

# Athabasca University

## POLI 311 Canadian Government and Politics

### Detailed Syllabus

**W**elcome to Political Science 311: *Aboriginal Politics and Governments*, a three-credit course at Athabasca University. The course examines the complex issues associated with Aboriginal peoples and their politics. The central issues of this course include the history and context of Aboriginal government and political movements, and the political goals of Aboriginal peoples today. *Political Science 311* will help you recognize the efforts of Aboriginal peoples to create and recreate their governing institutions, which is essential for understanding Aboriginal politics. This course will also help you understand the policies of the various levels of government in Canada, particularly the federal government, concerning the circumstances, rights, and self-determination of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

### Course Objectives

After completing *POLI 311*, you should be able to

- Outline important concepts associated with Aboriginal politics and Aboriginal governments in Canada.
- Discuss Aboriginal governing traditions, the evolution of Aboriginal politics and changes in Aboriginal governance systems, and current trends and issues associated with Aboriginal governments.
- Discuss the complexity of the issues related to Aboriginal politics and governments, and discuss how Canadian society both influences and is influenced by Aboriginal governments and politics.

## **Course Materials**

The course materials for *Political Science 311: Aboriginal Politics and Governments* are mostly found on the course website and include some online readings. However, the course does include one textbook, which is listed below. The course package you received by postal mail should have included this item.

### **Textbook**

Belanger, Y. D. 2013. *Ways of Knowing: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada, 2nd edition*. Toronto: Nelson.

### **Athabasca University Materials**

***Course Information:*** This Course Information provides essential information about the course design, the course materials, and the procedures to follow to complete the course successfully. Read it through before beginning your studies. Pay close attention to the study schedule, as it indicates what activities you should be working on each week.

***Study Guide:*** The Study Guide comprises four units, which are further divided into sections. Each unit begins with a list of learning objectives, and each section in the unit includes a reading assignment, a commentary, and a set of study questions. The commentary highlights important aspects of the section, and points out and analyses controversial issues and discusses a diversity of viewpoints. Note that the commentary has been written to complement the assigned readings; it is not a substitute for them. Some material covered in the commentary is not covered in the text and some textual material is not covered in the commentary. Students, however, are responsible for all the course material. The

study questions direct you to the key concepts in the section, and should be considered carefully.

***The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996)***: This report is recommended for use in this course because of its richly detailed and comprehensive discussions of issues facing Canada's first peoples. Please note that it is not a required reading. You will benefit greatly from consulting its analyses and pondering its recommendations as they relate to your assignments. Especially useful is Volume 2: Restructuring the Relationship. The Report is available in hard copy from libraries and other sources. A full bibliographic citation appears in this Course Information under the heading "Supplementary Materials."

### **Evaluation / Marking Scheme**

To receive credit for POLI 311, your grade will be based on your performance on three written assignments: one on-line quiz and two essays. You must achieve a grade of at least 60 percent on the quiz, and an overall course grade of at least "D" (50 percent). The weighting of the assignments is as follows:

**Assignment 1: Online Quiz -- 30%** (This is to test your knowledge of the course materials assigned in the first two units of the course).

**Assignment 2: Short Essay – 30%** (1500-2000 words on essay about the readings in first 3 units in the course).

**Assignment 3: Long Essay – 40%** (2500-3750 words on a research question, due at the conclusion of Unit 4).

## **Course Outline**

**Political Science 311 is divided into four units, with each unit covering different topics relating to Aboriginal politics and governments. Most units are further divided into sections, with each section focusing on a particular aspect of the topic being studied. The following outline lists the units and sections in the course.**

### **Unit 1: Introduction to Aboriginal Politics and Government**

### **Unit 2: Ideas about Aboriginal Government in Canada**

**Section 2.1:** Aboriginal Government Traditions

**Section 2.2:** The Indian Act and Aboriginal Governance

**Section 2.3:** Citizenship and the “Inherent Right” Movement for Self-Government

**Section 2.4:** Treaties and Land Claims in Canada

### **Unit 3: Issues in Aboriginal Government**

**Section 3.1:** The Politics and Policies of Self-Government

**Section 3.2:** Financing and Economic Development

**Section 3.3:** Social Services

**Section 3.4:** Justice

### **Unit 4: Interests in Aboriginal Self-Government**

**Section 4.1:** Métis and Inuit Issues

**Section 4.2:** Urban Issues

**Section 4.3:** Canada Compared I: United States and Mexico

**Section 4.4:** Canada Compared II: Australia and New Zealand