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**GEOGRAPHY OF CANADA**

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING THE GEOGRAPHIES OF CANADA

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**Lecture: Monday & Thursday 11:30am – 12:50pm**  
**Clearihue Building Room: C112**

**Office Hours: Monday 1:00-2:30pm**  
**Office Location: DTB B208**  
**Contact: [jmateer@uvic.ca](mailto:jmateer@uvic.ca)**

**We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples on whose territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose relationships with the land has existed for millennia.**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we will examine the ‘Geography of Canada’ using critical theoretical perspectives. Rather than learning about different ‘parts’ of Canada in a regionalist approach, we will explore Canada’s historical, economic, cultural, and political geographies. Some themes that will be covered include place, space, colonialism, neoliberalism, and decolonization. We will also discuss how these topics intersect with power, inequality, belonging, and exclusions. By understanding Canada through geographic themes, rather than regionalism, our class will have the opportunity to examine the social construction of ‘Canada’ through the politics and production of space. We will explore how landscape, borders, regions, territory, land, and environment are imagined, organized, contested, and fought for by different people.

“Nation,” “nationality,” and “nationalism” are necessary topics for this course and are likely to bring out all kinds of feelings and responses. We will deal with these topics, as well as various historical and contemporary social issues that will no doubt also elicit challenging and uncomfortable discussions. Regardless, we will not shy away from these topics. Instead, we will examine our beliefs about what Canada “is” and what it “ought to be.” We will do this with an open mind and respect for one another. For this to happen effectively, it is crucial that we make our classroom a safe space by respecting each other despite our differences.

**Guiding Quote:**

“The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent, to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence that has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them.” -Michel Foucault (Chomsky and Foucault 1974: 171)

**KEY THEMES:** Place, Space, Scale, Neoliberalism, Dispossession, Colonialism, Decolonization

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## REQUIRED TEXT AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available digitally through UVic libraries or will be uploaded on Brightspace.

Optional readings and recommended readings will also be available on BrightSpace. For those students who have a limited background in geography, recommended texts may provide a bit of essential background for the theme of the week. Optional readings are for those students wishing to explore the theme further, perhaps for their final essay.

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## LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course has four primary learning objectives:

- 1) To develop a more sophisticated understanding and critical appreciation for Canada's economic, political, historical, social, and cultural geographies.
- 2) To enhance the understanding of crucial geographic concepts such as place and space, drawing on the Canadian experience.
- 3) To develop critical thinking skills which recognize the multiplicity of values, assumptions, and perspectives that underline opinions and "facts."
- 4) To develop a better appreciation of the importance of a critical education for Canada, for one's own well-being, and for future endeavors – be they academic or otherwise.

You can expect to acquire the following skills:

Critical Thinking: by applying seminar discussions and readings to discussions and assignments, students will develop an ability to think critically about the geopolitical and geographic ideas and theories that have historically shaped and continue to inform political events.

Communication: to develop written communication skills through course assignments and to develop verbal communication skills and self-confidence through seminar discussions.

Time Management and Personal Responsibility: attending online seminars and by handing in assignments on time.

Working in a Team: You have the option to work in a team for a project on decolonization and invasive species pulls. By working with a group on your assignment, you will develop skills for working with a diverse group of people in order to accomplish a common goal.

## EVALUATION

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Participation  | 10% |
| Midterm #1   | 15% |
| Midterm #2   | 15% |
| Invasive Species Pull<br>and Decolonization assignment | 15% |
| Term Paper Proposal (optional)                         | 5%  |
| Term Paper   | 20% |
| Final Exam   | 20% |

## GRADING SYSTEM

As per the Academic Calendar:

| Grade                              | Grade point value | Grade scale                 | Description  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>A+</b><br><b>A</b><br><b>A-</b> | 9<br>8<br>7       | 90-100%<br>85-89%<br>80-84% | <b>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent</b> performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.         |
| <b>B+</b><br><b>B</b><br><b>B-</b> | 6<br>5<br>4       | 77-79%<br>73-76%<br>70-72%  | <b>Very good, good and solid</b> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area. |
| <b>C+</b><br><b>C</b>              | 3<br>2            | 65-69%<br>60-64%            | <b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.  |
| <b>D</b>                           | 1                 | 50-59%                      | <b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.  |
| <b>F</b>                           | 0                 | 0-49%                       | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.   |
| <b>N</b>                           | 0                 | 0-49%                       | Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.  |

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## ASSESSMENT & ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

### PARTICIPATION - (10%) – ONGOING THROUGHOUT TERM

- This includes engaging in class by asking questions and offering answers and interpretations. This is not an attendance grade, however, if you don't attend classes, it will be impossible to participate fully.

