

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui



Political Science and International Relations Programme

POLS 381/ PUBL 304
CABINET GOVERNMENT
2006
PAPER OUTLINE
(First Trimester – 24 points)

Course Coordinator: Associate Professor Elizabeth McLeay

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Timetable: Monday, 3.00 am – 5.00 pm, Cotton 341

Office Hours Monday, 1-2; and Wednesday, 2-3

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the course is to study the constitutional position of political executives in democratic states and theories of executive/legislative relationships. We study the people involved (ministers and prime ministers/chancellors), their resources (from political authority to staffing and advice), their accountability to parliaments and voters, their policy networks, and their policy capacity. Examples are drawn from countries such as Australia, Britain, Germany, and New Zealand. We also examine emerging issues in New Zealand's system of cabinet government. Case studies are an important part of the course. You should acquire:

- an understanding of the main features of cabinet government,
- an in-depth knowledge of the subjects you select for your essays and seminar presentation;
- the ability to analyse the material critically;
- knowledge of the relationships between different political structures, cabinet processes and policy outcomes;
- the capacity to explain and evaluate the central governmental policy systems of at least two countries.

Text

POLS 381/PUBL 304/*Cabinet Government Course Book*

Additional Information

Any additional information about the course will be posted on Blackboard and on the Political Science and International Relations notice-board, 5th Floor, Murphy Building.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment comprises:

- First essay (10%)
- Second essay (30%)
- Seminar presentation (10%)
- Final, three-hour examination (50%)

Assessment aims:

- to write essays, involving the tasks of essay design, gathering material on specialised topics, analysing the material, and presenting arguments in literate and structured form;
- to contribute to the development and delivery of an oral presentation, testing your ability to present material in an accessible, interesting and lively manner; and
- to write examination answers, testing your overall grasp of the content of the course and your ability to structure ideas quickly and to answer questions in brief, relevant essays.
- If you have difficulties meeting the course requirements because of personal problems you should see Elizabeth McLeay as soon as possible.

The Essays

*Please note that you are required to submit your essays **both** on paper and in electronic form. The latter may either be emailed to me or, alternatively, submitted on a disk.*

The first essay (worth 10%) is due on **Monday 20 March**. (See Essay List A). This essay should be no more than 500 words.

The second essay (worth 30%) is due on **Monday 1 May**. (See Essay List B) This essay should be no more than 2,500 words.

Rather than choosing a topic from the second essay list, you may compose your own question. Please note, however, that your essay topic and question *must* first be approved by Elizabeth McLeay by (or even better, before) 24 April.

Please note that you are not permitted to interview politicians or any other persons without first obtaining permission from the Victoria University Ethics Committee. Thus, if you plan to interview, you must discuss your essay with Elizabeth McLeay early in the course.

The Seminar Presentation (10%)

You are required to develop and deliver a ten-minute seminar presentation on a topic to be finalised no later than **Wednesday 3 April**. This will be a case-study, the topic to be agreed with Elizabeth McLeay. You will be required to prepare a brief summary, suitable for distribution to the rest of the class. The summary may take the form of PowerPoint slides that will subsequently be placed on Blackboard. You will be expected to pose a number of discussion questions at the end of the presentation, and to field and answer questions from the class. Your presentation will be assessed according to criteria distributed in class.

Possible seminar topics:

- A case study of cabinet decision-making, tracking the passage of a particular issue through the various stages of the policy process within the institution of cabinet government
- Prime ministers – a focus on the career of a particular prime minister, including consideration of his/her approach to cabinet government
- Prime Ministers – a focus on the resources available to prime ministers
- Responsibility and accountability – a case study focusing on ministerial responsibility (individual and/or collective)

- Public policy and decision-making in coalition and single party minority governments (with a particular focus on the implications for the institution of cabinet government)

Please note that these topics are included simply to illustrate the range of possibilities.

