



# GEOG 306 – Geography of Canada

## Fall 2018 Course Info

**Instructor:** Dr. Cameron Owens [camo@uvic.ca](mailto:camo@uvic.ca) (250) 721-7330  
**Office Hours:** R 15:00-17:00 in room DTB B210  
**LECTURE:** MR 10:00-11:20



## 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 humanities. The first unit explores Canada's **physical geography**, providing an overview of the country's vast and varied setting, 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 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 and the social, health, and ecological implications of this development including a consideration of "natural" hazards and environmental issues. Finally, we turn away from scientific analysis to examine the country's human geography through **story**. Taking bearings from Thomas King's "The Truth About Stories" we will discuss the importance of narrative in understanding national and regional social and cultural dynamics, we will engage with some stories about Canada as conveyed through visual art, music, and film. In particular, 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 this place. Overall, the intention of this course 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. Other essential readings, artwork, songs, videos will be posted on the CourseSpaces site (<http://coursespaces.uvic.ca/>).

Reading effectively is absolutely essential for success in this course. Be mindful that simply reading without engaging with the material (i.e. marking, highlighting, taking notes and critical reflection) is essentially 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. Same goes with videos and other work you are to engage with.

Note on Course Spaces: You will access the Course Spaces site (which has replaced Moodle) not only for required readings but also for important announcements, instructor notes, your grades and additional information.

## Assessment

Students will be evaluated on the following required elements:

- 1. Assignments (3) (60%)** – exploring various relevant topics pertaining to the three course units due Sept 24, Oct 15, Nov 26
- 2. Final Exam (30%)** – scheduled during the regular exam period
- 3. 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.

## Important Dates

Introduction	Sept 6, 10	Sept 3 – No Class
Unit 1: Physical Geography	Sept 13, 17, 20, 24	Sept 24 - Assignment #1 Due
Unit 2: Human-Environment Relationships	Sept 27, Oct 1, 4, 11, 15	Oct 8 – No Class Oct 15 – Assignment #2 Due
Unit 3: Canadian Stories: Canada through music and film	Oct 18, 22, 25, 29, Nov 1, 5, 8, 26, 29	Nov 12 & 15 – No Class Nov 26 – Assignment #3 Due
Wrap up	Dec 3	

## 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.