

# WSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

## How Parliament Works and Are Reforms Necessary?

**Honourable Don Boudria**

Former Government House Leader

February 16th, 2018

9:00am – 4:30pm

### Summary

This workshop will provide you with many inside details on parliamentary process and procedures. It will cover the structure of Parliament, how laws are made, and what potential reform could bring.

Television might show you fiery exchanges from the most recent Question Period. But what really goes on in Parliament? And how might our legislatures work better?

The Honourable Don Boudria comes as a seasoned politician with over 20 years of experience, ready to take you on an insightful journey that explains the workings of Canada's federal legislature and the ways in which proposed reforms might help or hinder parliament as we know it today.

### Outline

**Purpose:** The purpose of this workshop is to introduce students to parliamentary processes and procedures and familiarize them with Parliament's roles and responsibilities. With this information, participants will be better prepared to evaluate some of the recommendations for reform put forth in recent years.

#### **1. The Westminster Parliamentary System in Canada**

- a. The House of Commons: "Rep by Pop"
- b. Functions of Parliament
- c. The Chamber
- d. Parliamentarians on the Hill and their districts
- e. The Cabinet and the decision-making process
- f. The financial cycle of the Government
- g. The legislative process and legislative development
- h. The Prime Minister's Office: first amongst equals?
- i. The role of the Public Service
- j. Policy development
- k. Decision-making
- l. The Senate
- m. Political overview

#### **2. Parliamentary Committees: their role and function**

#### **3. Party discipline**

- a. Do MPs need more freedom from their Party Whips?

#### **4. Parliamentary Reforms**

- a. Is Parliament broken?
- b. What is its future?



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## **Required Readings**

Rathgeber, Brent (2017) "When it comes to parliamentary reform, everyone's a hypocrite". *iPolitics*.

<https://ipolitics.ca/2017/04/12/when-it-comes-to-parliamentary-reform-everyones-a-hypocrite/>

Wherry, Aaron (2017) "Regardless of electoral reform, it might be time to change Parliament". *CBC News*.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/wherry-parliament-reform-1.3955247>

And review the following:

Forsey, Senator Eugene A. *How Canadians Govern Themselves*. © The Majesty her Queen in Right of Canada, 1980. <https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/senatoreugeneforsey/book/chapters-e.html>

## **Recommended Readings\***

Aucoin, Peter and Lori Turnbull (2003) "The democratic deficit: Paul Martin and parliamentary reform" *Canadian Public Administration*, 46: 427-449.

Thomas, Paul G. (2010) "Parliament and Legislatures: Central to Canadian Democracy?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, John C. Courtney and David E. Smith (eds.). New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 153-171.

\*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at [wssr@concordia.ca](mailto:wssr@concordia.ca)

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