



GEOG 306



Geography of Canada

What is Canada? Who are Canadians? Would everyone agree on the answers to these questions? Would the answers change over time and space? Why so such questions matter? The course goes beyond a mere description of the physical geography of this vast country, and delves into the imagined and contested national identity, and as a place of diverse regions. We will begin with an overview of the country's physical setting and implications for those who live, work, and play there. We then turn to explore the different imaginaries, myths, and ideologies deployed as attempts to create and define the country in a specific way. Finally, we will explore the regional identities as well as Canada's image abroad. Through readings and discussion we will examine the key issues facing Canadians today and in the past. During our interrogation of the conceptions of Canada, we will not be unconsciously patriotic nor cynically traitorous. Instead we will attempt to understand new ways of seeing "Canada" and being "Canadian".

Instructor: Jennifer Mateer
jmateer@uvic.ca

Office Hours: M 12:30-2:30
in room David Turpin
Building (DTB) B208

Course Schedule:

Monday: 2:30-3:30 DSBC118

Wednesday: 2:30-3:30 DSBC118

Thursday: 2:30-3:30 DSBC118

SPRING 2015

Texts: There are no mandatory texts assigned for this class.

Readings: Essential readings in the forms of journal articles, book chapters and other sources will be posted on the course CourseSpaces site (<http://CourseSpaces.uvic.ca/> as well as a google drive <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B7LhgTD4-QM0cVZpdHBTOF9uODQ&usp=sharing>) 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 not only for required readings but also for important announcements, instructor notes, your grades and additional information.

Course Policies

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 colleagues. Being at university is a unique privilege. Be sure to make the most of it!

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 writing to make alternative arrangements. Failure to do so will result in a zero. Your required hand-in assignments will be accepted up to three days after the due date with a 10% penalty applied per day. Extensions will only be granted ahead of the deadline and with a doctors note or equivalent.

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/>.

Email: The Instructor receives a high volume of emails and may not always be able to respond in less than 24 hours, be sure to plan ahead, read the syllabus closely and/or ask peers for clarification.

Withdrawal: For information regarding withdrawal from class, please see: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014/FACS/UnIn/UARe/With.html> for dates and other information.

Academic Integrity: Please review <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.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.

Course Units

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Physical Canadian Geography
- 3) Human Canadian Geography
- 4) Critical Canadian Geography
- 5) Regional Geographies

NOTE: No Audio or Video recordings of Lectures permitted without the instructor's prior written permission.

Assessment

Students will be evaluated on the following required elements:

- 1. Participation:** based on the quality (not quantity) of your contributions to class discussion, and extra-curricular involvement (10%)
- 2. Midterm Exam: Thursday February 5th (in class)** multiple choice, fill in the blank, & short written answer questions covering material to date (20%)
- 3. Written Assignment: Thursday March 19th** An opinion piece on a Canadian issue (to be discussed in class) (25%).
- 4. Regional Presentations: March – April** In class group presentations and participation on regional issues in Canada (to be discussed in class) (15%)
- 5. Final Exam:** University Exam Period Date and Time TBA (30%)

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 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.

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014/GRAD/FARe/Grad.html>

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- 1) To develop a more sophisticated understanding and critical appreciation for Canada's physical, political, historical, and cultural geographies.
- 2) To better recognize how national and regional identities are constructed, contested, reproduced and reworked. In particular you will work at understanding the role of myths and ideologies in Canadian identity formation.
- 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 that transcend both a naively optimistic and cynically pessimistic approach by recognizing the multiplicity of values, assumptions, and perspectives that underline opinions and "facts".
- 5) To be able to articulate and defend a clear and concise position on a Canadian issues through the written assignment.
- 6) To gain public speaking experience through one group presentation.
- 7) To develop a better appreciation of the importance of a critical education for one's own well-being and for future endeavors - be they academic or otherwise.

Important Dates:

February 5th Midterm Exam:	In class
February 9-13th Reading Break:	No classes or office hours
March 16-26th Presentations:	In class, attendance mandatory
April 2nd:	Last day of classes

GUIDING IDEAS

In the end, everything in politics turns on the distribution of spaces. What are these places? How do they function? Why are they there? Who can occupy them? For me, political action always acts upon the social as the litigious distribution of places and roles. It is always a matter of knowing who is qualified to say what a particular place is and what is done in it. - Jacques Rancière (2003)

"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

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.

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