

History 2124A
Explorations in 20th Century Canadian Popular Culture
Fall 2024

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Office Hours: tba

Office Hours serve student needs and students curious about course related issues.

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

Course Description

Canadian popular culture: poor-quality imitation of America, or crucial element of Canadian identity? This course traces the evolution of Canadian popular culture by glimpsing into music, film, television, sport and more. What was enjoyed, why, and was it "Canadian?"

Antirequisite(s)

History 2124 F/G

Course Syllabus

Canadian popular culture is regularly derided as “inferior” and “derivative” of “pop culture” from south of the 49th parallel. Was (is?) that the case? We trace the evolution of “Canadian popular culture” through offering glimpses into music, film and television, sport, consumption and more. What was enjoyed, why, and was it “Canadian?” Voices, images, and more reveal both impressive originality and sycophantic imitation. We examine *popular* culture in various guises – from radio and television to film to music, sports, consumption of various products 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 “our” culture is more multifaceted than the caricatures provided by either nationalist “cheerleading” or dismissive rejection.

Course Materials

No course texts – the 2124 OWL site includes Power points and the Forum sites required for Participation.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation	20	
Group Chat on OWL	10	
Comments on Early Lectures [3 pp]	15	[early-to-mid October]
Thoughts on a Cultural Element [4 pp]	20	[mid-November]
Final Exam	35	December Exam period

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

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

Late papers will be dealt with as they arise, with the proviso that late papers face potential penalty of 5 % per day. Papers submitted more than ten days late without legitimate cause will not be graded. For cases beyond a student's control, decisions will rely on advice given by 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 * some topics may extend beyond one class

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

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.

Students must obtain permission before using generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, for any assignments in this course. Using these tools without my permission puts your academic integrity at risk. Even if permitted, **any** use of such tools must be clearly acknowledged. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification.

History Department Guidelines for Students

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