

CANADIAN POLITICAL IDENTITY: MYTHS, MORES AND METAPHORS
POLSCI 3J03
Winter 2024

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Contents

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	3
Required Materials and Texts	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview	4
1. ‘New Perspective’ blurb 2 X 7.5%, TBD	4
2. Critical Analysis Assignment – 20%, Feb. 16.....	4
3. Research Essay – 40 %, Apr. 17	4
4. Participation or Weekly Write-Ups – 25%, ongoing.....	4
Course Evaluation – Details	4
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings	6
Week 1 – Introduction (Jan 10, 12).....	6
Week 2 – Canada as the ‘Peaceable Kingdom’ (Jan 17, 19).....	6
Week 3 - Canada as a ‘Compact’ (Jan 24, 26)	6
Week 4 – Canada as ‘Sunny Ways Accommodationists’ (Jan 31, Feb 2)	6
Week 5 – Canada as a ‘Red Tory Anomaly’ (Feb 7, 9).....	6
Week 6 – Canada as a ‘Linchpin’ & ‘Peacekeeper’ (Feb 14, 16).....	7
Week 7 – Recess (Feb 19-23).....	7
Week 8 – Canada as a ‘Bilingual Model’ (Feb 28, Mar 1).....	7
Week 9 – Canada as a ‘Mosaic’ (Mar 6, 8).....	7
Week 10 – Canada as a ‘Multinational State’ (Mar 13, 15).....	8
Week 11 – Canada as a ‘2SLGBTQ Rights Trailblazer’ (Mar 20, 22).....	8
Week 12 – Canada as an ‘Anti-Racist State’ (Mar 27).....	8
Week 13 – Canada as a ‘Feminist Leader’ (Apr 3, 5)	9
Week 14 – Canadian Mythologizing in the 21 st Century (Apr 10)	9

Course Policies	10
Submission of Assignments.....	10
Grades.....	10
Late Assignments	10
Absences, Missed Work, Illness	10
Courses With An On-Line Element.....	10
Online Proctoring.....	11
Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection	11
Generative AI: Use Prohibited	11
Copyright and Recording	11
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)	12
Academic Integrity Statement.....	12
Conduct Expectations.....	12
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	13
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy	13
Course Modification.....	13
Extreme Circumstances.....	13

Course Description

This course interrogates the ideas that define 'being Canadian,' and prompts students to reflect on the values and history behind this identity. Course content will probe context and tensions of the Canadian identity, the role of dominance and power in myth-making, and the contradictions within Canadian branding. The course will include lecture and participation components.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify common Canadian identifiers and how they are reproduced;
- Problematize Canadian myth-making, particularly missing perspectives;
- Relate concepts of power, dominance and inequality to Canadian political identity;
- Describe tensions and opportunities within Canada national branding; and
- Recognize how shared ideas shape public policy outcomes.

Required Materials and Texts

All course materials will be available online through McMaster's database and journal access, or will otherwise be made available to students.

I believe the political science canon must expand to include perspectives traditionally marginalized within the academy (and more broadly). Diversifying course syllabi is *one* aspect of this effort. This aspect is especially important given my positionality as a lecturer (White, male, cis-gendered and Anglophone) and the risk of reproducing harmful narratives. Accordingly, I have made a concerted effort to include marginalized voices in the required materials. For transparency's sake, the required sources breakdown as follows: 22 sources are (co)authored by women (85%), at least 12 sources are co(authored) by racialized individuals (46%), and at least 3 (12%) sources by francophone scholars.

Class Format

The class will be in-person, though it will also be accessible. All lectures will be uploaded on Avenue to Learn. I will not be uploading, however, discussion sessions to maintain student privacy. I would encourage students to come in-person if that is possible. Each session will begin with attendance, then a lecture, and finally a discussion.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. 'New Perspective' blurb 2 X 7.5%, TBD
2. Critical Analysis Assignment – 20%, Feb. 16
3. Research Essay – 40 %, Apr. 17
4. Participation or Weekly Write-Ups – 25%, ongoing

Course Evaluation – Details

New Perspective Blurbs (2 x 7.5% = 15%), due on Tuesdays following selected weeks

For two weeks of your choosing, you will advocate for the inclusion of a reading or multi-media piece (eg. youtube essay) for that week's content. You are encouraged to think about perspectives that are missing from the course content. Who needs to be heard? What are we missing? How can this particular Canadian identifier be problematized further? The assignment is intended to be **short** (300 words or less). A full **correct** citation is expected alongside your justification. You will be graded on the following: writing style and grammar, argumentation, and citation style (Chicago author-date).

