**Learn by doing:  POL 491 (Y) – Democracy in Decline? – Renewing Civic Engagement**

*POL 491 is the Department’s unique hands-on, policy skills course, learned in a community setting.  It is aimed at developing, upon graduation, marketable policy analysis and advice skills. Community service pays huge dividends in networking and skill-building. This course is aimed at job-readiness.*

This course is about *doing democracy* as much as studying it. For those of you interested in a working application of your political science, this innovative course comes with a **service-learning** component comprising 25 volunteer hours with an organization or public sector agency engaged in building visions and agreement on a common issue among contending stakeholder. For example, you might be involved in the politics of public housing, the complaints process for the Toronto Police, a new electoral system for the City, forms of community-based youth engagement, facilitating municipal-public consultations, advocacy for immigrant taxi drivers, the effectiveness of women’s drop-in centres, comparing ratepayer councils around the world or… renewing a priority neighbourhood. Maybe you have a favourite topic? We aim to provide a placement that fits your sumer activities..

In this Course you will acquire skills such as issue profiling, stakeholder mapping, citizen consultations, and policy briefings that are marketable and will be immensely valuable in the workplace. POL491Y brings you into contact with a community that values your insights on politics and may even ask you to stay on after the Course is over, in a volunteer or work capacity. The workplace skills are complemented in the classroom by the learning of diagnostic approaches, by coaching from real community actors, and via the development of a rich self-awareness based on your experiential service-learning [see [www.ccp.utoronto.ca](http://www.ccp.utoronto.ca/)].

No other Political Science course currently offers Service-Learning … so come and join this unparalleled opportunity. This is a unique course in another respect: Along with a normal “Y” academic load [48 hours of classroom lectures, two essays] it adds:25 additional June-Aug service-learning hours [weekday or weekend] with a community partner, and classroom job-coaching sessions from real-world community practitioners. You will also learn how to write government-style Briefing Notes. Policy analysis and advice will be your take-away skills.

This year’s work includes

 a) a first Briefing Note that surveys the democratic deficit literature

 b) periodic written reflections on your Service-Learning Placement and Class discussions

 c) a second Briefing Note that explores Course remedies for the low civic engagement seen

 in your Placement

 d) your Service-Learning Partner’s professionalism assessment of you

 e) bonus marks for participating in optional coaching sessions

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*This Course assesses the vitality of Canada’s citizenship in the context of its overall democratic health. Citizenship is both a right and a* ***responsibility****. “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your county” [JF Kennedy]. “It’s about we, not me” [B. Obama].*

*“It was the most unique experience during my time at University of Toronto, and that is quite the statement, seeing as I had many interesting courses during my time here!!”*

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**If you would like to enroll in POL 491Y, please register directly on ACORN.  The deadline to add courses is Sunday, May 15, 2016.**

**For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor, Professor Anthony Careless (****a.careless@utoronto.ca****). The Course Syllabus is posted on the Political Science website.**