### MIDTERM EXAM – (15% x 2)

- There will be two midterms throughout the term. These will be in-class and include multiple choice, definitions and discussion questions.

### INVASIVE SPECIES PULL AND ASSIGNMENT – (15%)

- This term, you will need to attend a minimum of one invasive species pull, either with The Greater Victoria Green Team, PEPAKEN HÁUTW, or the WŚÍ, KEM Ivy Project. You will submit a reflection on the activity and its connection with course concepts. If you attend the pull with peers in your class, you are welcome to submit a group assignment (maximum of 4 people) or work individually on your reflection. This can take the form of a formal reflection (a template is available on BrightSpace), or a more creative approach.

### TERM PAPER – (25%)

We will be covering a series of topics relating to various geographic concepts and how these are exemplified through Canadian places, spaces, and landscapes. For your research paper, I would like you to select a topic or theory of interest to you that relates to Canadian geography (i.e., neoliberalism, environmental dispossession, environmental repossession, decolonization, etc.). Once you select the

topic you are interested in writing about, consider the ways in which this topic or theory may be exemplified in a Canadian example or situation. Consider how this theory becomes material through a real-life example in Canada.

- You have the option to submit a proposal worth 5% of your final grade. If you choose not to submit a proposal, your term paper will be worth the full 25%.
- The paper should be a total of 10-15 pages double-spaced, 12 pt. font Times New Roman, 2.54 cm margins with proper in-text citations. Your reference list will not count toward your page length and should be in APA style (a guide is posted on BrightSpace).
- The first portion of the paper should be a review of the relevant academic literature on your chosen topic. You will need to demonstrate that you have gone beyond assigned class readings by doing additional outside reading and thinking on the topics you choose to tackle here.
- The second portion of your paper should look at how the theory is “lived out” or exemplified in Canada. This will be your “case study” for your theory.
- Your example should be novel and not based on lecture materials or readings previously discussed unless discussed with me first. (i.e., if an author assigned in class discusses how Air BnBs are part of a neoliberal move in housing, you should likely choose a different topic so you’re not reproducing the same arguments and case study.)

#### **FINAL EXAM – (20%)**

- This will be an in-person exam held during the exam period
- I will discuss the final exam format with you in our last few weeks of class.
- Date TBD – this will be announced by the University during the term
- Travel is not a reason to miss the exam, so please wait until after a date has been selected to make any travel arrangements for April.

#### **IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT NOTES:**

Assignment: For all assignments use 12 pt. Font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, number pages, and a list of references. You do not need to include a title page, but DO include your name, my name, the course number, and the date at the top of the first page.

Referencing: Students are required to follow the APA style guide posted on Brightspace.

#### **GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT INFO**

- Geography Department website: [uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/](http://uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/)
- Geography Department Chair: [geogchair@uvic.ca](mailto:geogchair@uvic.ca)
- Geography Undergraduate Advising: [geogadvising@uvic.ca](mailto:geogadvising@uvic.ca)

#### **BRIGHTSPACE**

I will post the course syllabus, link to any online lectures, and any additional relevant materials on the course’s Brightspace website.

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#### **POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

- Assignments submitted ON TIME will receive my full attention & useful feedback.
- Please speak with me well in advance if you anticipate a delay in submitting your work, particularly when dealing with illness or family conflicts.
- 10% per day penalty for late assignments, including weekend days.

\*\* All assignments must be done exclusively for this course.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is every student's responsibility to be aware of the university's policies on academic integrity, including policies on **cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor or AI, multiple submissions, and aiding others to cheat.**

**Policy on Academic Integrity:** [web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)

**Policy of A.I. tools:** <https://www.uvic.ca/humanities/atwp/current-students/ai-guidelines/index.php>

If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me, your course instructor. For more information, see [uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/index.php](http://uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/index.php).

