

GEOG 306 – Geography of Canada

Winter 2019 Course Info

Instructor: Dr. Cameron Owens camo@uvic.ca (250) 721-7330
Office Hours: R 15:00-17:00 in room DTB B210
LECTURE: MR 13:00-14:20 in ELL 060



Overview

This course explores the physical, cultural, and political landscape of this place now known as Canada. After an introductory overview which includes clearing up misconceptions about what Geography actually is, we will work through three specific units that invite us to think about Canada through the lenses of physical science, social science, and the critical humanities. The first unit explores Canada's **physical setting**, providing an overview of the country's vast and varied geography, its division into physical regions, and the dynamic bio-physical processes that have created (and continue to modify) its physical landscapes. We then turn to examine some of the complex **human / environment relationships** that underscore the country's human geography, exploring the constellation of physical, historical, socio-cultural factors that explain patterns of settlement and political and economic development. In turn, we explore the social, health, and ecological implications of our relationship and consider "natural" hazards and environmental issues. Finally, we turn away from scientific analyses to examine the country's human geography through **story**. Taking bearings from Thomas King's "The Truth About Stories" and Daniel Francis' "National Dreams", we will discuss the importance of narrative in understanding national and regional social and cultural dynamics. We will further engage with stories about Canada as conveyed through music and film. We will encounter stories from Indigenous peoples and other voices not always represented in the mainstream, inviting us to a richer, more critical, and more diverse sense of place. Overall, the intention is to inspire a variety of ways of seeing "Canada" and being "Canadian".

Readings

Thomas King's (2003) "**The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative**" (Toronto: Anansi Press [CBC Massey Lectures]) is recommended. However, you can also find the oral lectures online (for free).

Daniel Francis' (1995) "**National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History**" (Vancouver: Arsenal Press) is available (for free) to read online through the UVic Library.

Reading effectively is essential for success in this course. But simply reading without engaging with the material (i.e. marking, highlighting, taking notes and critical reflection) is useless in that the material has no chance of moving from short to long term memory. Invest some time and effort and you will be rewarded.

Other essential readings, artwork, songs, videos will be posted on the CourseSpaces site for this course.

Assessment

Students will be evaluated on the following required elements:

1. **Assignments (2) (50%)** – short written-answer assignments to be discussed in class (due Feb 4 & Mar 14)
2. **Readings' Quiz (15%)** – snap quiz testing your comprehension of course texts (notes allowed)
3. **Final Exam (25%)** – scheduled during the regular exam period
4. **Participation (10 %)** – 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 Undergraduate Grading: Grading practices and procedures are guided by University policies specified in the Calendar. The 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 Chair may ask the instructor to revise those grades. Instructors submit grades online, and those grades are available to students 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. Achieved only by a small group of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation, communicates clearly and effectively, has an insightful grasp of the subject matter, and generally shows deep commitment to scholarship.
- B+ (77-79%); B (73-76%): Very good / acceptable work, fulfilling expectations. These grades indicate a good or satisfactory grasp of the subject matter with no major weakness.
- B- (70-72%); C+ (65-69); C (60-64%); D (50-59): Some deficiencies in knowledge, understanding, or techniques; Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking.
- F (0-49): Failing grade. Unsatisfactory performance. see <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2012/GRAD/FARe/Grad.html>

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 such as the ability to manage time and to accept constructive criticism; to communicate effectively, to think critically (no cynically), to solve problems, to listening carefully, to reason ethically; and good habits - 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. In this course you will be able to develop effective research and communication skills employing the methods of the physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Specifically, you will:
 - A. Understand different approaches to studying the world, the value of geographic inquiry, and the complementary relationship between human and physical geography
 - B. Recognize the diversity of Canada's physical landscapes and the underlying processes that explain their formation.
 - C. Understand how the physical environment along with other social/cultural factors and historical contingencies has influenced the settlement, economic and political development in Canada.
 - D. Understand complex human / environment relationships and how concerns with "natural hazards", environmental issues, and climate change are playing out in the Canadian context.
 - E. Recognize the value of approaching the study of Canada, Canadian places, and Canadians through stories, songs, and films, and in particular the enhanced understanding of this place through engaging with narratives (such as those of Indigenous peoples) that counter the mainstream.

Tentative schedule (note: subject to change)

Week 1	Jan 7 – No Class	Jan 10 – Course Introduction (Overview)	Instructor Away
Week 2	Jan 14 – UNIT 1: Canada's Physical Setting Guest Lecture: Dan Smith intro to Physical Geography of Canada	Sept 17 – Guest Lecture: Shannon Fargey on Climate and Weather	Instructor Away
Week 3	Jan 21 – Physical Geography III	Jan 24 – Physical Geog IV	
Week 4	Jan 28 – Unit 2: Human / Environment Relationships: Canada on the Map	Jan 31 – Influences on Canada's settlement patterns, development	
Week 5	Feb 4 – Canada's Territorial Evolution	Feb 7 – "Natural Hazards"	Assignment #1 Due (Feb 4)
Week 6	Feb 11 – Climate Change & Environmental Issues	Feb 14 – MIDTERM	
Week 7	Feb 18 – READING WEEK	Feb 21 – READING WEEK	
Week 8	Feb 25 – Unit 3: Canada Through Story Quiz	Feb 28 – Narratives of Canada	Readings' Comprehension Quiz (Feb 25)
Week 9	Mar 4 – Narratives of Canada II	Mar 7 – Narratives of Canada III	
Week 10	Mar 11- Canada Through Song	Mar 14- Canada Through Song II (Assignment #2 Due (Mar 14)
Week 11	Mar 18 – Canada Through Film	Mar 21 – Canada Through Film II	
Week 12	Mar 25 – Canada Through Film III	Mar 28 – Canada Through Film IV	
Week 13	Apr 1 – Canada Through Film V	Apr 4 – Final class	Take Home Final Introduced (due April 11)

Course Policies

Late policy: 10% penalty per day late for 3 days (for assignments).

You must contact instructor **before** final if you must miss (for legitimate, documented reason), after which we will make arrangements.

Plagiarism and unauthorized use of an editor – zero tolerance. If you are unclear about what constitutes a violation see UVic's [academic integrity policy](#)

Accessibility – please connect with instructor and the [Accessible Learning Center](#) early if you may need accommodation

Expectations of student behavior - UVic Geography prides itself on being one of the top programs in the country. You are expected to take seriously your time as a scholar in our program. Do your part to ensure an engaging classroom. Be punctual, respectful, compassionate, and attentive.

"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.