



Jan-April 2018

M R 11:30-12:50

COR A125

Geog 306

Geography of Canada

Dr. Cameron Owens

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Office: DTB B210

Office hrs: R 14:00-16:00

Policies:

1. Late policy – 10% penalty per day late for 3 days (for assignments). Contact instructor before a test if you must miss (for legitimate, documented reason).
2. Plagiarism and unauthorized use of an editor – 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.

Geography Department website:
<http://geog.uvic.ca>

Undergraduate Advisor: Dr. Phil Wakefield – geogadvisor@uvic.ca

Course Overview

Beyond a simple description of geographic facts, this course involves a critical investigation of the physical, cultural, and social landscape of this place now known as Canada. It is built around the following four units:

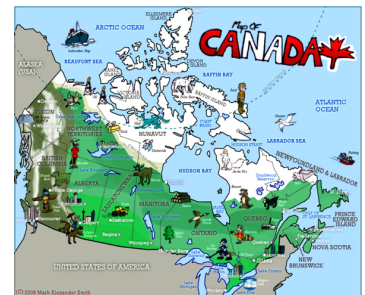
Unit 1: Physical Setting – An overview of the landforms of Canada and the physical processes that have produced the diverse physical landscape.

Unit 2: Human / Environment Relations – An introduction to the complex relationship between humans and the environment, exploring the constellation of physical, historical, socio-cultural factors that explain patterns of settlement, political, and economic development in Canada and the social, health, and ecological implications of this development including a consideration of “natural” hazards and climate change.

Unit 3: Canadian Nationalism & Mythology - An investigation of the forces (myths, symbols, institutions) that have worked to sustain a cohesive national identity.

Unit 4: Dissent & Faultlines - An investigation of the critical forces / voices of dissent that challenge the simple national narrative and deep faultlines in Canada’s social fabric, with an extended focus on issues and relationships with respect to Indigenous peoples.

Intending neither to be a jingoistic celebration nor cynical denunciation of the country, this course is sure to inspire important new ways of seeing “Canada” and being “Canadian”.



Assessment

1. **Midterm** (25%) – scheduled for Feb 8th
2. **Assignments (3)** (30%) –testing reading comprehension and application to current events (due Jan 22, Feb 26, Mar 19)
3. **Final Exam** (30%) – scheduled during the regular exam period
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

Francis, D. 1997. *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Press (electronic copy available through UVic Library)

Vowel, C. 2016. *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues in Canada*. Winnipeg, MB: Highwater Press (mandatory; available through UVic Bookstore)

Additional readings will be posted on the CourseSpaces site.

This is a reading-intensive course. 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,
Prime Minister
of Canada
(1921-30, 1935-
48)

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. the ability to manage time and to accept constructive criticism; effective written and oral communication, critical thinking*, problem solving, empathic listening, ethical reasoning, and organizational skills; and perseverance, initiative, and care.
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 am more concerned with you to developing into a successful, caring citizen. Keep in mind employers are 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 and how Canadian issues are your issues.
4. *Note: critical thinking is often misrepresented as cynical, pessimistic, or “being against things”. It should rather be understood in terms of healthy skepticism with received wisdom recognizing that certain things could /should be made otherwise. It involves 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 country (and world).

Tentative Schedule of Classes

Jan 4,8	Introduction	
Jan 11,15,18	Unit 1: Physical Setting	
Jan 22, 25, 29, Feb 1, 5	Unit 2: Human / Environment Relations	Jan 22: Assignment 1 due
Feb 8	Midterm	Midterm
Feb 12-16	Reading Week	
Feb 26, Mar 1, 5, 8	Unit 3: Canadian Nationalism & Mythology	Feb 26: Assignment 2 due
Mar 12,15,19,22,26,29	Unit 4: Dissent & Faultlines	Mar 19: Assignment 3 due
Apr 5	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.