Students are reminded that submitting for credit any academic work which has been submitted (or where credit has already been obtained) in another course is listed among academic offenses as academic dishonesty.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a documented disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible ([uvic.ca/services/cal/](http://uvic.ca/services/cal/)). The CAL staff is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## POSITIVITY AND SAFETY

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

## SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT UVIC

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. We encourage students to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp). If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out:

Where: Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR; Sedgewick C119  
Phone: 250.721.8021  
Email: [svpcoordinator@uvic.ca](mailto:svpcoordinator@uvic.ca)  
Web: [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp)

## RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The University of Victoria offers a number of resources to support international students as they pursue their studies. UVic's [International Centre for Students](#) is the primary office supporting international students on campus at the university-wide level and provides various supportive program through the [UVic Global Community Initiative](#), including a Mentorship Program and Conversation Partner Program. For academic advising-related questions, students in the Geography Department are also encouraged to meet with the Geography Undergraduate Advisor ([geogadvising@uvic.ca](mailto:geogadvising@uvic.ca)) as well as an academic advisor in the [Academic Advising Centre](#) early in their studies to help map out a plan to declare a major and

complete university program requirements. Other resources include the [Centre for Academic Communication](#) and the [Math and Stats Assistance Centre](#). International students are also encouraged to contact the International Student Liaison in Geography (Prof. CindyAnn Rose-Redwood, [cindyann@uvic.ca](mailto:cindyann@uvic.ca)), who can assist in making connections with other international and domestic students in the Geography Department and share opportunities for getting involved in departmental activities more broadly.

### **POLICY ON CHILDREN IN CLASS**

It is my belief that if we want women and parents in academia, we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university has no formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is, thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to students, staff, and faculty parents.

1) All exclusively breastfeeding and chestfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women or people can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they must choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in my class anytime.

2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of choosing between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that respects all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

### **POLICY ON RECORDING LECTURES**

According to the university's Intellectual Property Policy (GV0215), professors and instructors are the authors of their original course materials, lecture notes, and lecture presentations. Accordingly, they own the copyright in these materials. A lecture constitutes an instructor's intellectual property. A student must get permission to record the lecture from their instructor. Any material for the course (e.g., lecture notes, PowerPoints, syllabus, including a recording of a lecture) is made solely for the use of the student registered in the course for research and private study only. These materials must not be posted online or shared with other students without the instructor's permission. In some cases, a student with a perceptual disability will be eligible for an academic accommodation to record a lecture. Please visit the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) website for more information. You should be aware that there are policies and legislation regarding academic accommodation. Should you have any questions, please contact the Copyright Office.

### **COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed online and

can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

| WEEK | DATE                    |  |
|------|-------------------------|--|
| 1    | January 8 & 10          | Introduction to the course<br>Geomorphology  |
| 2    | January 15 & 18         | Climate Change   |
| 3    | January 22 & 25         | TEK and Indigenous Conservation and Environmental Stewardship                        |
| 4    | January 29 & February 1 | Place and Placemaking  |
| 5    | February 5 & 8          | <b>** February 8: Midterm #1</b>   |
| 6    | February 12 & 15        | Space  |
| 7    | February 19 & 22        | Reading Break  |
| 8    | February 26 & 29        | Neoliberalism, Nature & Food   |
| 9    | March 4 & 7             | Neoliberalism, Nature & Food Continued<br>Environmental Dispossession & Repossession |
| 10   | March 11 & 14           | Environmental Dispossession & Repossession   |
| 11   | March 18 & 21           | <b>** March 18: Midterm #2</b><br>Biopower and Colonialism                           |
| 12   | March 25 & 28           | Biopower and Colonialism continued<br>Decolonization                                 |
| 13   | April 1 & 4             | <b>** April 1: University is closed</b><br>Decolonization continued                  |
| 14   | April 8                 | Decolonization continued   |

## DISCLAIMER

The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

## NOTE:

A note to remind you to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone.

Counselling Services - *Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.* [uvic.ca/services/counselling/](http://uvic.ca/services/counselling/)

Health Services - *University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.* [uvic.ca/services/health/](http://uvic.ca/services/health/)

Centre for Accessible Learning - *The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [uvic.ca/services/cal/](http://uvic.ca/services/cal/). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.*

Elders' Voices - *The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.*

[uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php](http://uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php)