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## **GEOGRAPHY OF CANADA**

### A CRITICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING THE GEOGRAPHIES OF CANADA

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**Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00pm-2:30pm**

**Office Location: DTB B208**

**Contact: [jmateer@uvic.ca](mailto:jmateer@uvic.ca)**

**Lecture: Cornett Building A125**

M & Th - 1:00-2:20

**We acknowledge and respect the lək'ʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional and unceded territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.**

#### **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 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. Some 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.

"Nation," "nationality," and "nationalism" are necessary topics for this course and are likely to bring out 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 "ought to 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.

#### **Guiding Quote:**

"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)

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#### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available digitally through UVic libraries or will be uploaded on Brightspace.

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## EVALUATION

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Participation       | 10% |
| Book Review         | 15% |
| Midterm             | 20% |
| Final Exam          | 30% |
| Term Paper Proposal | 5%  |
| Term Paper          | 20% |

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## BRIGHTSPACE

I will post the course syllabus, link to any online lectures, and any additional relevant materials on the course's Brightspace website.

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## POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignments submitted **ON TIME** will receive my full attention & useful feedback.
- Please speak with me well in advance if you anticipate a delay in submitting your work, particularly when dealing with illness or family conflicts.
- 10% per day penalty for late assignments, including weekend days. For example, 10% will be deducted from the assignment (due at a specified time) *if the assignment is submitted later in the day*. If the assignment is submitted the next day, 20% will be deducted from the assigned grade, and so forth.

\*\* All assignments must be done exclusively for this course.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism in term papers, written summaries, the exam, and/or presentation will not be tolerated. Plagiarism detection software will be used in case of doubt. Plagiarism means representing someone else's work as your own, whether intentional or through improper citation. It is a serious offense and is punishable by academic sanctions. When you incorporate the words, ideas, maps, graphics, or other products from someone else's work into your projects, you must give credit by providing a citation and reference to the source work.

It is your responsibility to:

- understand what plagiarism is,
- be familiar with and understand the information on plagiarism outlined in UVic Libraries' plagiarism policy at <https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/>
- be familiar with UVic's policies on student responsibilities, conduct, discipline, and academic offenses, as described in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Students are reminded that submitting for credit any academic work which has been submitted (or where credit has already been obtained) in another course is listed among academic offenses as academic dishonesty.

## 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

Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL, formerly RCSD) as soon as possible. The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (<https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>). The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## POSITIVITY AND SAFETY

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

Discriminatory language is not welcome or tolerated in lectures, seminars, tutorials, or written work. This includes but is not limited to sexist, racist, ethnocentric, ageist, homophobic, or transphobic language.

## GRADING SYSTEM

As per the current Academic Calendar:

| Grade | Grade point value | Grade scale | Description   |
|-------|-------------------|-------------|---|
| A+    | 9                 | 90-100%     | <b>Exceptional, outstanding</b> and <b>excellent</b> performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.         |
| A     | 8                 | 85-89%      |   |
| A-    | 7                 | 80-84%      |   |
| B+    | 6                 | 77-79%      | <b>Very good, good</b> and <b>solid</b> performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area. |
| B     | 5                 | 73-76%      |   |
| B-    | 4                 | 70-72%      |   |
| C+    | 3                 | 65-69%      | <b>Satisfactory</b> , or <b>minimally satisfactory</b> . These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.  |
| C     | 2                 | 60-64%      |   |
| D     | 1                 | 50-59%      | <b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.   |
| F     | 0                 | 0-49%       | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.  |

## POLICY ON CHILDREN IN CLASS

It is my belief that if we want women and parents in academia, we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is, thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to students, staff, and faculty parents.

- 1) All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women or people can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in my class anytime.
- 2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a

child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

### **POLICY ON RECORDING LECTURES**

According to the university's Intellectual Property Policy (GV0215), professors and instructors are the authors of their original course materials, lecture notes, and lecture presentations. Accordingly, they own the copyright in these materials. A lecture constitutes an instructor's intellectual property. A student must get permission to record the lecture from their instructor. Any material for the course (e.g., lecture notes, PowerPoints, syllabus, including a recording of a lecture) is made solely for the use of the student registered in the course for research and private study only. These materials must not be posted online or shared with other students without the instructor's permission. In some cases, a student with a perceptual disability will be eligible for an academic accommodation to record a lecture. Please visit the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) website for more information. You should be aware that there are policies and legislation regarding academic accommodation. Should you have any questions, please contact the Copyright Office

### **COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)**

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.

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## OUTCOMES & RESPONSIBILITIES

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### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This course has five primary learning objectives:

- To develop a more sophisticated understanding and critical appreciation for Canada's economic, political, historical, social, and cultural geographies.
- To enhance the understanding of key geographic concepts such as place and space, drawing on the Canadian experience.
- To develop critical thinking skills which recognize the multiplicity of values, assumptions, and perspectives that underline opinions and "facts".
- 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.

