Course description
In this course, we explore how citizens engage in politics. We examine theories that explain political participation and use empirical work to see how these explanations help us understand the reality of citizen participation. The diversity of political acts is considered. So beyond electoral participation, we will also study other forms of participation such as protests, political consumerism, deliberation, and Internet activism. While the course material focuses mostly on advanced industrialized democracies, there will be some examples from the developing world. Through the readings, lectures and learning activities, we will try to answer a variety of questions related to the study of political participation. For example: What is political participation and how do we study it? Why do individuals and groups of citizens get involved? Or why don’t they get involved? Who participates in which forms of participation? Why are some groups of citizens more involved than others? How has political participation evolved over time? How do participation patterns vary across countries? What does citizen participation bring to democracy? And what are some democratic challenges related to citizen engagement? These questions follow four main axes that will guide the development of the course: 1) the definition and explanation of political participation, 2) the forms of participation, 3) evolution and change, and 4) democratic outcomes and challenges.

Course objectives
The main objective of this course is to have students master theories and learn how to apply them in the study of political participation. So students will learn about theories and how the sub-field of political participation is structured. Additionally, students will develop their abilities to understand social science research, and will ultimately use some methods of empirical research in their own work. The different course assignments and in-class learning activities will further lead students to develop their oral communication skills and their ability to work as a team.
Course and University Policies:

**Special needs:** Please let me know if you have special requirements due to a diagnosed learning or physical disability. We can accommodate your needs better if they are made explicit from the outset.

**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 [http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

**Clicker:** Since clicker records may be used to compute a portion of course grades, the use of a clicker other than your own is considered an academic offense. During class, possession of more than one clicker, or that of another student, will be interpreted as intent to commit an academic offense. Please refer to McGill's policy on Academic Integrity and Code of Conduct. 
[http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity)  
[http://www.mcgill.ca/cio/e-policies](http://www.mcgill.ca/cio/e-policies)

**Language:** 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.  
En conformité avec la Charte des droits des étudiants de l'Université McGill, les étudiants dans ce cours ont le droit de remettre en anglais ou en français tout travail écrit qui est sujet à évaluation.

**Readings**
All reading material is available on MyCourses or through the website of McGill’s library. Students are expected to do the readings for the course on time, which means before the lectures.

**Class participation**
This is a lecture course, but there will be regular opportunities for in class discussions. It is thus important that you are prepared (i.e. do the readings and reflect upon new knowledge) and actively participate in the course. Student participation will be further stimulated through the use of clickers and learning activities.

**Clickers**
This course makes use of the Student Response System (AKA “clickers”). In facts, clickers will be used in every lecture.

- You should **purchase** your clicker immediately. Purchase only one clicker for all your courses. Only one type of clicker is authorized on campus. You can buy one at the McGill Bookstore. New clickers cost $54 and used ones are available for $41. The bookstore will also buy back clickers at a cost of $25.
• You need to **register** your clicker on myCourses on our course page. Register your clicker to your McGill ID by going to the course list home page in myCourses - you will see the clicker icon in the right corner. If you are taking more than one course that is using a clicker, you will not need to register it in every one of your courses; the first registration will carry over to your other courses. Instructions on how to register your clicker can be found at: http://kb.mcgill.ca/kb/?articleid=4419.

• You need to **bring** your clicker to every class. We will start using clickers immediately. A percentage of your grade is based on clicker usage.

**Rules** for clicker usage:

• The clicker cannot be shared between multiple students (see Student Code of Conduct: [http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/informationtechnology/](http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/informationtechnology/)).

• Lost clickers must be replaced at your own expense and re-registered in all your courses using the link in myCourses stated above.

• For verification that a clicker is working correctly, please consult the ICS Service Desk at 688 Sherbrooke, Room 285 between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

• For any other questions, please see the frequently asked questions (FAQ): [http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/srs/resources/#FAQs](http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/srs/resources/#FAQs)

**Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Percentage of final grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clicker participation</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>➡️ In class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midterm 1</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>➡️ In class: February 18th</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midterm 2</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>➡️ In class: March 29th</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Presentations</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>➡️ In conferences: Week of April 5th and 12th</td>
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<td><strong>Group project</strong></td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>➡️ Submission deadline: April 21st</td>
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**Assignments**

For all exams and assignments:

• You are required to indicate on the cover page your McGill student **ID number only**. Do **not** write your first or last name.