Critical Analysis Assignment (20%), due February 16

For one week in the first half of the course, you are to critically analyze the assigned material for that week. This critical analysis can be done as a four-page solo paper, a six-page co-authored paper, or a 10 minute podcast collaboration. You will be expected to discuss the authors' arguments, outline their (potential) implications, and personally reflect on its validity and convincingness. Do you buy what they are 'selling'? You are encouraged to bring your own perspectives and experiences into the discussion. Assignments will be graded on their interpretations of the assigned materials, writing style or production organization, and overall argumentation.

Research Essay (40%), due April 17

Your final course assignment will be a research essay on one of the following topics. The assignment should be no longer than 3000 words. You are expected to have at least six scholarly sources. The reference style is Chicago author-date. Further details – including a grading breakdown – will be made available later.

Option A

When it was introduced in the 1960s, the red Maple Leaf was a symbol of a new Canada that embraced bilingualism, liberalism and multiculturalism. Though it was contested at the time, the 1960s helped delineate a new Canada from its days as a dominion. Today, Canadian nationalism is at an inflection point. On the one hand, we see Canadian identity embraced by movements like the Freedom Convoy. On the other hand, we know more and more people feel uncomfortable celebrating Canada (eg. Canada Day).

This context in mind, your major paper will focus on the following questions. First, what explains today's polarization over Canadian nationalism? Second, what are the implications of this polarization (especially for public policy)?

Option B

You can either interrogate a topic not directly covered by the course or a topic from the second-half of the course. This topic should advance an idea that defines (or will define) Canadian national identity today.

In this assignment, you will be asked to do the following:

- Outline your 'identifier' drawing from real world examples and scholarship;
- Describe this identifier – where did this come from?;
- Explain how this identifier may impact Canadian political culture and public policy;
- Problematize the identifier – who is missing from this version of Canada?

Participation or Weekly Write-Ups (25%), ongoing

This course is intended to be interactive. While I make strides to problematize the content and offer varied perspectives – as is my responsibility as a lecturer, there are inherent limitations. Your participation can fill gaps in my understanding as well as your peers.

This course allows for different participation pathways. For most, I expect oral participation during lecture. This involves asking questions, commenting on the materials, and offering your own perspectives. I especially welcome personal experiences should you feel comfortable to share. The best participants are those who both **engage** with the material and **listen** to other participants. If you are uncomfortable with verbal participation or are unable to attend, you can write up a weekly response (about 200 words) due each Friday.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 – Introduction (Jan 10, 12)

Optional Readings:

Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories*, pp. 1-29.

Section I: First Wave Canadian Identifiers

Week 2 – Canada as the ‘Peaceable Kingdom’ (Jan 17, 19)

Readings:

Scott See, “The Intellectual Construction of Canada’s ‘Peaceable Kingdom’ Ideal,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 52, no. 2 (2018): 510-37.

Rita Dhamoon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, “Dangerous (Internal) Foreigners and Nation-Building: The Case of Canada,” *International Political Science Review* 30, no. 2 (2009): 163-83.

Week 3 - Canada as a ‘Compact’ (Jan 24, 26)

Readings:

Stéphane Paquin, “The Invention of a Myth: The Pact between Two Founding Peoples,” In *Roads to Confederation*, 1999, 344-60.

Jennifer Wallner, “Imagining Canada: Narratives of Federalism in Intergovernmental Organizations.” In *Canada at 150: Federalism and Democratic Renewal*, edited by Kyle Hanniman and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant, 271-289. Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 2019.

Week 4 – Canada as ‘Sunny Ways Accommodationists’ (Jan 31, Feb 2)

Readings:

Hayden King, “Treaty Making and Breaking in Settler Colonial Canada,” In *Contemporary Inequalities and Social Justice in Canada*, edited by Janine M. Brodie, 107-123. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2018.

Karen Foster and Hannah Main, “Last Resort: The Promise and Problem of Tourism in Rural Atlantic Canada.” *The Journal of Rural and Community Development* 15, no. 2 (2020): 75-94.

Week 5 – Canada as a ‘Red Tory Anomaly’ (Feb 7, 9)

Readings:

Janet Ajzenstat and Peter J. Smith, “Liberal-Republicanism: The Revisionist Picture of Canada’s Founding,” In *Canada’s Origins: Liberal, Tory or*

Republican?, edited by Janet Ajzenstat and Peter J. Smith, 1-18. Ottawa: Carleton Press, 1997.

Nick Baxter-Moore, Donald Munroe Eagles, Ibrahim Berrada, Oleksandr Chernomorchenko, Paul D. Coleman, Kelly Gaskin, Karey Hatch, Craig Hilimoniuk and Patrick Morris, "Explaining Canada–US differences in attitudes toward the role of government: a test of S.M. Lipset's 'Continental Divide,'" *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 56, no. 4 (2018): 472-92.