You can expect to acquire the following skills:

- Critical Thinking: by applying seminar discussions and readings through weekly reflections, students will develop an ability to think critically about the geopolitical ideas that have historically shaped and continue to inform political events.
  - Communication: to develop written communication skills through course assignments and to develop verbal communication skills and self-confidence through seminar discussions and online discussion forums.
  - Time Management and Personal Responsibility: by attending online seminars and by handing in assignments on time.
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### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Reading the required materials. Seriously, you **MUST** do the readings. Seriously!
  - Actively participating in class discussion, both written on discussion forums and through Zoom meetings.
  - Presenting on a news issue in class.
  - Writing a final essay and exam.
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## ASSESSMENT & ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

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**PARTICIPATION - (10%) – ONGOING THROUGHOUT TERM**

- This includes engaging in class by asking questions and offering answers and interpretations. This is not an attendance grade, however, if you don't attend classes, it will be impossible to participate fully.
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**MIDTERM EXAM – (20%)**

- This will be in-class and cumulative and include short answer and definitional questions.
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**BOOK REVIEW – (15%)**

- During the term you will be asked to read and reflect upon one book from the following choices and critically analyze the book in relation to relevant course themes and content.
- Make sure that your book review maintains a geographic or spatial component, and follow the guideline posted on BrightSpace
- Review Choices:
  - Bob Joseph: 21 Things You May Not Know about the Indian Act
  - Thomas King: The Inconvenient Indian: A curious account of native people in North America
  - Chief Robert Joseph: NAMWAYUT: A pathway to reconciliation
  - Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson: The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the land, rebuilding the economy
  - Bev Sellars: Price Paid: The fight for First Nations survival
  - Jody Wilson-Raybould – True Reconciliation: How to be a force for change

**TERM PAPER PROPOSAL – (5%)**

- For this assignment, please describe what you intend to write your term paper about. For example, what questions you will answer in your paper, the reason why it is a relevant question, and what theory you will include in your analysis (Decolonization, Repossession, Place, Space, Right to the City, etc.).
  - The format should be as follows:
    - Description of the proposed research and the proposed title of your paper (10)
    - Research question and/or thesis statement (10)
    - Rationale (why is this important? Why does this fit in Geog306?) (10)
    - Theoretical framework (10)
    - Mechanics will also be evaluated (10)
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**TERM PAPER – (20%)**

- Throughout the course, you are encouraged to think critically about the theoretical and empirical relevance of the issues we will explore, as this will prepare you for your final essay.
- We will be covering a series of topics relating to various geographic concepts and how these are exemplified through Canadian places, spaces, and landscapes. For your research paper, I would like you to select a topic of interest to you that relates to Canadian geography. Once you select the topic you are interested in writing about, come up with a research question to help you narrow down the topic and focus your paper.
- The paper should be a total of 10-15 pages double-spaced, 12 pt. font Times New Roman, 2.54 cm margins with proper in-text citations. Your reference list will not count towards your page length.
- APA style referencing
- The first portion of the paper should be a review of the relevant academic literature on your chosen topic (for example, the Rights to the City, Environmental Repossession, or Decolonization)
  - You will need to demonstrate that you have gone beyond assigned class readings by considering the discussions we have had in class and by doing additional outside reading and thinking on the topics you choose to tackle here. Your annotated bibliography should help prepare you for this section.
- The second portion of your paper should look at how the theory is “lived out” or exemplified in Canada
- Your example should be novel and not based on lecture materials or readings previously discussed

unless discussed with me first.

- Your essay will be evaluated based upon the following:
    - Quality of content in terms of research skill demonstrated, analytical skills through critiques and linkages to course content
    - Good and logical structure and organization of the paper
    - Correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure
    - Proper in-text citations and references
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#### **FINAL EXAM – (30%)**

- This will be an in-person exam held during the exam period
  - I will discuss the final exam format with you in our last few weeks of class.
  - Date TBD – this will be announced by the University during the term
  - Travel is not a reason to miss the exam, so please wait until after a date has been selected to make any travel arrangements for April.
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#### **IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT NOTES:**

**Assignment:** For all assignments use 12 pt. Font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, number pages, and a list of references. You do not need to include a title page, but **DO** include your name, my name, the course number, and the date at the top of the first page.

**Referencing:** Students are required to follow the APA style guide posted on Brightspace.

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## WEEKLY CALENDAR

(Subject to revision as the course proceeds, particularly to meet the needs of guest speakers)

| Date                            | Topic  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Week 1: January 9 & 12          | Introduction to Geog306 and discussions of Place and Space               |
| Week 2: January 16 & 19         | Environment: Climate Change  |
| Week 3: January 23 & 26         | Environment: Wilderness, Wildness and Conservation                       |
| Week 4: January 30 & February 2 | Environment: Conservation continued<br>** proposal due                   |
| Week 5: February 6 & 9          | Neoliberalism: Urban Issues  |
| Week 6: February 13 & 16        | Space<br>Midterm Exam Feb 16 <sup>th</sup>                               |
| Week 7: Feb 20 & 23             | Reading Break  |
| Week 8: February 27 & March 2   | Neoliberalism: Food Systems  |
| Week 9: March 6 & 9             | Colonialism: Assimilation<br>**book reviews due March 9 <sup>th</sup>    |
| Week 10: March 13 & 16          | Colonialism: Dispossession   |
| Week 11: March 20 & 23          | Decolonization: Resistance   |
| Week 12: March 27 & 30          | Decolonization: Resurgence<br>*** final paper due March 30 <sup>th</sup> |
| Week 13: April 3 & 6            | Review and Exam Prep   |