

LAW AND DEMOCRACY WEEK

Course n°2: Elections: Becoming a Parliamentarian (Stéphane Perreault)

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The logical point of entry into the architecture of a democratic state is through the gateway of elections that lead to some citizens becoming parliamentary representatives of the people. Under this rubric, there is an opportunity to examine the mechanics and the meaning of the electoral process. Emphasis will also be placed on the doctrine underlying the Canadian electoral system: the level playing field. In this session, the objective is to begin from the broadest possible view, to then consider both the technicalities and the current issues of controversy, and finally to instill among the audience the methodology of the *Democracy Week* program, namely the interdisciplinary and comparative nature of the subject-matter.

This subject-matter is particularly rich in themes of interest:

- Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system and the possible alternatives of proportional representation;
- the diversion of fixed-date elections;
- the independence of the Chief Electoral Officer from the government;
- being a candidate and being elected;
- what renders an election free and fair;
- the constitutional and legal status of an MP;
- the interaction of elections and legitimacy.