

# VSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

### What is the Role of Government? Rationales, Instruments and Issues

**Mel Cappe** 

Former Clerk of the Privy Council May 22, 2018 9:00am – 4:30pm

### **Summary**

A well-functioning democracy must be led by an effective and efficient government. A healthy yet delicate balance must also be struck between the public, private, and not-for profit sectors in terms of the delivery of goods and services to citizens. Some governments take on more than they can accomplish while others fail to attempt to address fundamental issues of public good. When is it the government's responsibility to intervene? How should they proceed?

Mel Cappe, in his workshop, will explore the rationales for government interventions, the criteria for instrument choice, as well as the limits of government intervention and issues best left to the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Mr. Cappe, with years of experience at the head of the public service, is uniquely positioned to provide this inside view on the role of government. He will explore the lessons learned as well as current issues of public policy such as Climate Change, Security, Fiscal Policy, Immigration, Death and Dying, and the Legalization of Marijuana.

### **Outline**

- I. Rationales for Government Intervention.
- 2. Instrument Choice
- 3. Problem Definition
- 4. Current Issues: The afternoon will focus on public policy issues in the media the week of the workshop. Students are required to review news websites, watch the news, read newspapers and/or keep up with current events in the fashion of their choice that week. Students will be expected to discuss these issues in light of the role of government in the year of Canada's sesquicentennial





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### **Required Readings\***

Thaler, Richard, and Cass Sunstein. 2009. "Part 1: Humans and Econs." In Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness, New York: Penguin, pp. 18-100.

Available at Webster Course Reserve Room (3 hour loan)

Friedman, Thomas L. 2016. "What the hell happened in 2007?" In *Thank you for Being Late*, New York: Farar, Strauss and Giroux, pp. 15-35. <a href="http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll?Action=10&Type=14&Value=14EF21F9">http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll?Action=10&Type=14&Value=14EF21F9</a>

Stokey, Edith and Richard Zeckhauser. 1978. "Part III – Ends and Means." In A Primer for Policy Analysis, New York: Norton, pp. 257-320. <a href="http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF21CA">http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF21CA</a>

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

