

History 521

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University of Calgary

Department of History

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Canadian Biography

THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to explore the role of biography in the writing of Canadian history. In particular, we will investigate the merits and drawbacks of the biographical approach to history and we will look at the different trends in biographical writing. Our investigation of biography and history will be carried out within the framework of the lives of controversial Canadians, such as Louis Riel, Sir Sam Hughes, General Arthur Currie, Mackenzie King, and Sir Frederick Banting. The life of another “controversial Canadian”, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, who is currently the subject of intense public scrutiny and debate, will also be explored. Not all the subjects investigated in this seminar, however, will be prominent or historically significant figures. The subjects of traditional historical biographies tend to be politicians, generals, explorers and inventors. In this course, we will also look at the lives/biographies of people who were once considered to be marginal and not worthy of biography, “people on the margins.” The lives of E. Pauline Johnson and Francis Pegahmagabow will serve to investigate questions relating to gender and race in biography.

Within this framework of “controversial Canadians”, we will look at some of the major issues surrounding biography, most particularly the sensitive one of how far should the biographer probe into the private lives of individuals. We will also investigate the various forms of historical biography. Biographies used to be solely about their subject’s public life. More recently, biographies integrate the personal or private life with the subject’s public life. We will also explore newer literary forms of biography, most notably the Graphic form of Biography and biography written from an aboriginal perspective as opposed to being within the canon on western literary biography.

TEXTBOOKS

All Books are available ON RESERVE at the TDFL.

Broad, Graham, *One in a Thousand: The Life and Death of captain Eddie McKay, Royal Flying Corps* -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE

Dutil, Patrice & Roger Hall, eds., *Macdonald at 200: New Reflections and Legacies* (Dundurn Press, 2014) -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE and U of C Library as an e-book ON-LINE.

Stacey, C.P., *A Very Double Life: The Private World of Mackenzie King* -available from the instructor in class

Dummit, Christopher, *Unbuttoned: A History of Mackenzie King's Secret Life* -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE and U of C Library as an e-book ON-LINE.

Cook, Tim, *The Madman and the Butcher: The Sensational Wars of Sam Hughes and General Arthur Currie* -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE

Brown, Christopher, *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography* -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE

Gray, Charlotte, *Flint and Feather: The Life and Times of Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake* (Harper Collins), pb –available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE

McInnes, Brian, *Sounding Thunder: The Stories of Francis Peghmagabow*) -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE and U of C Library as an e-book ON-LINE.

Bliss, Michael, *Banting: A Biography* -available at the U OF C TEXTBOOK STORE

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	DUE Date	Length	Value
B.A. Students			
Seminar Participation	Cumulative		30%
Proposal		2-3 pp.	20%
Research Paper	No later than Thurs. Dec. 20 th 2018	12 pp. (3,000 words + Notes & Bibliography	50%

Assignment M.A. Students	DUE Date		Value
Seminar Participation	Cumulative		30%
Proposal		2-3 pp.	10%
Research Paper	No later than Thurs. Dec. 20 th 2018	12 pp. (3,000 words + Notes & Bibliography	40%
2 Book Reviews	Books & Due date t.b.a.	3-5 pp. or 1,000 – 1,250 words	20%

Written assignments may be submitted by hardcopy or electronically. The advantage of the latter is a faster turn-around and legible comments from the instructor. Detailed description of assignments follow the Seminar schedule.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Sept. 7th Organizational & Overview

Brown, Robert Craig, “Biography in Canadian History”, Presidential Address to the Canadian Historical Association, *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers*, 1980

Wright, Donald, “Reflections on Donald Creighton and the Appeal of Biography”, *Journal of Historical Biography*, Vol. 1

P.B. Waite, “Journeys Through Thirteen Volumes: *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*”, *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.76, No.3, Sept. 1995

Marshall, David B., “Exceptional Canadians: Biography in the Public Square”, in Taras, David, & Christopher Wadell, eds., *How Canadians Communicate, Vol. IV Media and Politics*, Spring 2012, pp. 233-257

Meister, Daniel, “The Biographical Turn and the Case for Historical Biography”, *History Compass*, Vol. 16, No.1, 2017

Sept. 14th Doing Biography

Broad, Graham, *One in a Thousand: The Life and Death of Captain Eddie McKay, Royal Flying Corps*

Sept 21st – Sept. 28th Controversial Lives I: John A. Macdonald

Sept. 21st The Life and Political Career of John A. Macdonald

Dutil, Patrice & Roger Hall, eds., *Macdonald at 200: New Reflections and Legacies*

Full Text available on-line from the Univ. of Calgary

Library <http://deslibris.ca.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ID/447069>

See also: Martin, Ged, “Archival Evidence and John A. Macdonald Biography”, *Journal of Historical Biography*, Vol. 1.

