



Course Outline

GEOGRAPHY OF CANADA

In grateful acknowledgement of the L'kwungen & WSÁNEĆ peoples upon whose territories we are able to live and learn.

Note: The most up to date version of this outline can be found on Brightspace.

Contact

Instructor	Cam Owens camo@uvic.ca
Office hours	Mondays 13:00-15:00 in DTB B210
<i>Note: I may also be available at other times to meet through Zoom or in person. Email to set up an appointment. I receive a high volume of messages and am often not able to respond immediately. I will aim to reply within 24 hours (not including weekends). So do not leave important matters to the last minute.</i>	
Marking TA	Emma Bowick emmabowick@uvic.ca
Office hours	TBD

Format

This course is delivered **online and asynchronously** through **Brightspace**, meaning there are **no scheduled class meetings or live lectures**. Instead, you will work through pre-recorded lectures, readings, and other course materials at your own pace within the **deadlines** for each unit. Although the course is asynchronous, there are **opportunities to engage** with the instructor and your classmates through discussion forums.

The course is organized into **seven units**, each spanning 1–2 weeks. Each unit includes assigned work like discussion posts, and/or assignments that must be completed by the specified **due dates** (see the course schedule and late work policy). You will also complete two online exams in Brightspace: a **midterm on November 6** and a **final exam during the December exam period**, scheduled by the Registrar.

The unit structure and regular deadlines are designed to help you stay on track and make steady progress throughout the term.

You can find **useful information** about online learning at the [UVic Learn Anywhere](#) portal.

You will access the [Brightspace](#) site for important announcements, to submit assignments, and to access information handouts, instructor slides, readings, your grades, and other stuff. Guidance for navigating Brightspace is [available](#).

Geography Department Info

- Geography Department website: uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/
- Geography Department Chair: geogchair@uvic.ca
- Geography Undergraduate Advising: geogadvising@uvic.ca

Course Description

This course invites both geographers and non-geographers to explore **the value of geographic inquiry** with a focus on Canada. Using **diverse resources** - maps, readings, videos, podcasts, artwork, and music - we delve into the complexities of Canada's peoples and places, in the past and the turbulent present. The course is **organized into the following seven units** (based on broad questions).

Topic	Due date	Deliverables
Unit 1: What is geography and why does it matter?	Fri, Sept 18	Discussion #1
Unit 2: What kind of a place is Canada? What is Canada's place in the world?	Fri, Sept 25	Discussion #2
Unit 3: What explains Canada's population, settlement, and development patterns ?	Fri, Oct 9	Discussion #3
Unit 4: How did Canada's borders come to be and what do they mean today?	Fri, Oct 23	Discussion #4
Unit 5: How should we understand the relationship between Canadian and Indigenous territories ?	Fri, Nov 6	Unit 5 Quiz
Unit 6: How has Canada tried to build and sustain national unity and identity ?	Fri, Nov 20	Discussion #5
Unit 7: What forces of change are reshaping Canada and what it means to be Canadian?	Mon, Dec 7	Assignment

Geog 306 fosters a deeper understanding of Canada's geography, equipping students with critical tools to engage thoughtfully with its diverse landscapes, cultures, and challenges in this present time of turbulence.

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize the **value of geographic inquiry** by applying geographic concepts and approaches, both scientific and artistic, to understand **Canada's context** and its **connections** to broader global issues.
2. Develop a nuanced understanding of **human-environment relationships**.
3. Critically engage with **diverse materials**: maps, readings, videos, podcasts, music, and artwork to analyze and reflect on Canada's physical and cultural landscapes.
4. Analyze Canada's **identity** and **faultlines**, examining centrifugal and centripetal forces that work to unite and divide Canada's vast and diverse population
5. Develop a robust sense of **responsibility** and an informed understanding of what it means to be a **citizen** through critical engagement with the country's historic and contemporary social, environmental, and political issues
6. Cultivate **skills** in research, critical analysis, and communication about contemporary Canadian issues through the discussion posts and assignment.
7. Foster **habits** of discipline, focus, and intentionality, developing skills like organization, confidence, empathy, and discipline that support success in academics and beyond.

Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the following required elements all accessed through Brightspace.

Discussion Posts (5): Students will periodically conduct research projects of varying depth, and rather than submitting them only as assignments for the instructor, will post their work in the discussion forum. This allows the class to learn from one another's findings, engage in dialogue, and gain a broader understanding of the diverse themes and perspectives in the geography of Canada. Some discussion posts will involve short reflections, others more involved research and writing.

Assignment (1): You will create content for a future version of Geog 306. Full instructions and guidelines will be provided later in the term. (Unit 6-7)

Exams (2): Finally, you will be tested on your comprehension of materials in a Midterm (Units 1-5) and Final Exam (Units 6-7).

Due Date	Item	Weight
Sept 18	Discussion 1: Locating Ourselves	5%
Sept 25	Discussion 2: Canada's Place in the World	10%
Oct 9	Discussion 3: Development case study	10%
Oct 23	Discussion 4: Border Issue	15%
Nov 6	Unit 5 Quiz	10%
Nov 20	Discussion 5: Geography of Canada music playlist	5%
Dec 7	Assignment	20%
Exam Period	Final Exam	25%

Grading System *as per the Academic Calendar:*

Grade	GPA	Grade scale	Description
A+ A A-	9 8 7	90-100% 85-89% 80-84%	Exceptional, outstanding and excellent 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-	6 5 4	77-79% 73-76% 70-72%	Very good, good and solid 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.
C+ C	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	1	50-59%	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
F	0	0-49%	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
N	0	0-49%	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

Readings and other learning materials

This course does not rely on a singular textbook. Instead, Geog 306 draws on a diverse range of materials, including videos, podcasts, music, art, government documents and websites and scholarly and popular readings. All required materials will be accessible online, typically posted on Brightspace.

