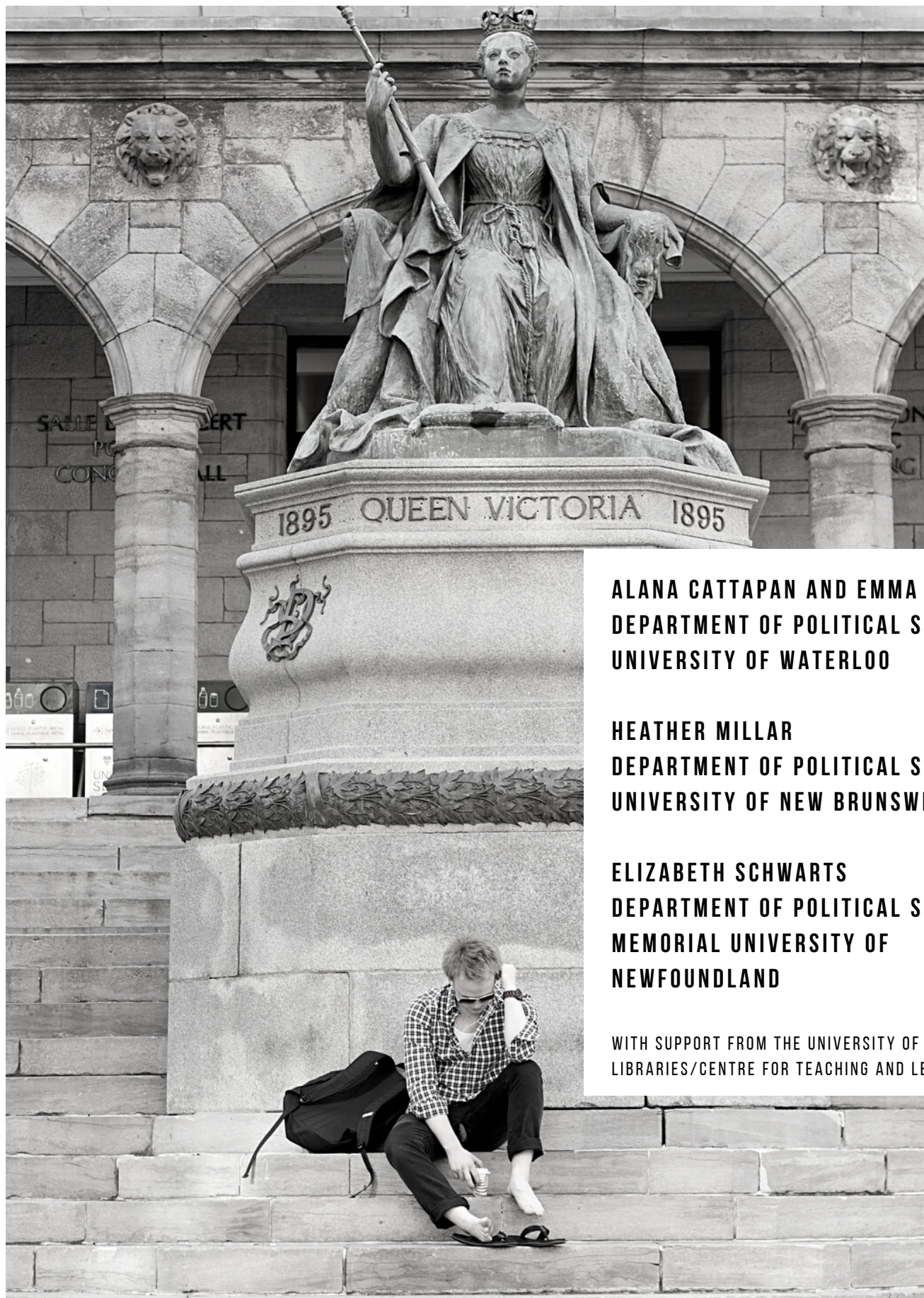# WELCOME TO CANADIAN POLITICS

GUIDE FOR STUDENTS
WINTER 2024

WELCOME TO CANADIAN POLITICS

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TABLE
OF
CONTENTS

ABOUT WTCP

"Welcome to Canadian Politics" (WTCP) is an online educational resource and assignment that engages students in group work to generate plain-language instructional materials on topics in Canadian politics. It aims to enhance students' knowledge about Canadian politics while (over the long-term) creating a digital, open-access textbook.

