OVERVIEW:

Using the October 19th Canadian federal election as a focal point, this four-week course examines Canadian politics and policy as a counterpoint to dynamics in the United States. We will touch on differences in institutional structure, federal party systems and political culture, as well as consider a few issue areas, notably immigration & diversity politics as well as Canadian social policy. The class will include guest lectures.

READINGS:

The readings below are recommended but not required. Shorter pieces are available on the OLLI website. Books can be purchased from any on-line bookseller.

WEEK 1 – Wednesday, September 30:

The Revolution and the Anti-Revolution: Understanding Canada-US Differences

Historically, observers of Canadian politics have emphasized how the country’s political institutions and political culture were shaped by refusing to participate in the revolution that lead to US independence. We’ll consider differences in founding documents, federal structures and political culture. Also important are the consequences of very different majority-minority conflicts: between French and English “solitudes” in Canada, around the white/black “color line” in the United States. Despite Lipset’s “foundational moment” hypothesis, opinion polls suggest that Canadians’ and Americans’ views on social and economic issues diverged more in recent times, from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Are economic globalization and technological innovation attenuating attitudinal differences?


This accessible book, written by one of the most acclaimed political sociologists of his day, sets up the “foundational moment” argument.


Adams gives a 40 minute lecture, updating his survey data, and takes questions in a public talk at the Wilson Center, Washington DC.

WEEK 2 – Wednesday, October 7:

**Spotlight on Policy and People: Immigration & Diversity; Social Policy**

Lipset’s thesis of a “foundational moment” suggests strong historical differences that continue to the present. But the case of immigration/diversity policy and social policy tell a somewhat different story. Canada lagged behind the US in responding to the 1930s Great Depression with an interventionist “New Deal.” Canadian immigration policy was just as racially restrictive as American policy prior to the 1960s, and arguably more exclusionary of Jews fleeing Europe. Divergence instead started in the 1960s through to the early 2000s. Now, some commentators worry of an “American” turn to a stronger security focus in immigration and citizenship policy and greater economic inequality as the welfare state has been cut back in Canada. These might be issues for the 2015 election.


Written for European policymakers, this report summarizes Canada’s immigration and integration policy, speculating on why it was “worked.”


A very short version of key arguments from my book Becoming a Citizen, written for a policy audience.


By two acclaimed analysts catalogue and decry social policy claw backs in Canada in this recent academic piece.
WEEK 3 – Wednesday, October 14:

The Canadian Party System: Past and Present

Today’s class will be given by Ken Carty, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and a former McLean Chair in Canadian Studies at the University of British Columbia. Carty, an expert on political party and electoral systems, will talk about the unique features of the Canadian party system, especially as it has evolved over the last 20 years. He will then turn to the upcoming federal election to discuss how the parties are positioning themselves to maximize votes and seats.


**OPTIONAL EVENT – Monday, October 19

Canadian Federal Election Night viewing party, Institute of Governmental Studies

Co-hosted by the Canadian Studies Program and the Institute of Governmental Studies, OLLI members are invited to attend an evening of watching and commenting on election returns for the 2015 federal Canadian election. Various local and Vancouver-based experts will provide informal commentary. Light refreshments also provided. In the IGS Library, located in 109 Moses Hall: http://www.berkeley.edu/map?moses. This optional event is not part of the official OLLI course.

WEEK 4 – Wednesday, October 21

Understanding the Election and Speculating about the Future

Will Canada have a minority government? Will the Conservative Party continue to lead the country, as it has since 2006? Or will the NDP’s win in Alberta translate into the first social democratic government at the national level? We will have a panel discussion with Carty, Bloemraad and select other Berkeley faculty, seeking to understand the federal election results and speculating about the future of Canadian politics.