

History 2124B
History of Canadian Popular Culture
Winter 2027

Instructor: **Monda Halpern, Professor**

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Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2266**

Office Hours: **Wednesday, 9:30-11:30**

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

Course Description:

This course will examine the history of popular culture in Canada, with a focus on the twentieth century. As distinct from high culture that has historically been reserved for elites, popular culture is ostensibly created, disseminated, and consumed by the people, and represents their collective mindset and sensibilities; its often-stellar quality, mass appeal, and ubiquitous impact challenge the perceived dominance of elite culture. Arguably, due to the attributes of popular culture, state and corporate leaders have routinely appropriated, regulated, commodified, commercialized, and/or exploited it in order to promote a nationalist agenda, garner profits, and/or exert power and social control; these objectives have had both positive and negative outcomes on artists, cultural industries, the public, and Canada as a whole. This course will explore these issues by first discussing various theoretical ideas and then by examining selected artists and fields (including literature, television, film, music, and sports) and their interplay with the state, the public, and societal artifacts, events, and trends. The course will also consider the ways in which popular culture, and the extent to which it has been “Canadian,” has helped shape the persona of a country that has struggled to claim an identity.

Antirequisite(s): Interdisciplinary Studies 2100A/B.

Course Syllabus:

Learning Outcomes

Students should be able to

-describe the ways in which Canadian popular culture has been shaped from “below” and “above” (that is, by both the masses and the state, respectively) and the ways in which it has influenced, and has been influenced by, various societal events and trends.

-identify the ways in which Canadian popular culture has intersected with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, creating an environment that both includes and excludes.

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-explain the ways in which Canadian popular culture has been utilized to promote Canadian identity, unity, and nationalism.

In order to achieve these learning outcomes, students are expected to attend the in-person lectures, read the assigned weekly articles, and prepare for the three assessments. They are also encouraged to participate in class discussions.

Methods of Evaluation:

TEST 1 (one session, 30 minutes (maximum 65 minutes), 30 multiple-choice questions), **Thursday, January 28, 9:00am-Sunday, January 31, 9:00am**, worth 25%, covers the course material of Weeks 1-3, inclusive.

TEST 2 (one session, 40 minutes (maximum 85 minutes), 40 multiple-choice questions), **Thursday, March 4, 9:00am-Sunday, March 7, 9:00am**, worth 35%, covers the course material of Weeks 4-6, 8, inclusive. Designated Assignment: see point 6 below.

FINAL EXAM (one session, 60 minutes (maximum 150 minutes), 60 multiple-choice questions), platform, location, and date (**in April**) TBA, worth 40%, covers the course material of Weeks 9-14, inclusive.

PLEASE NOTE THESE VERY IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. Both tests will take place online (Brightspace Quizzes) over a three-day window. See precise dates and times above. The platform, location, and date (in April) of the Final Exam have yet to be determined.
2. The assessments will cover material from lectures and readings (for readings, know major arguments and general comprehension).
3. Each assessment is designed to be completed within the indicated duration (see above); however, **all students will be afforded double the designated time, meaning that for students with time accommodations, these are already built into the time allowance.**
4. If you have an accommodation, please ensure that your accommodations for this course are active on the Accommodated Exams website, even with the universal accommodations described in point 3 (the request should be made at least 10 days prior to your test/exam). See <http://studentservices.uwo.ca/Accommodatedexamssignup/>
5. Make-up tests and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams. Accommodations and makeup assessments (tests and the final exam) will only be provided for students who first receive academic accommodation from an academic advisor. **Please keep in mind, as indicated in point 3, that double the required time has already been built into the writing time of all**

assessments. Barring exceptional circumstances, this guaranteed, universal accommodation AND the flexibility already built into the three-day submission window will preclude further accommodation (including make-ups) regarding the two tests and final exam.

6. Please note that TEST 2 is a “Designated Assignment,” meaning that students are not permitted to submit an “undocumented” absence (in the Student Absence Portal) for this assessment; supporting documentation will be required for any academic consideration.