Week 6 – Canada as a 'Linchpin' & 'Peacekeeper' (Feb 14, 16)

Readings:

Nicole Wegner, "Militarization in Canada: myth-breaking and image-making through recruitment campaigns," *Critical Military Studies* 6, no. 1: 67-85.

Jennifer M. Welsh, "Canada in the 21st Century: Beyond Dominion and Middle Power," *The Round Table* 93, no. 376: 583-93.

Notes: Critical Analysis Assignment due February 16

Week 7 – Recess (Feb 19-23)

Reading Week. No classes.

Section II: Second Wave Canadian Identifiers

Week 8 – Canada as a 'Bilingual Model' (Feb 28, Mar 1)

Readings:

Stéphanie Chouinard, "Federalism 'Plus'? Carving a Space of Non-Territorial Autonomy in a Federal State: The Case of Official-Language Minorities in Canada," In *Canada at 150: Federalism and Democratic Renewal*, edited by Kyle Hanniman and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant, 211-23, Institute of intergovernmental Relations, 2019.

Emmanuelle Richez, "Francophone Minority Communities: The Last Constitutional Standard-Bearers of Trudeau's Language Regime," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* no. 45-46 (2012): 35-53.

Week 9 – Canada as a 'Mosaic' (Mar 6, 8)

Materials:

Himani Bannerji, "On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of 'Canada,'" In *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*, 87-124, Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000.

Amira Elghawaby, "Canada's Multiculturalism – Worth Defending," *TEDxOttawa*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pP_ptjP1eKo.

Tina J. Park, "Tackling racism against Asian-Canadians as multiculturalism turns 50," *Policy Options*, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/tackling-racism-against-asian-canadians-as-multiculturalism-turns-50/>.

Week 10 – Canada as a 'Multinational State' (Mar 13, 15)

Readings:

Glen Sean Coulthard, "The Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts," In *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, 25-49, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Kaitie Jourdeuil, "This Canada Day, settler Canadians should think about 'land back.'" *The Conversation*, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/this-canada-day-settler-canadians-should-think-about-land-back-184816>.

Pamela McCurry, "Ottawa must talk to Canadians about nation-to-nation agenda," *Policy Options*, 2018. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/october-2018/ottawa-must-talk-to-canadians-about-nation-to-nation-agenda/>.

Week 11 – Canada as a '2SLGBTQ Rights Trailblazer' (Mar 20, 22)

Materials:

Miriam Smith, "Homophobia and Homonationalism: LGBTQ Law Reform in Canada," *Social & Legal Studies* 29, no. 1 (2020): 65-84.

Lily Alexandre, "Trans Youth Get Healthcare Challenge (Impossible)," Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YfgFnnlCfs>.

Lauren Bialystok, "Doug Ford's reboot of sex education in Ontario: Same as it ever was." *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/doug-fords-reboot-of-sex-education-in-ontario-same-as-it-ever-was-122299>.

Corinne L. Mason and Leah Hamilton, "How the 'parental rights' movement gave rise to the 1 Million March 4 Children," *The Conversation*, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/how-the-parental-rights-movement-gave-rise-to-the-1-million-march-4-children-213842>.

Week 12 – Canada as an 'Anti-Racist State' (Mar 27)

Readings:

Robyn Maynard, "Arrested (In)Justice," In *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, Chapter 3, Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2017.

Debra Thompson, "The Only One," In *Long Road Home: On Blackness and Belonging*, Chapter 2, Toronto: Scribner Canada, 2022.

Week 13 – Canada as a 'Feminist Leader' (Apr 3, 5)

Readings:

Lelia Benhadjoudja, "Racial Secularism as Settler Colonial Sovereignty in Quebec," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 7, no. 2 (2022): 182-99.

Mary Eberts, "Being an Indigenous Woman Is a 'High-Risk Lifestyle,'" In *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, 2nd edition, edited by Joyce Green, Chapter 5, Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2017.

Week 14 – Canadian Mythologizing in the 21st Century (Apr 10)

Optional Materials:

Joseph Heath, *The Myth of Shared Values in Canada*, The 2003 John L. Manion Lecture, Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2003.

The Agenda, "Is Canada Getting Lost in the Shuffle?" Youtube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goml_Yh-0c4.

Notes: Research Essay due April 17

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

[Insert policy on format of assignments and how to be submitted]

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

The general late penalty will be 2% per day. Students will also receive three 'free days' without penalty to be used across the course assignments. These 'free days' are used automatically and chronologically. No e-mails are needed to communicate this.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

Courses With An On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Generative AI: Use Prohibited

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with McMaster academic integrity policy, it "shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source". This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also state in the policy is the following, "Contract Cheating is the act of "outsourcing of student work to third parties" (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment." Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be

taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.