



Fall 2017

**TWF 12:30-13:20**

**CORNETT B111**

# Geog 309

## Geography of BC

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Office: DTB B210

Office hrs: R 13-15:00

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### Course Overview

This course introduces students to the physical and human geographies of a place now known as British Columbia. Beyond a simple identification of geographic “facts”, the course will push you to think critically, creatively, and multi-perspectively, engaging with many struggles central to the province’s social experience, for example around: resource development, environmental protection, Indigenous sovereignty, immigration, identity politics, economic diversification, and sustainable community development. As a unique opportunity, you will be involved in a very engaging and practical project critically reviewing and revising our text (for republication in 2018). Through a close reading of this text and the acclaimed story *The Golden Spruce* by John Vaillant, as well as engaging lectures, videos, and group discussion, this course will provide you a more sophisticated appreciation of the place you presently call home and of the importance of a creative, critical education.



### Assessment

1. **Midterm** (25%) Oct 6<sup>th</sup>
2. **Golden Spruce Quiz** (15%) Nov 21<sup>st</sup>
3. **Text Revision Project** (25%) In a group of 2-4 you will undertake an assignment completing revisions for a new edition of the text.
4. **Final Exam** (25%) Take home exam given on Dec 1<sup>st</sup> and due on Dec 8<sup>th</sup>.
5. **Participation** (10%) Consists of quality 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 summary of what you learned and how it related to class.

Note on marks: A-level marks (80%+) reflect exceptional (beyond expectations), outstanding, or highly competent efforts. B+/B level marks (73-79%) reflect good or at least acceptable efforts (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.

## Policies:

1. Late policy – 10% penalty per day late for 3 days (for assignment). Contact instructor before Midterm or Quiz 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 readings

There are two mandatory course texts and additional readings will be posted on the CourseSpaces site. Reading - and engaging with the readings (highlighting, underlining, taking good notes etc.) – is essential for your enjoyment of and success in this course. Coming to class unprepared is a waste of time for you and everyone else (and it makes things really boring).

1. McGillivray, B. 2011. *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscape in Transition*. Vancouver: UBC Press
2. Vaillant, J. 2006. *The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness & Greed*. Toronto: Vintage

## 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 BC'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 BC and how you have the responsibility of helping shape its future.
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.

## Tentative Schedule of Classes

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration... into the logic of the present system... or becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

- Paulo Freire

Week 1	Sept 6 – Introduction Sept 8 – Mapping BC	Ch 1
Week 2	Sept 12 – Video: Bog in My Backyard Sept 13- Critical Geography Sept 15- Term Project Introduced	
Week 3	Sept 19,20,22 – BC Physical Geography – Processes / Landscapes	Ch 2
Week 4	Sept 26, 27, 28 – Physical / Human Geography Interface “Natural Hazards”, Environmental Issues & Climate Change	
Week 5	Oct 3, 4 – Historical / Cultural Geographies (Euro Colonial) <b>Oct 6 – Midterm</b>	Ch 4
Week 6	<b>Oct 10 - Thanksgiving</b> Oct 11, 13 – Historical / Cultural Geographies (Asian)	Ch 6
Week 7	Oct 17, 18, 20 – Historical / Cultural Geographies (First Nations)	Ch 5
Week 8	Oct 24, 25, 27 – Historical / Cultural Geographies (First Nations)	Ch 5
Week 9	Oct 31, Nov 1, 3 – Resource Geographies	Ch 8-12, 15
Week 10	Nov 7, 8, 10 – Beyond the Resource Economy: Tourism, Tech / Creative Economy	Ch 14 + others
Week 11	<b>Reading Break</b>	
Week 12	<b>Nov 21- Golden Spruce Quiz</b> Nov 22, 24- Discussion	Golden Spruce
Week 13	Nov 28, 29 – Urban Geographies Dec 1- Wrap up / Project due	Ch 15-16

“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.