7. Try to write the test as soon as possible within the three-day window as you could be faced with technical problems that require time to address or with conflicts/commitments that arise in the latter period of the window. Write the test within your first available hours.

8. All assessment times are in Eastern Standard Time (ET). Confusion or neglect regarding the date(s) of an assessment or of its assigned window, including issues related to regional/global time disparities and to AM/PM distinctions, will not warrant a make-up test.

9. During the writing of tests and exams, the use of course lectures, readings, and other online (and offline) resources and communication, including AI, is strictly prohibited.

10. The use of cameras and recording devices for the purpose of replicating/distributing any course content, whether spoken or written, is strictly prohibited.

Course Materials:

No purchase necessary.

The required readings include all of the online articles cited below. All articles can be found on JSTOR and are available at no cost when accessing them at/through Western; click on the article link. If off campus, go to <https://www.jstor.org/> **Click on “Log in through your school or library.”** Type in Western Ontario and then click on “University of Western Ontario.” This will take you to the “Off-Campus Access” page where you will fill in your username and password. Then search for your article!

Course Schedule and Readings:

WEEK 1, JANUARY 6 – INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE MEANING OF POPULAR? CULTURE? CANADIAN?

Jennifer Vanderburgh, “GHOSTBUSTED! Popular Perceptions of English-Canadian Cinema,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 12 (Fall 2003): 81-98.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24408027>

Shirley L. Thomson, “Canadian Distinctiveness and Cultural Policy as We Enter the Twenty-First Century,” *The Canadian Distinctiveness into the XXIst Century*, edited by

Chad Gaffield and Karen L. Gould (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2003).
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ckph79.20>

WEEK 2, JANUARY 13 – WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA?: PLACE, ENVIRONMENT, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Monique Begin, “I Am Canadian!” From Beer Commercials to Medicare: In Search of Identity,” in *Canadian Distinctiveness into the XXIst Century*, edited by Chad Gaffield and Karen L. Gould (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2003).
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ckph79.17>

Jennifer Adese, “Colluding with the Enemy? Nationalism and Depictions of ‘Aboriginality’ in Canadian Olympic Moments,” *American Indian Quarterly*, 36 (Fall 2012): 479-502. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/amerindiquar.36.4.0479>

WEEK 3, JANUARY 20 – BACKGROUND: EMPIRE, COUNTRY, AND COMMUNITY

Kevin B. Wamsley and Robert S. Kossuth, “Fighting It Out in Nineteenth-Century Upper Canada/Canada West: Masculinities and Physical Challenges in the Tavern,” *Journal of Sport History*, 27 (Fall 2000): 405-430. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43609777>

Faye Hammill, “A new and exceedingly brilliant star’: L. M. Montgomery, “Anne of Green Gables,” and Mary Miles Minter,” *The Modern Language Review*, 101 (July 2006): 652- 670. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20466900>

WEEK 4, JANUARY 27 – 1920s: “MODERNIZATION” AND LEISURE TIME

Rachel Alexander, “Consuming Beauty: Mass-Market Magazines and Make-Up in the 1920s,” *IJAS Online* (2015): 3-14. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26556732>

Stephen Davies, “‘Reckless Walking Must Be Discouraged’: The Automobile Revolution and the Shaping of Modern Urban Canada to 1930,” *Urban History Review*, 18 (October 1989): 123-138. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43561966>

****TEST 1 (Thursday, January 28, 9:00 am-Sunday, January 31, 9:00 am, Weeks 1-3, inclusive)**

WEEK 5, FEBRUARY 3 – 1930s: DEPRESSION AND DISTRACTION

Dominique Brégent-Heald, “Vacationland: Film, Tourism, and Selling Canada, 1934-1948,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 21 (Fall 2012): 27-48.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24411793>

Monda Halpern, "The 'Malestrom' at Christie Pits: Jewish Masculinity and the Toronto Riot of 1933," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 28 (2019): 12-33.