Launched in Winter of 2020, WTCP also aims to include students in identifying what "counts" as Canadian politics. The online format allows for an expansion of what constitutes Canadian politics—new ideas and creative topics are welcome. You can find the site at: welcometocanadianpolitics.ca.

Participation in WTCP occurs through a group assignment in a university course related to topics in Canadian politics. Students are divided into groups and choose a topic in Canadian politics. After researching and compiling information about their selected topics, students draft a submission introducing or explaining a their topic and its relevance to Canadian politics. They then hand it into their teaching teams. After they are graded, the submissions are revised for publication and uploaded to the WTCP site.

This handbook serves as an introduction and user guide for students participating in the project.

WTCP STUDENT USER GUIDE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with issues in Canadian politics while identifying gaps in what is normally covered.

- To convey information clearly and concisely to a broad audience of readers,

- To collaborate with others, drawing on the experience, skills, interests, and knowledge of different group members.

- To share course knowledge with an audience beyond the classroom, including both students who have (and are) engaging with WTCP in other classrooms, and with site users.

HOW TO WTCP

First, students break into groups, and choose a topic to study. Usually, the group size will be determined by your instructor. Instructors may provide a list of potential topics, or your group may be allowed to choose their own. If you are unsure about whether your topic is a good fit for WTCP, check in with your TA or instructor. Selecting a topic can be a challenge, but there are many topics to choose from. For Winter 2024, some suggested topics include (but don't let this limit you):

1. SELECT A GROUP, CHOOSE A TOPIC

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- The Numbered Treaties
- The Lieutenant Governors
- The History of the Live-In Caregiver Program
- The Evolution of the Federal Franchise
- Statement of the Government[AC1] of Canada on Indian Policy (The White Paper), 1969.
- The October Crisis
- The Supreme Court of Canada
- Canada's Feminist Foreign Assistance Policy
- Newfoundland in Confederation
- The North American Free Trade Agreement
- Churchill Falls/Quebec Hydro Controversy
- Berger Inquiry/Mackenzie Valley Pipeline
- Dish With One Spoon

Second, after selecting a topic, groups get together--in class, tutorials, or elsewhere--to discuss what they know about the topic, and what else would be useful to know. Look at a range of sources for information (i.e., CBC archives, scholarly articles, newspaper archives, and government publications). Many university libraries have subject guides that are a good place to start. Some instructors may have a minimum number of sources to include. Be sure to follow the guidelines for your class.

2. CONDUCT RESEARCH, DRAFT SUBMISSION

Then, start drafting your submission! You may be asked to produce between 700-1500 words depending on your instructor and group size. Groups should work together throughout this process. Using an online writing tool will help you and your teams work collaboratively on the submission.

Tip: the challenge of WTCP is not finding the information--there is a lot out there. It is choosing what information to include, and how to sure your work is clear, cohesive, and compelling.

HOW TO WTCP CONTINUED...

3. DRAFT, EDIT, EDIT AGAIN

Third, after you have written you first draft, edit your submission. The goal is make your submission accessible to a broad audience.

Although you might start by drafting different elements separately, submissions that piece together different group members work are often unclear and do not read well as a single text. Make sure to work together throughout the process to create a cohesive submission. Rewrite, edit, and proofread (and then edit and proofread again), and make sure you are adhering to the assignment guidelines set by your instructor and teaching team.

In some classes, you may engage in peer-review to ensure your work is as strong as it can be.

4. HAND IT IN!

Once you have perfected your work, you will then requirements are complete, you will then submit your assignment to your TA or instructor in the ways that they have outlined to you. It will then be graded by your teaching team.

Instructors may also ask you to fill out a self/peer assessment form (this is the case at the University of Waterloo), to allow instructors to gather information about your contributions and to provide feedback about their experience with WTCP in their class.

