

History 2124B
Canadian Popular Culture
Summer 2024
Distance Studies, Online, Asynchronous

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

Course Description

This course will consider the history of popular culture in Canada. Popular culture will be defined broadly here to include any form of culture that could be said to exist outside of what might be defined equally broadly as high or elite culture. These are necessarily slippery terms and we will spend some time unpacking them throughout the semester. In particular, we will consider the assumption that high culture serves the needs of an elite leadership class intent upon preserving its social and political power. We will also consider the assumption the masses turn to popular culture either to distract themselves from the fact that they lack economic and political power or as a means of challenging those who hold the power that they crave for themselves. In order to understand the meaning of popular culture, as well as to understand the role that popular culture plays in our world, it is useful consider how popular culture is produced and how it is consumed. And so, while it is important to think about the artists who create culture, it is also important to understand the forces that produce this culture and that control its dissemination. By approaching the subject in these ways, we will consider the question of whether popular culture represents the spontaneous and authentic expressions of the masses or if it is merely something that is manufactured by those who control the instruments of production and who disseminate it as simply one more means of controlling the masses.

In this course, we will begin by situating ourselves in the field by drawing on some of the key theorists like Theodor Adorno and Stuart Hall. We will also consider the key Canadian thinkers on the subject, including Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis. We will then spend our time considering the manner in which culture has been understood by the state, by cultural industries, and by the general public.

By the end of the course, in addition to gaining a sense of the larger theoretical underpinnings of the field, we should also gain insights into the manner in which culture is produced, disseminated, and consumed. As well, we should have developed a greater understanding of how power is exercised in a democratic and capitalist society and perhaps even have come to terms with how we experience popular culture in own lives.

As an online, distance studies, summer class, this course will be necessarily compressed. It will, to be sure, cover the outline of the history of Canadian popular culture, but its focus will be on the larger themes stitching this history together. This is also an asynchronous course, with no formal class time. This should free students up to spend more time on the readings and to engage even more meaningfully with the material. Students may approach the course material at their own pace. However, these six weeks will go by quickly and there is quite a bit of reading to get through, so it is advisable to keep up with the readings in order to avoid finding oneself with an overwhelming amount of material to cover right before assignments are due. I will, of course, be available to provide additional guidance as well as to respond to any and all questions that might arise during the semester.

Antirequisite:

Interdisciplinary Studies 2100A/B

Course Materials

Every week, there will be slide presentations posted on the course site on Owl. These slides are designed to highlight the main points we should be focusing on each week, and should help guide you as you navigate the weekly topics and readings. All weekly readings will be posted online, either through Owl or the Weldon Library.

Methods of Evaluation

In addition to keeping up with the weekly readings and engaging meaningfully with these readings, students will be asked to write **two assignments** during the course. One week before each assignment's due date, students will receive questions, which they will answer in essay format. The first assignment is **due July 2** and the second is due **July 15**. All of the material that students will need to write these two short assignments will be found in the course readings and slides. No outside research will be permitted.

Assignments are to be typed, well-written, provide sound analysis, draw upon the appropriate course materials, follow proper scholarly conventions (including Chicago Style Footnotes, as well as a bibliography) and include a cover page. You will upload the completed assignments to the course web page on Owl, where they will also be subject to turnitin review. Assignments submitted after the due dates will be subject to a late penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends).

A note on academic integrity: It is expected that students produce work that is written using their own words and that relies on research that they have conducted themselves. Submitting work that is not your own is considered dishonest. It is thus not permitted to copy other peoples' work, copy from published or unpublished texts, or to present artificially generated text (i.e. ChatGPT or other AI content generators) as your own. Nor would it permitted to submit an essay or a response to an exam question using ChatGPT or any other AI content generator even if you acknowledge that you have done so with proper source attribution.

First assignment (due July 2)	40%
Second assignment (due July 15)	60%

Course Schedule and Readings

Week One

June 17 Introduction

June 19 Thinking About Popular Culture

- Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *The Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1944)
- Dwight Macdonald, “A Theory of Mass Culture,” *Diogenes*, 1, no. 3 (June 1953): 1-17.
- Stuart Hall, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Popular’,” in *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 227-239.
- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 7-21.

