

*York University*  
**School of Public Policy and Administration**  
**AP/PPAS 3761 3.00 Section A (crosslisted to: AP/POLS 3170 3.00)**  
**CANADA'S SOCIAL POLICY**  
**Fall 2025**

**Professor:** Thomas R. Klassen

**Web sites:** [www.tklassen.blog.yorku.ca](http://www.tklassen.blog.yorku.ca) and [www.linkedin.com/in/thomasklassen/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/thomasklassen/)

**Meeting dates:** Tuesdays 4:00-7:00

**Classroom:** DB 1016

**Office location:** 137 McLaughlin College

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**Course description:** This course introduces students to social policy with specific reference to Canada but also in a comparative context. The course outlines the historical trajectory of social policy in Western nations and highlights significant social, ideological, political, and economic factors that have shaped social policy in Canada. Selected policy areas such as student financial aid, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, and welfare assistance will be analyzed. The final section of the course assesses the pattern of social policy reforms and the impacts that these have had both in Canada, selected other nations, and globally.

The course involves extensive use of case studies, scenarios, role playing and related activities. These assist students in learning and applying knowledge acquired from readings and lectures to other aspects of their studies and to their lives. Case studies on different policy fields are the major writing assignments in the course. The course meets in person with all activities, including the mid-term, taking place on campus.

**NOTE:** Attending classes regularly is essential in this course. Not attending classes makes it impossible to successfully complete the assignments and earn a passing grade in the course. There is a blended section of this course offered in the Fall 2025 semester for those wishing an online component.

**Learning Outcomes:** The course is designed to stimulate critical thinking on public policy and to introduce fundamental debates on, and knowledge about, public policy. The course will be particularly useful for future professionals in the public and private sectors, as well as in further studies.

At the completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate key aspects of public policy.
2. Analyze key debates in Canadian and comparative public policy.
3. Express themselves clearly and concisely in written and verbal discussions of public administration and public policy.

In this course, every element of each course assessment must be fully prepared by the student. The use of generative AI is not permitted, and its use will be treated as a breach of academic conduct. For more information, please refer to York University's **Senate Policy on Academic Conduct**.

**Required readings** (the first book is available for purchase at the York Bookstore):

*Public Policy in Canada: An Introduction* (8<sup>th</sup> edition) by Lydia Miljan. Oxford University Press (Canada). 2021.

Note: An e-book version (180 days) is available for \$42.99. Only the 8th edition (2021) can be used for the course.

*How to Succeed at University (and Get a Great Job!): Mastering the Critical Skills You Need for School, Work and Life* by Thomas R. Klassen and John A. Dwyer. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. 2015. You may download the book for **FREE**.

**Recommended reference books:** There are many books on social policy at the York Libraries and in public/community libraries, as well as online. The large number of books and publications reflects the importance that social policy play in the lives of citizens. Students are not required to purchase any of the books below but might find these to be helpful sources of supplementary information. All books are the Scott Library with the call numbers indicated. Most are also available as ebooks.

*States and Markets: Sociology of Public Policy in Canada* by Susan A. McDaniel and Seong-gee Um. Toronto: Oxford University Press. 2015 **HN 107 M43 2015**

*The Oxford Handbook of Governance and Public Management for Social Policy*. Karen J. Baehler, K. J. (Ed.). 2023. Oxford University Press.

*Universality and Social Policy in Canada*. Béland, Daniel, Gregory Marchildon and Michael J. Prince, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2019. **HN 107 U55 2019**

**Constraining the Court: Judicial Power and Policy Implementation in the Charter Era.** James B. Kelly. 2024. Vancouver: UBC Press.

**The Routledge Handbook of Global Public Policy and Administration.** Thomas R. Klassen, Denita Cepiku and T. J. Lah, eds. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 2017. **JF 1351 R59**

**Social Policy in Canada.** Ernie Lightman and Naomi Lightman. Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press. 2017. **HN 103.5 L54 2017**

**Canadian Social Policy: Issues and Perspectives.** Anne Westhues and Brian Wharf. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 2012. **HN 107 C354 2012**

**Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History.** Alvin Finkel. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 2006. **HV 108 F56 2006**

**Policy Change, Courts, and the Canadian Constitution.** Emmett Macfarlane. University of Toronto Press. 2018. **KE 3098 P65 2018**

**Caring for Children: Social Movements and Public Policy in Canada.** Rachel Langford, Susan Prentice and Patrizia Albanese. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2017. **HQ 778.7 C2 C37 2017**

There are two public policy journals that might be of interest: **Canadian Public Policy**, and **Policy Options**.

### Evaluation

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Worth (%)</i>	<i>due date</i>
Policy case #1 – immigration - ships arriving	5	September 23
Policy case #2 – immigration operating agency	10	September 30
Policy case #3 – gaming	10	October 7
Mid-term test (1 hr)	15	October 28
Policy case #4 – gender identity policy	10	November 4
Policy case #5 – deputy minister	10	November 11
Policy case #6 - contracting out	10	November 18
Policy case #7 – Medical Aid in Dying (MaiD)	10	November 25
Policy case #8 – involuntary addiction treatment	10	December 2
Participation	10	ongoing

### Please note

1. All graded assignments are completed **in person, and in the classroom**. **There is NO option to complete assignments in any other manner.**
2. You may miss submitting **one policy case assignment** and have the grade for this **one missed assignment** be the average of your highest and lowest grade for policy case assignments submitted before the missed assignment. Other missed assignments **will not be graded**.

