



---

**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**GEOGRAPHY OF CANADA**

*(note: this tentative version of the course outline is subject to change before classes commence in September. It is intended to give a general sense of the course direction)*

---

***In grateful acknowledgement of the L'kwungen & WSÁNEĆ peoples upon whose territories we are able to live and learn.***

**LECTURES:** Mondays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:20 (delivered online)

*Note: Attendance of live video-conference sessions is required.*

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 14:00-16:00 (online)

**Office Location:** N/A

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

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to the interrelated **physical, cultural, and political geographies of Canada**. The course is organized around three major sections.

First, we provide an overview of the Geography of Canada, basically asking: **what is Canada and who are Canadians?** Here we introduce the study of geography, itself, consider Canada's geographic and political place in the world, survey the country's physical setting, interrogate the stories or myths that sustain Canadian nationalism, and interpret songs that help us understand some of the nuance of Canadian places: cities and small towns.

We then turn to look at **Canada at this time of crisis**, exploring daunting contemporary challenges facing Canadians including climate change, COVID-19, environmental devastation, natural hazards, and the Opioid overdose crisis.

Finally, we turn to explore Canada's contested political geography specifically looking at **perennial social faultlines**. Here, we do not shy away from controversial issues, grappling with relevant dimensions of Canada's complex historical and contemporary social setting specifically focusing on colonialism, Indigenous resistance and resurgence; regionalism, and systemic racism. Our investigation confounds simple, agreed upon understandings of what Canada is, who Canadians are, who Canadian spaces are for, and what our collective future trajectory should be.

The course involves lectures, videos, representations of Canadian art and music, and group discussions delivered online in live and self-directed formats. Intending neither to be bombastically patriotic nor treasonously cynical, this course will inspire important new ways of seeing "Canada" and being "Canadian".

## **SPECIAL NOTES ON COURSE FORMAT**

Given the current situation and need for physical distancing, the course will be delivered remotely online and will involve a mixture of self-directed activities and online live video lecture and discussion sessions.

**Attending the live lectures at the designated times (Mondays and Thursdays from 10:00-11:20 Pacific Daylight time) is expected. Real-time interaction with the instructor and classmates as well as the structure provided by set times greatly enhances the learning experience. However, recognizing students face unusual challenges in the context of the COVID-19 disruption and that some students may be joining the class remotely from vastly different time zones, attendance is not strictly mandatory and lectures will be recorded and posted on Brightspace.**

Because of its online delivery there might be some additional challenges for you as a student.

**Please read the following carefully and keep in mind for the course:**

- Much of the course will be delivered “live” from 10:00-11:20 (PDT) Mondays and Thursdays through the Zoom platform, while there will also be self-directed learning components. Important materials will be posted on the Brightspace site for this course.
- Before class, you will be sent a link through which you can easily access Zoom. Please ensure you frequently check the email with which you are registered with UVic. You will also be able to connect with other students through Zoom (for group project meetings, for example). Please log on with your real name when using Zoom.
- You will need reliable access to the internet and a computer (preferably with camera/microphone) to connect with the class for the online lessons (through Zoom).
- The online format can seem strange and awkward at first, but we will do everything possible to make this a comfortable and effective learning environment. Ensure you have a distraction-free space at home (or elsewhere) for the online classes. Keep in mind that we are all new to this format and be forgiving, open-minded and adaptable. We’re all in this together.
- The “live” portion of the course will involve lectures, break-out group sharing, class discussion, and time for questions and answers. Please listen carefully to directions given at the beginning of class around how to ensure we can have effective discussions through this format. When you are not actively contributing, please ensure your “mute” yourself to reduce ambient noise. Students less keen on sharing live will be able to participate through the [Brightspace](#) forum. As in class, please be respectful, friendly and professional in all your online interactions. No falling into troll-mode.

## EVALUATION

You will be evaluated on the following required elements:

Due Oct 15	<b>Assignment #1:</b> How places come to be + musical exploration of Canadian geography	25%
Due Nov 30 (outline due Nov 5)	<b>Assignment #2:</b> Op/Ed on a Canadian issue	25%
In December	<b>Final exam</b> (scheduled by the registrar)	35%
Ongoing	<b>Participation</b> – positive contribution to class, chat, or online forum discussion/self-directed study assignments	15%

## GRADING SYSTEM

As per the Academic Calendar:

Grade	Grade point value	Grade scale	Description
<b>A+</b> <b>A</b> <b>A-</b>	9 8 7	90-100% 85-89% 80-84%	<b>Exceptional, outstanding and 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.
<b>B+</b> <b>B</b> <b>B-</b>	6 5 4	77-79% 73-76% 70-72%	<b>Very good, good and 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>C+</b> <b>C</b>	3 2	65-69% 60-64%	<b>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory.</b> These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
<b>D</b>	1	50-59%	<b>Marginal</b> Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
<b>F</b>	0	0-49%	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
<b>N</b>	0	0-49%	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.

## READINGS

There are no required texts for this course. A series of required readings (journal articles, book chapters, actual assessment documents and other sources) will be available online (for example through the UVic Library or posted on Brightspace and should be read thoroughly and accessible during class. Reading effectively is essential for success in this course. Along with lecture material, assigned readings will be tested on the midterm and final.