The Examination (50%)

There will be a three-hour, unseen examination. Details of the structure and content of the examination will be advised in class in advance of the examination. You should make yourself familiar with the University’s rules about cases where illness, bereavement, or other exceptional circumstances prevent attendance or impair performance at an examination. Students who would benefit from special facilities at examination time because of medical or other reasons, should contact the relevant Faculty Examinations Officer, or a member of the Student Health or Counselling Services, 2-4 Wai-te-ata Road, as soon as possible.

Mandatory Course Requirements

- Submission of the two essays on or before the due dates;
- Presentation of one seminar talk;
- Attendance of no fewer than eight of the Monday classes; and
- Writing the final examination paper.

Workload

The University norm for a 24 point, 300-level, one-trimester course is 18 hours per week, an adequate guideline for PUBL 304/POLS 381.

COURSE PROGRAMME

- Note that changes may need to be made to this programme depending on the size of the class, and the availability of those contributing to the programme.
- The classes during the first eight weeks comprise informal lectures and class discussion. During the latter part of the second part of the course (Weeks nine to eleven) classes will be based on seminar presentations, focusing on particular themes. I have made some suggestions for seminar topics but you are welcome to develop your own (after discussion with me). A detailed programme for Weeks 9 to 11 will be distributed after the mid-trimester break.

Date	Topic	Readings
WEEK ONE 27 February	Introduction: some history, constitutions and cabinet government; the doctrine of the separation of powers Discussion: what are the ‘big issues’ facing contemporary political executives?	Heywood, “Political Executives” <i>Cabinet Manual 2001</i>

<p>WEEK TWO <i>6 March</i></p>	<p>Parliamentary and presidential core executives compared; and the USA as an example of non-parliamentary government.</p> <p>Political Parties and 'Party Government'</p>	<p>Verney, "Parliamentary Government ..."</p> <p>Weller, "Political Parties and the Core Executive" Blondel, "Towards a Systematic Analysis of Government-Party Relationships"</p>
<p>WEEK THREE <i>13 March</i></p> <p><i>Discussion of seminar topics</i></p>	<p>The Westminster model: Cabinet government in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.</p> <p>Comparing Westminster with non-Westminster systems of parliamentary government</p>	<p>Palmer and Palmer Cabinet Manual 2001 McLeay, "What is the Constitutional Status of the NZ Cabinet Manual?"</p>
<p>WEEK FOUR <i>20 March</i></p> <p><i>Essay 1 due today</i></p>	<p>Cabinet decision-making (or not) – what happens inside the black box?</p> <p>Policy networks and cabinet decision-making.</p>	<p>Burch and Holliday 'Case Studies...' Marsh et al.</p>
<p>WEEK FIVE <i>27 March</i></p>	<p>Visit to the Cabinet Office</p>	
<p>WEEK SIX <i>3 April</i></p> <p><i>Confirm seminar topics</i></p>	<p>Prime ministers and cabinets: comparisons and trends</p>	<p>Henderson Burch and Holliday, "The Prime Minister's and Cabinet Offices" Giddings Heffernan</p>
<p>MID-TRIMESTER BREAK</p>		
<p>WEEK SEVEN <i>24 April</i></p>	<p>Cabinet Government in New Zealand under MMP – what's changed, why, and with what consequences?</p>	<p>Boston, "Reforming the Executive" Boston, Church, and Bale Boston and Church Cabinet Office, "Coalition, Support, and Cooperation Agreements"</p>
<p>WEEK EIGHT <i>1 May</i></p> <p><i>NB essay II submitted today</i></p>	<p>Responsibility, accountability, and ethical guidelines and behaviour</p>	<p>Gregory Palmer and Palmer McLeay, "Taking Responsibility" Stone</p>

WEEK NINE <i>8 May</i>	Seminar presentations	
WEEK TEN <i>15 May</i>	Seminar presentations	
WEEK ELEVEN <i>22 May</i>	Seminar presentations	
WEEK TWELVE <i>29 May</i>	The institution of cabinet government: the challenges of capacity and strategic management Discussion of examination.	Upton Keating and Weller

ESSAY TOPICS

Essay One

Write an appraisal of any one of the following articles from your Course Readings. You should: briefly summarise the argument, including the main points made by the author or authors; criticise it; and discuss its usefulness to understanding cabinet government.