At this point, your submission will be edited by the teaching team and/or WTCP project assistants and instructors. We may amalgamate your submission with others on the same topic, make style changes, or edit for length. We will work hard, however, to keep as much of your original text as we can.

5. COMPLETE PROJECT ASSESSMENT FORM

Once the revised submissions are uploaded to the website, you will have a chance to review them

The last step in WTCP is providing feedback to the WTCP project team and letting us know if you do/do not want your name or contributions included on the WTCP website, and if any changes need to be made. This "project assessment form" is available at: https://forms.gle/C2ttfebssnKyFMkY9.

ON CITATIONS

The style of referencing for WTCP is slightly different from traditional academic assignments.

HYPERLINKS. Because it is designed for reading online, WTCP relies primarily on hyperlinks, with additional referencing wherever needed. The use of hyperlinks allows you to attach links to websites, videos, pictures, diagrams, articles or work that connects readers directly to relevant source material. Using hyperlinks improves the user experience for people reading your article, since they can easily click through to related materials.

If you are unsure about how to insert hyperlinks into your document, talk to your instructor(s). (Or Google "how to hyperlink" -- there are a lot of guides!)

AUTHOR-DATE. Since not all the information in your submission will be available online to readers to click through, you may need to use a more conventional form of citation in addition to your hyperlinks. For all sources not available online, we use the author-date system. We use the Canadian Journal of Political Science's guide to authors as our style guide -- https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/pdfs/Editorial%20Style%20Guidelines%202008.pdf.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. In order to ensure that your instructor can look up all your materials easily, when you submit your assignment you should include a reference list/bibliography that includes all relevant materials (including those you hyperlinked). This will allow your instructor both to work with your submission for the website, and to more easily assess your use of relevant research materials. In your bibliography/reference list, hyperlinks should be treated as any other academic citation would be for a university-level assignment.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- **Start early. Collaborations take time, so make sure you have a draft as early as you can to ensure that what you submit is cohesive and clear.**

- **Try to use language and a tone in your work that is appropriate for lay readers, something similar to a newspaper article. Explain terms, don't use jargon, and try to be as clear as possible.**

- **Try to use the active voice (and avoid passive voice writing) wherever possible. Not only does this make writing clearer, it also helps reduce sentence length.**

- **If you are having trouble figuring out how to make sure your work is cohesive, try using a Google doc or another collaborative writing platform to create your draft. That way you can work together throughout the drafting process rather than piecing different parts together.**

- **Make sure to use hyperlinks and to reference relevant information, wherever you can. Make sure to include ALL references (including what you hyperlinked) in a bibliography or reference list for your teaching team.**

- **Ensure you are following any and all assignment guidelines created by your teaching team. This includes things like word count/length, the number of sources you might be required to use, and how to submit your assignment.**

- **Don't forget to fill out the online "project assessment" form after you've completed the assignment! (Find it at: https://forms.gle/6VCTemQtiCWDF31v6)**

STUDENT CHECKLIST

☐ Create a group. Acquaint yourself with your group members, share contact information.

☐ Establish a collaborative space to work online. Working from a Google Doc or other similar shared document online will help you to work as a team.

☐ Read the WTCP student guide and all other assignment materials closely. Take notes if you need to, and make sure to ask any questions you have to your instructor/teaching team.

☐ Choose a topic. How this occurs will depend on your instructor, but look through the suggested topics, and brainstorm what topics you want to pursue. Ask yourself how your topic contributes to Canadian politics.

☐ Conduct secondary research on your topic. Gather information that you think will be relevant to your topic. Take notes! Read! Take more notes!

☐ Establish an outline for your submission and develop a writing plan. Look at some of the examples on the WTCP for guidance. Decide what information to include and exclude, and work with your group to decide how to craft your submission in a compelling and engaging way,

☐ Get writing. Work on a first draft and review your submission with your teammates.

☐ Write a second draft. Revise your ideas, make sure that all of the information is clearly conveyed and well-explained.

☐ Search for multimedia to include in your submission. Part of your assignment may consist of multimedia to engage your reader (i.e., YouTube clips, drawings, photos, games, maps). Look at some of the examples on the WTCP website.