Week Two

June 24 Popular Culture in Canada

- Paul S. Moore, “Movie Palaces on Canadian Downtown Main Streets: Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver,” *Urban History Review* 32, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 3-20.
- John Gilmore, *Swinging in Paradise: The Story of Jazz in Montreal* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1988), 17-41, 90-114, 160-183, 184-204.
- Sean Mills, “Democracy in Music: Louis Metcalf’s International Band and Montreal’s Jazz History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (September 2019): 351-372.

June 26 The Perils of Popular Culture

- Carolyn Strange, *Toronto’s Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 116-143,
- Mary Louise Adams, “Youth, Corruptibility, and English-Canadian Postwar Campaigns against Indecency, 1948-1955,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6, no. 1 (July 1995): 89-117.

Week Three

July 2 Perceptions of Place

- Northrop Frye, “Conclusion to A Literary History of Canada,” 1965.
- Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), 27-67.

July 3 Reimagining Place

- Lawren Harris, “The Group of Seven in Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Association Report* 27, vol. 1 (1948): 28-38.
- John Jennings, “The Mad Trapper in Literature and Film,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 80-91.
- Michael Dawson, “‘That Nice Red Coat Goes to My Head Like Champagne,’ Gender, Antimodernism and the Mountie Image, 1880-1960,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 32, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 119-139.
- Peter A. Stevens, “‘Roughing it in Comfort’: Family Cottaging and Consumer Culture in Postwar Ontario,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 94, no. 2 (June 2013): 234-262.

Week Four

July 8 The Culture Industry

- Mary Vipond, “Cultural Authority and Canadian Public Broadcasting in the 1930s: Hector

Charlesworth and the CRBC,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 42, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 59-82.

- Jeffrey Brison, “The Kingston Conference, the Carnegie Corporation and a New Deal for the Arts in Canada,” *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 23, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 503-522.

- Gary Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board, 194-1953* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 3-28.

- Ira Wagman, “The Woods Gordon Report, Accountability, and the Postwar Reconstruction of the National Film Board of Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 42, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 83-104.

July 10 The Revolt of the Elite

- Philip Massolin, *Canadian Intellectuals, the Tory Tradition, and the Challenge of Modernity, 1939-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 155-215.

- Paul Litt, “The Massey Commission, Americanization, and Canadian Cultural Nationalism,” *Queen’s Quarterly*, 98, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 375-387.

- André Loiselle, *Denys Arcand’s Le déclin de l’empire américain and Les invasions barbares* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 3-17.

Week Five

July 15 Culture and Nationalism

- Gregory Millard, “Ambiguously Hip: The Tragically Hip and Canadian Nationalism,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 55, no. 3 (Fall 2021): 649-672.

- John Wright, Gregory Millard, Sarah Riegel, “Here’s Where We Get Canadian: English-Canadian Nationalism and Popular Culture,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 11-34.

- Stephen Brooks, “Comments on ‘Here’s Where We Get Canadian: English-Canadian Nationalism and Popular Culture,’” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 35-40.

- Neal Earle, “Hockey as Canadian Popular Culture: Team Canada 1972, Television and the Canadian Identity,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 30, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 107-123.

- Karen E. H. Skinazi, “The Mystery of a Canadian Father of Hockey Stories,” in *Canada’s Game: Hockey and Identity*, ed. Andrew C. Holman (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 98-124.

July 17 Post National Culture

- Katherine A. Roberts, “Making Women Pay: Revolution, Violence, Decolonizing Quebec in Hubert Aquin’s *Trou de mémoire*,” *Québec Studies* 30 (Fall/Winter 2000): 17-27.

- Patricia Smart, “When ‘Next Episodes’ Are No Longer an Option: Quebec Men’s Writing in a Postfeminist, Postnationalist Age,” *Québec Studies* 30 (Fall/Winter 2000): 28-43.

- Lori Saint-Martin, “The Body Politic and the Erotic Body: The (Male) Novel of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 21, no. 2 (2008): 195-217.

- Dominic A. Beneventi, “Montreal Underground,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 46, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 263-286.

- Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’: Glenn Gould and the Culture of Celebrity in the 1950s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 5-41.

Week Six

July 22 Conclusion

Additional Statements***Use of generative AI tools:***

All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may not make use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT for any assignments in this course.

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 for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

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