

Fall 2015
MR 10-1120
COR A129

Geog 306

Geography of Canada

Dr. Cam Owens
camo@uvic.ca

Office: DTB B210

Office hrs: M 3-5 pm

Policies:

1. Late policy – 10% penalty per day late for 3 days (for assignment). Contact instructor before Midterm if you must miss (for legitimate, documented reason). Zero tolerance for late final exams.
2. Plagiarism – zero tolerance (see UVic's [academic integrity policy](#))
3. Accessibility – please meet with instructor and the [Resource Centre for Students with a Disability](#) early if you may need accommodation
4. Do your part to ensure an engaging classroom. Be punctual, respectful, compassionate and attentive.

Course Overview

Beyond a mere description of the geography of this vast country, this course interrogates Canada both as an imagined (and contested) national space. We begin with an overview of the country's physical setting before exploring how Canadians have been shaped by and in turn have shaped the landscape they inhabit for better or worse. We consider different imaginaries, myths, and ideologies deployed in attempts to make sense of this place and define the country's national identity and direction. We then turn to explore some of the tensions or faultlines at the heart of the Canadian social experience. Along the way we grapple with some of the key issues facing Canadians today and in the past. Intending neither to be bombastically patriotic nor treasonously cynical this course is sure to inspire important new ways of seeing "Canada" and being "Canadian".

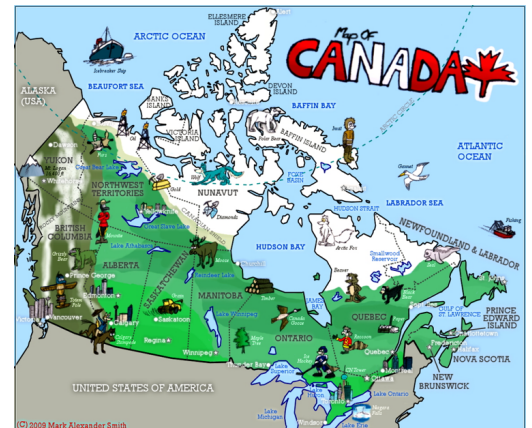
Assessment

1. **Midterm** (25%) Oct 8th
2. **Op/Ed Assignment** (30%) - Short, informed opinion piece on a Canadian issue (details will be provided in class). Due Dec 3. Note: you may submit your assignment on Nov 5th. It will be reviewed and returned to you with suggestions for improvement after which you can submit your final version on Dec 3.
3. **Final Exam** (30%) – Take home exam given on Dec 3 and due on Dec 10.
4. **Participation** (15%) – consists of quality of contribution to class room and / or online forum discussion AND attending 2 relevant events during the term, writing up and submitting a short well-written overview of the event, what you learned and how it related to class.

Note on marks: A-level marks (80%+) reflect exceptional (beyond expectations), outstanding, or at least highly competent efforts. B+/B level marks (73-79%) reflect good or at least acceptable efforts (usually above the class average). B-/C+ level marks (65-72%) represent average efforts, showing some understanding but deficient in some way. C/D level marks (50-64%) represent passable but largely insufficient efforts, while F marks (<50%) represent failing the course.

Course readings

There is no text book for this course. Instead readings will be posted on the Course Spaces site. Reading - and engaging with the readings (highlighting, underlining, taking good notes etc.) – is essential for your enjoyment of and success in this course.



If some countries have too much history, we have too much Geography.

- Mackenzie King,
Canada's
longest serving
Prime Minister

Until the Lion learns to speak, the tales of hunting will be weak.

- K'Naan – Somali-
Canadian Rapper

Notes on learning expectations

1. Think deeply about why you are here and what you want to get out of your experience at UVic in the short time you'll be here. Use this time wisely to develop marketable skills and good habits - e.g. effective written and oral communication, critical thinking*, problem solving, empathic listening, organization, perseverance, and initiative.
2. I consider such skill development and good habit formation as being at least as important as content mastery in this course. While I want you to learn important things about Canada's geography, I also want you to develop particular skills and habits. Keep in mind employers are much more concerned with your skills and habits than your marks.
3. Effective learning involves recognizing how the course material is directly relevant to your life – in this case how your own story is weaved into the story of Canada and Canadians.
4. *Note: critical thinking is often misrepresented as cynical, pessimistic, or “being against things”. In this class it should rather be understood in terms of healthy skepticism with received wisdom recognizing the world could / should be otherwise; ceaseless, piercing questioning of status quo “common sense”; trying to make important linkages and connections; recognizing and evaluating multiple perspectives and the values and assumptions underlying each (including our own); evaluating evidence and arguments (while recognizing power relations in knowledge claims), arriving at defensible positions on issues and working towards a more respectful, inclusive, just, and fair world (or country in this case).

Tentative Schedule of Classes

Week 1	Sept 7 – NO CLASS	Sept 10 – Introduction
Week 2	Sept 14 – Canada's Physical Setting	Sept 17 – Canada's Physical Setting
Week 3	Sept 21 – Assignment introduced	Sept 24 – Field Trip
Week 4	Sept 28 – Human / Environment relations	Oct 1 – Human / Environment relations
Week 5	Oct 5 – Human / Environment relations	Oct 8 – MIDTERM
Week 6	Oct 12 – NO CLASS	Oct 14 – Intro to Canadian Identity & Diversity
Week 7	Oct 19 – Canadian National Myths & Identity	Oct 22 – Canadian National Myths & Identity
Week 8	Oct 26 – Canadian National Myths & Identity	Oct 29 - Canadian National Myths & Identity
Week 9	Nov 2 – Indigenous- Non-Indigenous Faultlines	Nov 5 - Indigenous- Non-Indigenous Faultlines
Week 10	Nov 9 – NO CLASS	Nov 12 – Indigenous- Non-Indigenous Faultlines
Week 11	Nov 16 – Other Cultural Faultlines	Nov 19 – Other Cultural Faultlines
Week 12	Nov 23 – Other Cultural Faultlines	Nov 26 –Core-periphery Faultline / Canadian Regionalism
Week 13	Nov 30 – Core - Periphery	Dec 3 – Final Class

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

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, 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.