

**HISTORY 2124A (001)**  
**Explorations in 20th Century Canadian Popular Culture**  
**Fall 2023**

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This is a **draft** syllabus. Please see the course site on OWL for a final version.

**Course Description:**

Canadian popular culture: poor-quality imitation of America, or crucial element of Canadian identity, worthy of "Canadian Content" regulations and financial aid? This course traces the evolution of "Canadian popular culture," glimpsing into music, film, television, sport, as well as the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and food. And more. What was enjoyed, why, by whom, and was it "Canadian?"

**Antirequisite:**

Interdisciplinary Studies 2100A/B

**Course Syllabus:**

Canadian popular culture is sometimes derided as "inferior mimicry" and "derivative" of "pop culture" from south of the 49th parallel. Was (is?) that the case? We trace the evolution of "Canadian popular culture," offering glimpses into music, film and television, sport, consumption and more. What was enjoyed, why, and was it "Canadian?" Scrutiny of "voices, images, and more reveal histories little appreciated, with both impressive originality and sycophantic imitation readily found. We will examine *popular* culture in various guises – from radio and television to film to music, sports and more. The character of that cultural product; the role of changing tastes and technologies; the influence of regulation versus free enterprise; national versus international perspectives; and the changing "mass" market all come into play. History 2124 suggests that "our" culture is more multifaceted than the caricatures provided by either nationalist "cheerleading" or dismissive rejection.

**Course Materials:**

There are no course texts – the 2124 OWL site includes Power points and the Forum sites required for Participation. Further materials on the examination and papers provided as required.

**Methods of Evaluation: tentative**

Participation	20
Group Chat on OWL	10

Comments on Early Lectures [3 pp]	15	Due mid-October
Thoughts on a Cultural Element [4 pp]	25	Due mid-late November
Final Exam	30	December

**Students must submit both course papers [Comments & Thoughts] to pass the course.**

Make-up exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Extensions for late papers / posts worth less than 10 % will only be available for reasons deemed suitable under the regulations established by the University. See the information at the end of this paragraph. Be sure to consult with the Professor **as soon as possible**. Longer absences or missed work of greater mark value will require documentation be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted. For more detail: Social Science Academic Counselling on [Absence & Academic Consideration](#), the university's policies on [Academic Consideration for Medical Illness](#), and the Department of History's own [Undergraduate Policies and Statements](#)

### **Course Schedule and Readings: tentative**

**\* topics may extend beyond one class; subject to change**

1. Introductions / Contexts of Canadian Culture / Culture Contemplated
2. Glimpses of 19th Century Popular Culture
3. Popular Culture Meets Urban-industrial Capitalism
4. Tiddley Winks to "Reaching for a Lucky": Popular Culture as Control & as Site of Contention
5. Music & Machines → Mesmerizing the Masses
6. Entertaining Canadians: Expanding Media
7. Sporting Spectacles in a Modernizing Canada
8. Contexts of "Modern" Popular Culture: W.W. II to the 1980s
9. Consuming as Progressive Popular Culture
10. *Seeing Things*: Images & Popular Culture in Canada, 1939-1990s
11. "Bits" of Canadian Popular Culture since the 1990s

### **Additional Statements**

#### **Use of Electronic Devices:**

No electronic devices will be permissible for use for the Final examination. Use in lectures at the discretion of the professor – objectionable or distracting use forbidden.

**Office Hours:**

Each week I will be available for student questions and concerns. Hours tba but likely immediately following class or by appointment.

**Use of generative AI tools:**

As with earlier technologies like Google or the much more resilient technology known as the book, students will like turn to generative AI tools like ChatGPT. This use is permitted IF the purpose is early development of content, refining ideas, and organization. Such use **must** be cited with proper documentation in the final paper. Moreover, that final submission **must reflect YOUR ideas and writing**. Submission of work done by “others” – technological or human, is not permitted. Given the “ideas from class” format of much of the work, your own work will be, in the end, a better choice. Should the University provide a campus-wide policy concerning AI, these broader policies will replace the above statements.

**Important Department Policy Note:**

Please review the Department of History’s shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: [https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program\\_module\\_information/policies.html](https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html) for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

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