

**Geography 306
Geography of Canada
University of Victoria
Fall 2016**

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 take will explore Canada's historical, economic, cultural and political geographies. A particular focus of the course will be the production of Canada as a nation, and the ways this has been achieved through myths. Some of the themes that will be covered include place, space, colonialism, immigration, and wilderness. 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 spaces. We will explore how landscape, borders, regions, territory, land, and environment are imagined, organized, contested and fought for by different people. This course will highlight ideas and myths surrounding Canada and Canadians have material effects.

"Nation," "nationality," and "nationalism" are necessary topics for this course, and are likely to arouse 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 "should 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.

Instructor: Jennifer Mateer
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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30-1:30
 Friday 11:30-1:30

Course Time: Tuesday 10:30-11:20
 Wednesday 10:30-11:20
 Friday 10:30-11:20

Course Location: Cornett Building B129

Class Format: The format for this course will consist of a combination of lectures, in-class activities, and films. Most class sessions will be lecture-based, but we will also occasionally use class time to discuss the assigned readings, which students are expected to have read prior to class. In addition to the standard lecture format, there will also be several in-class activities and films throughout the semester.

Guiding Thoughts:

"A nation is a group of people who share the same illusions about themselves ... expressed in stories or core myths we tell about ourselves." - Daniel Francis (1997:10)

"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)

Course Schedule

I will try to stick as closely as possible to the following schedule, however this may not always be possible.

Week 1	September 7 & 9	Course Overview Who are Canadians and what are Canada's Beginnings
Week 2	September 13, 14 & 16	Canadian History, Myths, and Place
Week 3	September 20, 21 & 23	Conceptions of Space in Canada
Week 4	September 27, 28 & 30	Physical and Economic Geographies Midterm #1
Week 5	October 4, 5 & 7	Wilderness and Place / Space Making
Week 6	October 11, 12 & 14	Canadian Soundscapes and Music Geographies
Week 7	October 18, 19 & 21	Canadian Migration, Immigration, and Refugee Geographies
Week 8	October 25, 26 & 28	Midterm #2 Foodscapes and Migrant Labour
Week 9	November 1, 2 & 4	Indigeneity and Decolonization: This will be a recurring theme throughout the course. However, it will be more closely attended to this week
Week 10	November 8, 9 & 11	Canadian Multiculturalism Reading Break – No Class Office hours will not be held during Reading Break
Week 11	November 15, 16 & 18	Canada and Canadians Abroad
Week 12	November 22, 23 & 25	Student Presentations
Week 13	November 29, 30 & December 2	Student Presentations and Review

Learning Objectives

- 1) To develop a more sophisticated understanding and critical appreciation for Canada's physical, economic, political, historical, and cultural geographies
- 2) To better recognize how national and regional identities are constructed, contested, reproduced and reworked
- 3) To enhance the understanding of key geographic concepts such as place and space, drawing on the Canadian experience
- 4) To develop critical thinking skills which recognize the multiplicity of values, assumptions, and perspectives that underline opinions and "facts"
- 5) To gain public speaking experience through one group presentation
- 6) 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

Required Materials

- **Readings:** Required readings, such as journal articles, book chapters, and other sources will be posted on the CourseSpaces site (<http://CourseSpaces.uvic.ca/>) and should be read thoroughly and brought to class. While readings are peripheral to learning in some courses, they are central to this one.
- **Reading effectively** is absolutely essential for success in this course. Be mindful that simply reading without engaging with the material (i.e. marking, highlighting, frequent re-reading, taking notes and critical reflection) will limit the movement of material from short to long term memory.

Note on CourseSpaces: You will Access the CourseSpaces site for required readings, important announcements, assignment submissions, instructor notes, your grades and additional information.

Assessments

Students will be evaluated on the following required elements:

10% Participation: based on the quality of your contributions to class discussion, and/or extra-curricular involvement

30% Midterm Exams: Considering the length of each class (50mins), we will have two short in-class midterms (each worth 15%). One on **September 30th** and the other on **October 25th**.

25% Student Presentations: In class group presentations and participation on geographies of Canada. Topics will be explored in class.

35% Final Exam: Take Home Exam consisting of two essay questions to be submitted online.

Course Policies

1. **Collegial Respect:** Do your part to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning. Arriving late, talking, texting, surfing the internet etc. all disrupt the flow of the class and may impact your participation grade. Be respectful to the instructor and to colleagues. Being at university is a unique privilege. Be sure to make the most of it!
2. **Late / Missing Work:** If for a legitimate reason (e.g. verifiable serious illness or family emergency) you must miss the midterm/exam/assignment deadline you must notify the instructor before the date to make alternative arrangements. Failure to do so will result in a mark of zero. Your required hand-in assignments will be accepted up to three days after the due date with a 15% penalty applied per day. Extensions will only be granted ahead of the deadline and with a doctor's note or equivalent – travel is not considered a reason to miss a deadline or exam.
3. **Accessibility:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSd) as soon as possible. The RCSd staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>.
4. **Email:** I often receive a high volume of emails and may not always be able to respond in less than 48 hours. Be sure to plan ahead, read the syllabus closely and/or ask peers for clarification.
5. **Withdrawal:** For information regarding withdrawal from class, please see: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015/FACS/UnIn/UARe/With.html> for dates and other information.
6. **Academic Integrity:** Please review <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html> for university policy on academic integrity and useful information on avoiding plagiarism, falsifying results, cheating on assignments etc. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic "F" for that assignment or test and possibly the course for ALL individuals involved. Note: plagiarism detection software will be used in this class.
7. **Grade Revisions:** If you believe your grade does not reflect the quality of your work, you may resubmit the assignment with a one or two paragraph justification for why your mark should be changed.
8. 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.

Note on Undergraduate Grading: Grading practices and procedures are guided by University policies specified in the Calendar. The geography department is concerned about the potential problem of grade inflation and wishes to ensure equity in grading standards among colleagues. In cases in which grades for a course are substantially outside normal ranges, the department Chair may ask the instructor to justify or revise those grades. Instructors submit grades online as soon as they have

been approved by the Chair. If the grades for a course are not available online, it means that the grades have not yet been approved by the Chair, and any grades posted elsewhere are unofficial and subject to change.

Students should pay particular attention to the qualitative indicators associated with each grade

A+ (90-100%); A (85-89%); A- 80-84% Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance- normally achieved only by a small group of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.

B+ (77-79%); B (73-76%): Very good / acceptable work fulfilling expectations. These grades indicate a good or satisfactory grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area with no major weakness.

B- (70-72%); C+ (65-69); C (60-64%); D (50-59): Deficiencies in knowledge, understanding or techniques; Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking.

F (0-49): Failing grade- unsatisfactory performance.