

# Reviving and Rebuilding in Politics: A Multi-level View from the Inside

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9:00am-4:30pm

## Module I: Paul Martin's Remoulding of Canada's Liberal Coalition

The Martin government sought to extend indefinitely the fourth era of Liberal dominance. An ambitious plan was developed in the first years of the new century to ease the Liberal Party's reliance upon Ontario and upon the temporary weaknesses of the Conservatives and NDP. Buoyed by a wave of popularity, Martin and his advisors aimed to secure the future of the Liberal Party of Canada by placing it squarely on the sturdy pillars of the great national coalitions: Western Canada and in Quebec. This workshop module explores the origins of the plan, the constraints on its development and the policy choices that brought it to life in 2004-2004. As well, the module will discuss the events that frustrated the plan, its ultimate defeat in 2006, and the reduction of the federal Liberals to a new and narrow core.

## Module II: Kathleen Wynne's post-Austerity Ontario Liberal Offering

The unplanned exit of hitherto successful Premier Dalton McGuinty left the Ontario Liberal Party facing long odds. Shopworn and scandal-plagued, the party was also tied to a program of austerity that was deeply unpopular with key components of the Liberal stakeholder ecosystem and the party's already-shrinking electoral coalition. Enter Kathleen Wynne, with an alternative program of urban-focused public investment that secured triumphant re-election in 2014. Since the election, two new elements have emerged – asset recycling and tackling climate change. The resulting policy mix is a new Liberal offering of the radical centre, with far-reaching implications. This workshop module will chart the origins of the plan, its success in the hotly-contested 2014 campaign, and the risks and rewards of this attempt to construct a new liberalism in Canada's biggest province.

### Module III: John Tory's Construction of a Political Centre in Toronto

Toronto is one of the world's most unusually-governed urban polities. With no political parties, a sprawling City Council, a "weak-Mayor system" of government, and an independent civil service, post-amalgamation Toronto has a weak institutional and political centre. The city's politics have, accordingly, frequently deviated from the kind of easy centrism one would expect of "Toronto the Good" into raw ideological warfare. Dysfunction descended into farce with the Ford administration, creating a political opening for a candidate of the centre to emerge. In February, 2014, Progressive Conservative John Tory stepped into this opening, starting in third place but marching steadily into a strong lead well before the campaign's anticipated autumn sprint. He did so in part by systematically expanding the opening in the centre with his popular SmartTrack transit proposal. Receiving less attention were a host of targeted policy offerings aimed at knitting together a coalition of suburban conservative homeowners, upper-income liberal midtowners and even downtown urbanists to prevail on election night. The workshop module will uncover the politics of a sprawling metropolis as it seeks to overcome its divisions and step forward into the ranks of the world's global cities.