- Weller, 'Political Parties and the Core Executive'
- Blondel, 'Towards a Systematic Analysis of Government-Party Relationships'
- Blondel, 'Cabinets and Ministers: A Comparative Perspective'
- Stone, 'Administrative Accountability in the "Westminster" Democracies'
- Keating and Weller, 'Cabinet Government: an Institution under Pressure'

Essay Two

1. Summarise the arguments and evidence for and against the proposition that cabinet government is dead (or in decline). What evidence is there to support or refute the assertion that the institution of cabinet government in New Zealand is in decline?
2. Critically evaluate the impact of MMP on New Zealand's system of cabinet government. Has MMP decreased government effectiveness?
3. What is 'ministerial responsibility'? Discuss the practice of ministerial responsibility in any two parliamentary systems, explaining the differences and similarities.
4. Is there any evidence that there has been a decline in ethical standards in systems of cabinet government? Illustrate your answer with examples. (You may choose to focus on one country or on several.)
5. Why do the proportions of women ministers vary so much across different political systems?

6. How has globalisation impacted on cabinet government? Illustrate your answer with examples.
7. “Ministerial portfolios ... have traditionally been organised on functional lines that tend to focus on the supply of specific services, whereas the modern focus has been in favour of a client focus and the bundle of services each particular client needs ... These developments have led to an increasing pressure for coordination across portfolios, and hence a growing role for the core executive to take account of the interrelatedness of issues. In particular, the core executive needs to develop a linking strategy, so that as far as possible there is consistency between government programs and overall policy coherence” (Keating and Weller, 2000: 50). In what ways, and with what degree of success, have the organisational arrangements and processes of Cabinet government in New Zealand responded to the challenge of strategic management by and from the ‘centre’?
8. What are the essential features of a Westminster system of government, and to what extent do we find these features in the New Zealand system of government, especially the relationship between the Cabinet, and the Parliament? In New Zealand are we seeing a shift from the Westminster model?
9. Discuss why and how cabinets and prime ministers have expanded their political resources in the past couple of decades. Illustrate your answer with examples.
10. How do cabinets (or a particular cabinet) make policy decisions, (or fail to make) policy decisions? Illustrate your answer by reference to at least one policy ‘case study’ in which you explain how key decisions were made (or not). You may not use the Falklands War as your case study.
11. “[I]t has long been contended that that whereas majoritarian electoral systems lead to strong stable government, countries that employ forms of proportional representation are governed by fractious and ineffective administrations”(Boston, Church, and Bale, 2002: 7). How has the change from a First Past the Post to a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system impacted on the institution of cabinet government in New Zealand, and with what consequences?
12. In what ways, and with what degree of effectiveness, do parliaments hold cabinets to account? Illustrate your answer with examples.

READING LIST

Note that there is a great deal of official information on the internet. The School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations website (accessed through the VUW website) contains links to research tools, including government information around the world and the New Zealand government online information.

See:

- <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.parliament.uk/>
- <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk>
- www.beehive.govt.nz
- <http://www.parliament.govt.nz/>
- <http://www.aph.gov.au/index.htm> (Australian Parliament)
- <http://www.gov.au/sites/fed.html> (Australian Government)
- <http://www.bundestag.de>
- <http://www.bundesregierung.de/en>

- For Germany, see *West European Politics. Governance* is generally useful. See also *Parliamentary Affairs, Public Administration and Government and Opposition*, especially for material on Britain. New Zealand’s *Public Sector and Political Science* are essential sources. See also the VUW Institute of Policy Studies publication at: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/ips/publications/policy%20quarterly%20issue%201%202005.pdf>

- There is a range of textbooks on the political systems of the UK and Germany in the library, many on Level 3. The texts entitled *Developments in British Politics* and *Developments in German Politics* are useful.
- Biographies and autobiographies provide rich sources of information, especially on political leaders.