Be mindful that simply reading without engaging with the material is useless in that the material has no chance of moving from short to long term memory. It is critical to mark up, highlight, take notes and critically reflect while reading. Invest time and effort and you will be rewarded. Canadian football player Pinball Clemons counsels that: “We all must suffer one of two pains in life: either the pain of [focus and] discipline or the pain of regret.” Commit this term to discipline and focus, especially important given the online format.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date/Topic</b>
	<b>What is Canada? Who are Canadians?</b>
Week 1	Sept 10 – Introduction
Week 2	Sept 14 – Canada’s place in the world Sept 17 – Physical geographic setting
Week 3	Sept 21 – Canadian Myths & National Identity Sept 24 – Canadian Myths & National Identity
Week 4	Sept 28 – Settlement & development Oct 1 – Settlement & development
Week 5	Oct 5* – Self-directed study - cities & small towns through music ( <i>no live class</i> ) Oct 8 – Cities & small towns through music
Week 6	Oct 12 – <b>No class (Thanksgiving)</b> Oct 15 – <b>Assignment #1 due</b>
	<b>Canada at this Time of Crisis</b>
Week 7	Oct 19 – Canada at a Time of Crisis – reflecting on climate change, COVID-19, and other contemporary crises Oct 22* – Self-directed study on “natural” hazards + video: “Cascadia Megathrust” ( <i>no live class</i> )
Week 8	Oct 26 – “Natural Hazards” in Canada Oct 29* – Self-directed study on the climate / environmental crisis + video: “Hadwin’s Judgement” ( <i>no live class</i> )
Week 9	Nov 2 – Climate/environmental crisis Nov 5 – Opioid crisis
	<b>Perennial Social Faultlines in Canada</b>
Week 10	Nov 9 – <b>No Class</b> Nov 12* – Self-directed study on Colonialism, Indigenous resistance & resurgence (videos: “Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance” & “BC Treaty Process”) ( <i>no live class</i> )
Week 11	Nov 16 – Colonialism, Indigenous resistance & resurgence Nov 19 – Colonialism, Indigenous resistance & resurgence
Week 12	Nov 23 – Regionalism – Québec Separatism & Western Alienation Nov 26* – Self-directed study on racial faultlines + podcast: “Secret Life of Canada” ( <i>no live class</i> )
Week 13	Nov 30 – Racial faultlines in Canada + <b>Assignment #2 due</b> Dec 3 – Looking back; looking forward

\* indicates days when there will be no live class and you will work on a self-directed study.

### DISCLAIMER

The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Please consult BrightSpaces frequently for any updates.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course presents an opportunity to learn about the geography of Canada, but more importantly an opportunity to develop certain skills and cultivate good habits. Specifically, disciplined and focused students will leave this course:

1. ... recognizing the value of geographic inquiry and the ability to marshal geographic concepts and approaches to understanding the Canadian context (and the world more generally).
2. ... with a more nuanced understanding of the concept of “place”, of particular places, and how places shape and our shaped through our collective lived experiences.
3. ... with a more nuanced understanding of how the physical environment along with other social/cultural factors and historical contingencies (along with ongoing processes of settler colonialism) have influenced the settlement, economic and political development in Canada and the ability to apply such knowledge in other contexts.
4. ... with a more nuanced understanding of the challenges of climate change, bio-diversity loss, the pandemic, and the geophysical and social factors constituting so-called “natural” hazards (especially with reference to Canada).
5. ... with a more nuanced understanding of the concept of nationalism and how it has been articulated within the Canadian context, its promise in uniting people and concerns with respect to foreclosing other voices and glossing over historical and ongoing violence and injustices.
6. ... with a more diverse understanding of Canadian experiences including those of Indigenous peoples and people of colour, ongoing concerns and opportunities for reconciliation and making space for resurgence
7. ... able to self-reflect on your own identity and relationship with Canadian nationalism
8. ... with enhanced critical thinking and communications skills: i.e. recognizing multiple perspectives and the values and assumptions underlying each (including our own) specifically with respect to Canadian social and environmental issues and representations of Canada and Canadian nationalism and being able to articulate a position on an issue (through the Op/Ed assignment).
9. ... with a better appreciation of the importance of a critical education for one’s own well-being and civic responsibility (i.e. recognition of one’s own linkages to Canadian concerns and solutions).
10. ... with better habits in terms of discipline, focus, intentionality, consistency, organization, confidence, courage, conscientiousness, empathy, and dedication.

## **GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT INFO**

- Geography Department website: [uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/](http://uvic.ca/socialsciences/geography/)
- Undergraduate Advising: [geogadvising@uvic.ca](mailto:geogadvising@uvic.ca)

## **BRIGHTSPACES**

You will access [BrightSpace](#) (replacing CourseSpaces this year) to access readings, for important announcements, instructor notes, grades, and additional information. Guidance for navigating Brightspaces (which replaced CourseSpaces) is [available](#).

## **EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR**

I will do everything I can to create an effective, engaging learning environment. I invite you to be part of something special. Please be punctual, respectful, compassionate, and attentive.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

It is every student's responsibility to be aware of the university's policies on [academic integrity](#), including policies on **cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor, multiple submission**, and **aiding others to cheat**. If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me, your course instructor. Click [here](#) more information

## **POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments will be accepted up to 3 days late with a 5% penalty per day applied.

## **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.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a documented disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#) (CAL) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. 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.

## **SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT UVIC**

UVic takes sexualized violence seriously, and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. We encourage students to learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp). If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out:

Where: Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR; Sedgewick C119

Phone: 250.721.8021

Email: [svpcoordinator@uvic.ca](mailto:svpcoordinator@uvic.ca)

Web: [uvic.ca/svp](http://uvic.ca/svp)

### **NOTES ON SELF-CARE:**

A note to remind you to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone.

*Counselling Services - Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students. [uvic.ca/services/counselling/](http://uvic.ca/services/counselling/)*

*Health Services - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. [uvic.ca/services/health/](http://uvic.ca/services/health/)*

*Centre for Accessible Learning - The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [uvic.ca/services/cal/](http://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.*

*Elders' Voices - The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.*

*[uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php](http://uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/programming/elders/index.php)*