**Group Project:**

One of the main objectives of this course is to introduce students to empirical research in political science, how research is carried out, and how methods of investigation influence our understanding of political participation. In consequence,
This assignment is designed to be a hands-on application of the concepts and techniques of investigation covered in class and the readings. As part of the course requirements, you will be developing a research project on a topic that interests you. You will be required to plan a research project involving the collection of original data related to any aspect of the study of political participation and involving interactions with human subjects.

- The research project should be 18 pages for two group members, 22 pages for three group members and 25 pages for four group members (double-spaced, excluding tables, graphs, appendices and bibliography).
- The assignment is scored out of 100 marks, worth 35% of your final grade. All members of the group will receive the same grade for the group project. Each group member must submit a signed statement confirming that s/he participated equally in the project.
- You are required to provide a print version and an electronic copy of your work. The print version should be handed in to me at my office (3610 McTavish, office 23-3) and the electronic version should be posted on MyCourses (in Assignments).

**Presentations:**
Each team will present its research project with a Prezi or PowerPoint presentation. Presentations should be about 8-12 minutes, depending on the number of members in the group. Each project will be assigned discussants (i.e. another team), who will comment on the project and ask questions.
- Note that each member of the team has to present a part of the project.
- The presentation and discussant assignment count for 10% of your final grade. All members of the group will receive the same grade for the group project.

**Late policy:** All assignments will be graded on 100 marks. A penalty of five marks per weekday will be subtracted for late submissions. If the assignment is handed in on the same day AFTER the required time, a penalty of five marks will still be applied. Please note that weekend days are not exempt from this penalty (i.e. if the assigned deadline is Friday and the assignment is handed in the following Monday, a 15 mark penalty will be assigned).

No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.
**Course overview:**

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<td>January 12</td>
<td>Political participation: What is it?</td>
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<td>January 14</td>
<td>How do we study political participation?</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Why participate?</td>
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<td>January 21</td>
<td>Socialization</td>
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<td>January 26</td>
<td>The Contexts of Political Learning</td>
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<td>January 28</td>
<td>Biopolitics: Nature versus Nurture?</td>
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<td><strong>February</strong></td>
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<td>February 2</td>
<td>Participation: Learned Behaviour or Inherited Trait?</td>
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<td>February 4</td>
<td>Social networks</td>
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<td>February 9</td>
<td>Political and Social Institutions</td>
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<td>February 11</td>
<td>Do Political parties still Matter? – with Guests</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>Social movements, interest groups, associations - with Guests</td>
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<td>February 18</td>
<td>* Midterm *</td>
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<td>February 23</td>
<td>Electoral Participation</td>
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<td>February 25</td>
<td>The Decline Thesis</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>* Reading Week *</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>* Reading Week *</td>
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<td>March 8</td>
<td>The Young Generation - with Guest</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>Post-Materialism</td>
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<td>March 15</td>
<td>New Forms of Participation</td>
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<td>March 17</td>
<td>The Challenge of Diversity and Political Inequalities</td>
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<td>March 22</td>
<td>Mobilization and Information</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>Internet: the New Promise or Just Another Challenge?</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>* Midterm *</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>Protest Participation</td>
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<td><strong>April</strong></td>
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<td>April 5</td>
<td>Political Consumerism</td>
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<td>April 7</td>
<td>* No class *</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>* No class *</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Conclusion and Reflections on Political Participation</td>
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Detailed course outline

January 12th: What is political participation?


January 14th: How do we study participation?


January 19th: Why Participate? Theories of political participation


André Blais, To Vote or Not to Vote (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press), pp. 1-16


January 21st: Socialization


January 26th: The Contexts of Political Learning


January 28th: Biopolitics: Nature versus Nurture


February 2nd: Participation: Learned Behaviour or Inherited Trait?


February 4th: Social Networks


February 9th: The Role of Political and Social Institutions


**February 11th: Do Political Parties still Matter?**


**February 16th: Civil Society, Interest groups and Social Movements**


**February 18th: * Midterm * 

**February 23rd: Electoral Participation**


* Recommended:

**February 25th: The Decline thesis**


**March 1st: *** READING WEEK *****
March 3rd: *** READING WEEK ***

March 8th: The Young Generation


March 10th: Post-materialism


March 15th: New Forms of Participation


March 17th: The Challenge of Diversity and Political Inequalities


March 22nd: Mobilization and Information


March 24th: Internet: a New Promise or just Another Challenge?


March 29th: * Midterm #2 *

March 31st: Protest Participation


April 5th: Political Consumerism


April 7th: * No class  ➔  Presentations *

April 12th: * No class  ➔  Presentations *
April 14th: Conclusion and Reflections