COMPARATIVE WORKS: General

- Blondel, J., 'Cabinets and Ministers: A Comparative Perspective', in I. Marsh, ed., *Governing in the 1990's. An Agenda for the Decade* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1993).
- Blondel, J. and F. Muller-Rommel, (eds.) *Cabinets in Western Europe* (Houndmills, Macmillan, 1988).
- Davis, R. H., *Women and Power in Parliamentary Democracies: Cabinet Appointments in Western Europe, 1968-1992*, (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
- Helms, L., *Presidents, Prime Ministers and Chancellors: Executive Leadership in Western Democracies* (Houndmills, Palgrave/Macmillan, 2005).
- Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, et al., *Parties, Policies, and Democracy* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1994).
- Laver, M. and K. A. Shepsle, *Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Government* (Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press, 1994).
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- Mackie, T. T. and B. W. Hogwood (eds.), *Unlocking the Cabinet: Cabinet Structures in Comparative Perspective*, (Sage, London, 1985).
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- Peters, B. G., R. A. W. Rhodes and V. Wright, *Administering the Summit: Administration of the Core Executive in Developed Countries* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 2000).
- Peters, B. G. and A. Barker (eds.), *Advising West European Governments: Inquiries, Expertise and Public Policy* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993).
- Strom, K., *Minority Government and Majority Rule* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Weller, P., 'Prime Ministers, Political Leadership and Cabinet Government', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 50 (1991), 131-44.
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- Weller, P., H. Bakvis and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The Hollow Crown: Countervailing Trends in Core Executives* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997).

COMPARATIVE WORKS: Accountability

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- LeDuc, L., 'Elections and Democratic Governance', in L. LeDuc, R. G. Niemi and P. Norris, eds.) *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective* (London, Sage, 1996), 342-363.
- McDonald, A. and G. Terrill (eds.), *Open Government: Freedom of Information and Privacy*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 1998).
- Mulgan, R., 'Accountability: An Expanding Concept?' *Public Administration*, 78 (2000), pp. 555-75.
- Peters, B. G. and D. J. Savoie (eds.), *Governance in a Changing Environment* (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1993).
- Reid, W., 'Changing Notions of Accountability', *Public Administration*, Vol. 70 (1992).
- Stone, B., 'Administrative Accountability in the "Westminster" Democracies: Towards a New Conceptual Framework', *Governance*, Vol. 8 (1995), pp. 505-26.
- R. K. Weaver and B. A. Rockman, (eds.), *Do Institutions Matter? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad* (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1993).

COMPARATIVE WORKS: Legislatures and the Executive

- Baldwin, N. D. J. (ed.), *Executive Leadership and Legislative Assemblies* (London and New York, Routledge, 2006).
- Copeland, G. and S. Patterson (eds.), *Parliaments in the Modern World: Changing Institutions* (Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press, 1994).
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- Norton, P. (ed.), *Parliaments and Governments in Western Europe* (Frank Cass, London, 1998).
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- Burch, M. and I. Holliday, 'The Prime Minister's and Cabinet Offices: An Executive Office in all but Name', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 52:1 (1999), 32-45.
- Denham, A. and M. Garnett, 'Influence Without Responsibility? Think Tanks in Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 52:1 (1999), 46-57.
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GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

Student Conduct and Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct.

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct.

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean of your faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances.

Academic integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the Course Co-ordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

Telephone: 463-6070

Email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, the following staff members will either help you directly or quickly put you in contact with someone who can.

	Staff member	Location
FHSS	Dr Allison Kirkman	Murphy Building, room 407
Law	Kirstin Harvey	Old Govt Building, room 103
Science, and Architecture and Design	Liz Richardson	Cotton Building, room 150
Commerce and Administration	Colin Jeffcoat	Railway West Wing, room 119
Kaiwawao Maori	Liz Rawhiti	Old Kirk, room 007
Manaaki Pihipihinga	Melissa Dunlop	14 Kelburn Pde, room 109D
Victoria International	Matthias Nebel	Rutherford House, room 206

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

Email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz.

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building:

Telephone 463 6983 or 463 6984

Email: education@vuwsa.org.nz.