**Instructor’s Manual**

to accompany

***Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics*, Sixth Edition**

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**Chapter 1: Governing Ideas**

**Chapter Outline**

**Learning Objectives**

**Lecture Outline**

* 1. **Introduction**
* Politics as an inescapable force in everyone’s lives
* We view ourselves, our world and politics through the lens of concepts
  + Takes us beyond the singular to the general
* Conceptualization: how we name, group and understand things
* Most of the concepts in political science are contested
  1. **Governance, Politics, and Power**
* Political science primarily focuses on questions related to politics, governance, and political power
* **Politics**: things concerning the polis (ancient Greeks)
  + Politics as both the master science and the master’s science
* **Governance**: who decides and for whom?
  + How political life is organized across time and space
  + Political organization: from empires and city states to nation-states
    - Types of states: authoritarian, totalitarian, liberal democracy
* **Power**: exercise of influence.
  + To get someone to do something they would not otherwise do.
* Power framed as power to; power over; power/knowledge
  + **Power To**
* The capacity to achieve political ends through individual and collective action
* pluralist theory: mobilization of groups to advance interests
  + **Power Over**
* Political power possessed by some and wielded over others
* Power unequally distributed; disparities embedded in structures and institutions
* Elite theory: two groups in society: haves and have nots
* Class analysis: power distributed between unequal classes
* Conflict goes beyond class to include sexism, racism, colonialism
  + **Power/Knowledge**
* Foucault: how power operations through truth claims and expert discourses
* How we know what is “true,” “proper,” and “good”
* Disciplinary power: exercise of power through enforcement of appropriate behaviors and norms of conduct in order to fit into society
* Biopower: regulation and management of populations by the state
  1. **Conclusion: Looking Forward**
* The COVID-19 pandemic framed as a crisis
* Crisis: inability or unwillingness to return to previous path but uncertainty or division over path moving forward
* Crisis as a critical concept in political science

**Suggested Lecture Topics and Class Activities/Assignments**

1. Ask the students how they define such concepts as democracy, justice, equality, power and truth. How are these definitions similar? How are they different?
2. Divide students into groups and ask them to provide examples of power to, power over and power/knowledge in their everyday lives.
3. Have students go online to find examples of a social movement, protest, or individual that is an example of “power to.” How was this group or individual successful in achieving their goals?
4. Discuss how social media and the rise of Donald Trump has influenced our understandings of power/knowledge, in terms of what we identify as truth and expert opinion in contemporary society.
5. Divide students into groups, and ask them to provide examples of how the government engages in biopower. How did we see this playing out during the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. Ask students to provide examples of disciplinary power throughout society, in terms of the norms and expectations of different community, sport, educational, and religious groups.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Canada was created as a White settler society of the British Empire. How has colonialism shaped not only our past but also our present in terms of politics, power and governance?
2. Describe some of the main differences between authoritarian, totalitarian, and liberal democratic states. What are some real-world examples of each type?
3. Do you think most conflict in society is the result of different classes, or the impact of racism, colonialism, and sexism?
4. In what ways has Canada and the world changed as a result of the pandemic? Do you think these changes are permanent?
5. Canada likes to portray itself as a country based on equality and equal opportunity. Does every citizen have an equal opportunity to influence the political process, and is everyone treated the same way before the law?
6. What does the author mean by describing politics as the “master’s science”? How does this relate to our understandings of power?
7. Is elite rule inevitable in society? Why or why not?

**Further Readings**

Parsons, Craig. 2017. Introduction to Political Science: How to think for yourself about politics. New York: Pearson.

Polanyi, Karl. 2001. The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Organization of Our Times. Revised edition. Boston: Beacon Press.

Simons, Jon. 1995. Foucault and the Political. New York: Routledge.

**Recommended Websites**

**Newspapers from around the world**

[www.onlinenewsspapers.com](http://www.onlinenewsspapers.com)

[www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com)

[www.politicsresources.net](http://www.politicsresources.net)

**Global Risks Report 2021**

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2021>

**Make the World Greta Again**

environmentaljusticetv.worldpress.com

Global Satisfaction with Democracy 2020

<https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/research/centre-future-democracy/>

**Key Terms**

**biopolitical power**: a term used to describe power that is exercised on populations rather than individuals, often to secure better health, education, or productivity of population as a whole

bourgeoisie: a term most often used in Marxist analysis to refer to the social class that owns the means of production; often also referred to as the capitalist class

crisis: a term derived from the Greek kreinen, which means decision, and typically refers to a moment of uncertainty and a tipping point after which things will be different

**concept**:an idea or abstraction which subsumes the singular and unique into a broader class of things

**conceptualization**:an exercise in imagination through which we name and understand a thing as being part of, or representative of, a broader class of things or practices

direct democracy: a system of government in which political decisions are made directly by citizens

disciplinary power: a practice through which appropriate behaviours are produced through social definitions of what is normal and expected. A Foucauldian concept, it conveys the idea of self-policing and the realization of social interests and goals without resort to force

**governance:** the way we organize our common affairs; the organized exercise of power

**Machiavellian**: a negative term used to describe devious and unethical behaviour driven by a lust to gain and hold political power

**national state:** political unit that claims supreme authority (sovereignty) and the legitimate use of force over a defined territory and population

oligarchy: a form of rule by the few, usually a rich political elite

**pluralism:** a theory of democratic politics that asserts that political outcomes are the result of the organization of and competition among competing group interests

**populism**:a style or way of doing politics that asserts a fundamental social conflict between elites and “the people”

power over: the idea that individuals, groups, or states are unable to realize their interests and goals due to external influences, constraints, and inequalities in resources

power to: the idea that individuals, groups, or states can realize their goals

proletariat: a term used by Marx for the social class that does not own the means of production but is, instead, forced to sell its labour-power in exchange for wages

**sovereign**: an individual or entity holding supreme power

**sovereignty**: a legal (*de jure*) and actual (*de facto*) condition whereby states recognize no higher authority either domestically or externally and are thus free to act as they wish. A state’s right to manage its affairs internally, without external interference, based on the legal concept of the equality of states.