Course: ENGL 451: Contemporary Canadian Fiction (Spring 2022)
Instructor: Lisa Chalykoff (chaly@uvic.ca; 250-721-7262)

Course Description:
Some people think Canadian Literature ("CanLit") is boring: this course will prove otherwise. It offers a wide-ranging introduction to some of the most compelling and inventive contemporary fiction being written in our own time. The emphasis is on diversity: you will encounter some of Canada’s most lauded literary voices as well as newcomers to the scene, you will encounter works of realism, historical romps, and speculative fiction; and I am always careful to include both authors writing from the dominant culture and BIPOC voices in order to give you as full a sense of this literature’s range as is possible in our time together.

Diversity also characterizes how we will approach these stories: we will examine how these works have been reviewed by “experts” and non-experts alike to gain an understanding of what is valued in writing today; we will think about the formal qualities of these works, and about their use and abuse of genre conventions; and we will, of course, consider how these authors are using their literary imaginations to intervene in the political debates that mark this profoundly multicultural settler colony called Canada. All are welcome!

Proposed Assignments:
- Short essay (~ 1000 wds): 20
- Reception Study (examining critics’ reviews of one of our texts): 20
- Final exam: 30

Proposed Readings:
- Alice Munro’s Runaway (2004). (4 stories)
- Esi Edugyan’s Washington Black (2018)
- Michael Christie’s Greenwood (2020)
- Eden Robinson’s Son of a Trickster (2017)
- Andre Alexis’s Fifteen Dogs (2015)