<https://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/view/40141/36313>

WEEK 6, FEBRUARY 10 – 1940s: WARTIME AND POST-WAR ADJUSTMENT

Jessica Leonora Whitehead, "Hollywood Goes North: The Making of a 'Canadian' War Epic, *Captains of the Clouds*," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 27 (Fall 2018): 23-47

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26645747>

Mary Louise Adams, "Youth, Corruptibility, and English-Canadian Postwar Campaigns against Indecency, 1948-1955," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6 (July 1995): 89-

117. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3704439>

WEEK 7, FEBRUARY 17 – NO CLASS (SPRING READING WEEK)

WEEK 8, FEBRUARY 24 – 1950s: COMING INTO OUR OWN

James Onusko, "Childhood in Calgary's Postwar Suburbs: Kids, Bullets, and Boom, 1950-1965," *Urban History Review*, 43 (Spring 2015): 26-37.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43560420>

Stephen Azzi, "Magazines and the Canadian Dream: The Struggle to Protect Canadian Periodicals 1955-1965," *International Journal*, 54 (Summer 1999): 502-523.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40203408>

WEEK 9, MARCH 3 – 1960s: YOUTH, CONFLICT, AND COUNTER-CULTURE

Ben Bradley, "Undesirables Entering the Town to Look for Good Times: Banff Confronts Its Counterculture Youth Scene, 1965–1971," *Urban History Review*, 47 (Fall/Spring 2018–19): 71-88. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26841715>

Geneviève Zubrzycki, "Aesthetic Revolt and the Remaking of National Identity in Québec, 1960–1969," *Theory and Society*, 42 (September 2013): 423- 475.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24717518>

****TEST 2 (Thursday, March 4, 9:00 am-Sunday, March 7, 9:00 am, Weeks 4-6, 8, inclusive)**

WEEK 10, MARCH 10 – 1970s: CHALLENGING THE ISMS

Johanne Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left, and the Question of Political Art in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Art History*, 26 (2005): 80-

107. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42616679>

Linda Trimble, "Coming Soon to a Station near You?: The CRTC Policy on Sex-Role Stereotyping," *Canadian Public Policy*, 16 (September 1990): 326-338.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3551086>

WEEK 11, MARCH 17 – 1980s: AMERICANISM, CONSERVATISM, AND CONSUMPTION

Jaap Kooijman, "We Are the World: America's Dominance in Global Pop Culture," 23-42, in *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp7ck.6>

Natalie Coulter, "The Consumption Chronicles: Tales from Suburban Canadian Tweens in the 1980s," *Counterpoints*, 245 (2005): 330-346

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42978708>

WEEK 12, MARCH 24 – 1990s: SCREENS

Jordan Fairbairn, "Rape Threats and Revenge Porn: Defining Sexual Violence in the Digital Age," in *eGirls, eCitizens: Putting Technology, Theory and Policy into Dialogue with Girls' and Young Women's Voices*, edited by Jane Bailey and Valerie Steeves (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2015),

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt15nmj7f.13>

Scott Nicholson, "Playing in the Past: A History of Games, Toys, and Puzzles in North American Libraries," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*, 83, (October 2013): 341-361. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/671913>

WEEK 13, MARCH 31 – 2000s: THE NEW MILLENIUM AND COMMEMORATION

Veronica Strong-Boag, "Experts on Our Own Lives: Commemorating Canada at the Beginning of the 21st Century," *The Public Historian*, 31 (Winter 2009): 46-68.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/tph.2009.31.1.46>

Lindsay Gibson, "The Case for Commemoration Controversies in Canadian History Education," *Canadian Journal of Education*, 44 (2021): 434-465.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/27089247>

WEEK 14, APRIL 7 – CONCLUSION

FINAL EXAM, April exam period, TBA, Weeks 9-14, inclusive

Additional Statements:

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.