Pro Tip: Merely skimming or passively consuming the materials doesn't work. To move the content from short-term to long-term memory, it is critical to mark up, highlight, take notes, and reflect critically while reading, watching, or listening. Dedication time and effort to this process will significantly enhance your understanding and overall success in the course. Honestly!

Additional Course Information and Policies

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, multiple submission, and aiding others to cheat. If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me, your course instructor. For other resources on writing see the [Centre for Academic Communication](#).

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. The RCSD 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.

Artificial Intelligence Usage

Understanding AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to systems designed to mimic human intelligence, such as natural language processing or problem-solving. Tools like ChatGPT can generate human-like responses, assist with editing, or provide ideas and outlines based on prompts. While these tools are effective at synthesizing information and generating content quickly, they have significant limitations. AI can produce articulate but factually incorrect or misleading responses, lacks critical thinking and contextual understanding, and cannot replace rigorous research or original thought. Additionally, AI tools often rely on pre-existing data, which means they may fail to provide up-to-date, accurate, or nuanced insights, especially on complex topics.

Of course, AI capabilities are rapidly evolving as are concerns around its use.

Using AI Effectively and Ethically

In this course, you are allowed but not required to use AI (for example ChatGPT) as an assistant, but should do so effectively, responsibly and ethically.

- **Effective Uses:** Structuring outlines, brainstorming ideas, drafting initial thoughts, and receiving editing suggestions for clarity and grammar.
- **Ineffective Uses:** Solely relying on AI for research, using it to generate final submissions, or accepting its outputs without verification, as AI cannot replace academic rigor or provide the depth required for this course.

Guidelines for Using AI

1. **Academic Integrity:** All AI-assisted work must be your own. You must review, revise, and critically engage with any material AI helps you produce. Directly passing off AI-generated work as your own is a violation of academic integrity and will result in consequences as outlined by the university's policies.
2. **Critical Evaluation:** AI tools can produce convincing but incorrect or incomplete responses. You are encouraged to use them collaboratively—experimenting with prompts and refining your questions—but you must critically evaluate their output, verify all information against credible sources, and take full responsibility for the accuracy and reliability of your work.
3. **Citing AI Use:** If you use AI tools, you must clearly document their contributions. For example, if you used AI to draft an outline or edit a draft, include a brief note explaining how you used it. See this resource for citing ChatGPT:
<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Course Experience Survey

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 via MyPage 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.

Expectations of Behaviour

I will do everything I can to create an effective, engaging learning environment. I invite you to be part of something special. Please be punctual, respectful, compassionate, and attentive.

Intellectual Property

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.

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) 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), 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.

Late policy: Work will be accepted after the deadline with a 3% per day penalty applied. Penalties may be reconsidered in certain instances: e.g. documented illness, family emergency.

Positivity & Safety

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

Self-Care

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/

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/

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/. *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

Sexualized Violence Prevention & Response

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. 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 Web: uvic.ca/svp

Study / Learning Tips

1. **Leverage Self-Testing:** The latest research strongly indicates that *the most* effective way to comprehend and retain information is testing yourself soon after encountering new material. Immediate self-directed test-taking after learning can significantly enhance your ability to learn, apply, and retain new knowledge. Simply reviewing notes without self-testing is far less effective.
2. **Limit Distractions:** Create a study environment with minimal distractions. Turn off notifications, set a specific study time, and use tools like noise-canceling headphones to maintain focus.
3. **Use Active Learning Techniques:** Engage with the material actively by summarizing concepts in your own words, teaching them to someone else, or discussing them in study groups.
4. **Chunk Study Sessions:** Study in focused, manageable chunks of time (e.g., 25–30 minutes) followed by short breaks. This approach, often called the Pomodoro Technique, helps maintain concentration and prevents burnout.
5. **Set Clear Goals:** Break down your study sessions into specific, achievable goals. Knowing what you aim to accomplish helps keep you on track and provides a sense of progress.
6. **Use Multi-Sensory Learning:** Engage multiple senses while studying. For example, read aloud, create diagrams, or use flashcards. Combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic inputs can enhance memory retention.
7. **Apply the Material:** Find ways to apply what you're learning to real-life scenarios or problems. This contextualizes the information and makes it more memorable.
8. **Prioritize Sleep:** Ensure you get sufficient sleep (ideally 7-9 good quality hours), as it's vital for memory consolidation and cognitive function.
9. **Stay Hydrated:** Keep yourself hydrated throughout the day. Dehydration greatly impairs cognitive function, so make water your friend during study sessions.
10. **Practice Mindfulness Meditation:** Incorporating short mindfulness meditation sessions can help improve concentration, reduce stress, and enhance memory. Even just 5–10 minutes of focused breathing can be beneficial.

Reference: For more on these study strategies, see the Huberman Lab Podcast episode: [“Optimal Protocols for Studying & Learning”](#).