☐ Revise and edit your text. Proofread and check citations- remember to edit, proofread and check that all your hyperlinks are working properly.

☐ Submit a final version of your submission

☐ ⊠Complete (and submit, if required) the self/peer evaluation form

APPENDICES

MARKING/PEER REVIEW SHEET

Student Names:

Topic:

Mark:

Research and discussion of topic:

- Is the topic explain the topic effectively?
- Did you define any relevant terms?
- Did you provide information that would deepen readers' understanding?
- Did you engage with relevant, credible sources?

Presentation and creativity:

- Did you present the information in a way that was interesting to readers?
- Did you provide information that would pique interest in your topic?
- Did you identify other sources of information for further reading?
- Did you thoughtfully and creatively present relevant information?

MARKING/PEER REVIEW SHEET CONT'D

Writing and style:

- Did you use language and a tone appropriate for a lay reader?
- Did you write clearly and concisely?
- Did you use a recognized citation style (or provide relevant hyperlinks)
- Did you follow the assignment guidelines?

Other notes/comments:

RUBRIC

	D	C	B	A
Quality of research	Little to no research conducted.	Minimal research was conducted using some credible sources.	Reasonable amount of research was conducted using a range of credible sources,	Significant, high quality research, using a range of credible sources.
Clarity of messaging	Concepts and relevant details were not clearly described, Text includes unnecessary or confusing information,	Concepts and relevant details were partially described. Text may include some unnecessary information.	Concepts and relevant details were described. Text is well-edited to ensure focus is clear	Concepts and relevant details were clearly and effectively described Text is well-edited, to ensure focus is clear.
Writing	Significant problems with phrasing and grammar (making some ideas unclear).	Some concerns with phrasing and grammar. Much more editing was needed...	Writing is generally clear but could have been more specific and concise.	Writing style is clear and effective, clearly conveying complex ideas.
Formatting and style	Did not follow assignment and/or WTCP guidelines. Lacking citations and hyperlinks for referencing information.	Assignment and/or editorial guidelines rarely followed. Hyperlinks and citations were rarely used.	Assignment and/or editorial guidelines were often followed. Sufficient hyperlinks and citations were included.	Assignment and/or editorial guidelines well-followed. Hyperlinks and citations were effectively incorporated

SELF/PEER ASSESSMENT FORM*

Please assess your own contributions, and those of your colleagues using the following criteria. Your feedback will be considered in revisions to this assignment. Please try to be as fair as possible in your assessment.

Scale:

5 -- Excellent work, was crucial to group's success
4 -- Strong work, contributed significantly to the group
3 -- Sufficient effort, contributed adequately to the group
2 -- Insufficient effort, met minimal standards of the group
1 -- Little or weak effort, was detrimental to the group**

Self Evaluation

Name: _____

_____ Participated in developing ideas
_____ Attended meetings/actively engaged in group work
_____ Cooperated well with other group members
_____ Contributed meaningfully to the final submission

Peer Evaluations

Name of group member: _____

_____ Participated in developing ideas
_____ Attended meetings/actively engaged in group work
_____ Cooperated well with other group members
_____ Contributed meaningfully to the final submission

**An assessment of 1 or less requires an explanation in the "other comments" section below.

Peer Evaluation continued...

Name of group member: _____

_____ Participated in developing ideas
_____ Attended meetings/actively engaged in group work
_____ Cooperated well with other group members
_____ Contributed meaningfully to the final submission

Name of group member: _____

_____ Participated in developing ideas
_____ Attended meetings/actively engaged in group work
_____ Cooperated well with other group members
_____ Contributed meaningfully to the final submission

Name of group member: _____

_____ Participated in developing ideas
_____ Attended meetings/actively engaged in group work
_____ Cooperated well with other group members
_____ Contributed meaningfully to the final submission

Other comments:

- How effectively did your group work together?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What do you think went well?
- What would you have done differently, given the opportunity?
- Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the project?

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

YOUR FEEDBACK IS ALWAYS WELCOME E-MAIL US AT
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