### Grading

Percentage grades will be provided for each assignment. The final letter grade will be determined as illustrated:

<i><b>Grade</b></i>	<i><b>Per Cent Range</b></i>	<i><b>Description</b></i>
A+	90-100	Exceptional
A	80-89	Excellent
B+	75-79	Very Good
B	70-74	Good
C+	65-69	Competent
C	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	55-59	Passing
D	50-54	Marginally Passing
E	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	(below 50%)	Failing

Students may take a limited number of courses for degree credit on an ungraded (pass/fail) basis. Information on the **Pass/Fail Grading Option**.

Please note that students who wish to designate a course as Pass/Fail must do so within the first two weeks of the term in which the course begins.

## **IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION**

### **Student Conduct in Academic Situations**

1. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom and other academic settings, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. Students are encouraged to consult the **Senate Policy on Academic Conduct**.

### **University Resources**

**The Writing Centre:** One-to-one help with a writing instructor on any writing assignment. You will need to enroll to set up your appointment, although the Centre also offers some drop-in sessions: **<https://www.yorku.ca/laps/writing-centre/>**.

**York University Libraries:** Links to the main catalogue, e-resources, online help chat line with librarian, and many other research aids: **<http://www.library.yorku.ca/web/>**

## LECTURE SCHEDULE, REQUIRED READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### PART I: INTRODUCTION

#### Week 1 (September 9)

*Welcome, introductions and course overview*  
*Introduction to social policy*

Also: **watch this clip** (a government minister speaking to his deputy minister):

### PART II: HISTORY, STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

#### Week 2 (September 16)

*The Canadian context and social policy*

REQUIRED:

Chapter 1

Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 1

**How Canadians Govern Themselves** (51 pages)

#### Week 3 (September 23):

*Theoretical perspectives on social policy*

REQUIRED:

Chapter 2

Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 2

Schmidt, R. 2007. **Comparing Federal Government Immigrant Settlement Policies in Canada and the United States**. *The American Review of Canadian Studies*; 37, 1: 103-123. [You must be logged in to your York University account. The article is first on the landing page, but you will see other very interesting articles as well]

**How Canada's refugee system works**

**ASSIGNMENT #1** – ships arriving

[September 23 is the last date to enrol in this course]

#### **Week 4 (September 30)**

*Policy tools and instruments*

REQUIRED

Chapter 3

Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 3

**Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) Offices  
Live in Canada permanently**

**ASSIGNMENT #2** – immigration operating agency

#### **Week 5 (October 7)**

*The policy process*

REQUIRED

Chapters 4 and 5

Klassen and Dwyer – chapter 4

Cosgrave, J. and P. Cormack. 2023. "Making Markets out of Vice: Gambling, Cannabis, and Processes of State Legitimation and Formation in Canada." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, vol. 57, p. 280-297.

**<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/916189>**.

SUPPLEMENTARY

**Watch this clip** (of two civil servants talking) from *Yes, Minister*.

**ASSIGNMENT #3** - gaming

#### **Reading week - no class on October 14**

### **PART III: CASE STUDIES AND APPLICATIONS**

#### **Week 6 (October 21) – This week we will meet over Zoom**

*Social policy and the rise of the welfare state – with family policy as a case study  
(chapter 10)*

REQUIRED

Chapter 6  
Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 5

**Week 7 (October 28)**

*Income security for older people in Canada*

REQUIRED

Chapter 7  
Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 6

**TEST**

**Week 8 (November 4)**

*Labour market policy*

REQUIRED

Chapter 8  
Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 7

**ASSIGNMENT #4** – gender identity policy

[last date to drop the course without receiving a grade]

**SECTION IV: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES, GLOBALIZATION  
AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

**Week 9 (November 11)**

*Youth unemployment*

REQUIRED

Chapter 9  
Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 8

**What is a deputy minister**

**ASSIGNMENT #5** – deputy minister

### **Week 10 (November 18)**

*Social policy in a comparative perspective: Ageing and sexual orientation*

REQUIRED

Chapter 10

Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 9

**ASSIGNMENT #6** – contracting out

### **Week 11 (November 25)**

*Creating a New Policy Agenda*

REQUIRED

Chapter 11

Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 10

**Medical assistance in dying and end-of-life decisions support for medical professionals in Ontario**

**ASSIGNMENT #7** – Medical Aid in Dying

### **Week 12 (December 2)**

*Social policy in comparative perspective health care*

REQUIRED:

Chapter 12

Klassen and Dwyer – Chapter 11

**Involuntary treatment - Canadian Mental Health Association**

**ASSIGNMENT #8** – involuntary addiction treatment

### **Course Web Resources**

There is considerable information available on the Web on public policy and public administration. Some of the web sites below may be of assistance in your research and of interest in exploring issues related to public policy.



**Canada School of Public Service:** information about the latest news and trends in executive learning, including information about executive education and development programs and services and to documents

**The Innovation Journal:** independent, peer-reviewed, Internet-based journal devoted to sharing ideas and discussing public sector policy and administration innovation

**Institute of Public Administration of Canada:** national non-profit organization, concerned with the theory and practice of public management, with 17 regional groups across Canada

**Office of the Auditor General of Canada:** publications, including searchable full text of the Reports of the Auditor General

**Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire:** access to the House of Commons, Senate and the Library of Parliament, including debates, committee proceedings, and status of legislation

**Privacy Commissioner of Canada:** includes annual reports

**Public Service Commission of Canada:** responsible for promoting and safeguarding a merit-based, representative and non-partisan public service that serves all Canadians.

There are also many web sites related to public policy that might be useful for our course.

**Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

**CD Howe Institute**

**Conference Board of Canada**

**Fraser Institute**

**International Labour Organization**

**Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP)**

**Maytree**

**Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD)**

**Vanier Institute**