Martin, Ged, John A. Macdonald and the Bottle” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, No.3, Fall 2006

Perry, Adele, “Beyond Biography, Beyond Canada”, *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No.2, June 2017

Neilson, Carmen, “A Much-Fathered Nation: Feminist Biography and Confederation”, *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No.2, June 2017

Wright, Donald, “His Macdonald, My Creighton, Biography and the Writing of History”, *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No.2, June 2017

Sept. 28th The Trial of John A. Macdonald

CBC Ideas: “The Trial of John A. Macdonald: Would he be Guilty of war Crimes Today?”, Originally aired April 11, 2018, 54 minutes

CBC Ideas: “The Verdict: John A. Macdonald: Guilty or Innocent?” Originally aired April 12, 2018, 54 minutes

See also the two scholarly biographies of Macdonald.

-Creighton, Donald, *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician* (1952)

-Creighton, Donald, *John A. Macdonald, The Old Chieftain* (1955)

Gwyn, Richard, *John A. The Man Who Made Us: The Life and Times of John A. Macdonald, Volume One: 1815-1867* (2007)

Gwyn, Richard, *Nation Maker, Sir John A. Macdonald His Life, Our Times, Volume Two: 1867-1891* (2011)

Oct. 5th – Oct. 12th Controversial Lives II: William Lyon Mackenzie King

Oct. 5th William Lyon Mackenzie King, the Biographer and the Public Record

Dummit, Christopher, *Unbuttoned: A History of Mackenzie King's Secret Life*

Full Text available on-line from the Univ. of Calgary

Library <http://deslibris.ca.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ID/452363>

Oct. 12th Breaking the Mold of Decorum & Respectability: Invading the Private

READING: C.P. Stacey, *A Very Double Life: The Private World of Mackenzie King*

Copies available from the Instructor

Oct. 19th – Oct. 26th Controversial Lives III: Libel & Scandal

Oct. 19th Hughes, Currie and the First World War

Cook, Tim, *The Madman and the Butcher: The Sensational Wars of Sam Hughes and General Arthur Currie*

Oct. 26th Biography, Social History & Exposing Scandal

READING: Michael Bliss, *Banting: A Biography*

See also: P.B. Waite, "Invading Privacies: Biography as History", *Dalhousie Review*, Vol.69, No.4, Winter 89/90.

Vipond, Mary, "A Canadian Hero of the 1920s: Dr. Frederick G. Banting", *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 63, No.4, Dec. 1982

Nov. 2nd – Nov. 9th Controversial Lives IV: Louis Riel

Nov. 2nd Orthodox Biography

Howard, Joseph Kinsey, *Strange Empire: Louis Riel and the Metis People*

Stanley, G.F.G., *Louis Riel*

Flanagan, Thomas, *Louis "David" Riel: Prophet of the New World*

Siggins, Maggie, *Louis Riel: A Life of Revolution*

Boyden, Joseph, *Louis Riel & Gabriel Dumont*

See also: Owram, Douglas, "The Myth of Louis Riel", *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 63, No.3, Sept. 1982

Nov. 9th Unorthodox Biography

Brown, Christopher, *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*

Nov 23rd – Nov. 30th Controversial Canadians V: People on the Margins

Nov. 23rd Biography and Gender

READING: Charlotte Gray, *Flint and Feather: The Life and Times of Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake*

See also: Cameron, Elspeth & Dickin, Janice, eds., *Great Dames*

Strong-Boag, Veronica & Carole Gerson, *Paddling her Own canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake*

Nov. 30th Indigenous Biography

McInnes, Brian, *Sounding Thunder: The Stories of Francis Pegahmagabow*

<http://deslibris.ca.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ID/451864>

Hayes, Adrian, *Pegahmagabow: Life-Long Warrior*

See also: Dempsey, Hugh, *Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfeet;*

Dempsey, Hugh, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom;*

Dempsey, Hugh, *Maskepetoon: Leader, Warrior, Peacemaker*

ASSIGNMENTS

1.Seminar Participation is an integral component of the course. Students will be assessed on the basis of their knowledge of the readings, quality of their participation, willingness to debate, and originality of their contribution. Showing up but saying very little warrants a grade of “C” or lower, as I will assume that you have not done the reading. The seminar is only as good as the amount and quality of class participation. Poor attendance will lead to a grade of “D” or lower for this component of the course.

STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO CONSULT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR ABOUT THEIR RESEARCH TOPIC.

2.The research paper proposal is a crucial stage in the preparation of the research paper. It should contain the following:

- outline of topic with some discussion of the primary research question.
- discussion of the significance of the topic in terms of biography and historiography or put another way, why the topic is important.
- major primary and secondary sources that will form the foundation of the paper
- a bibliography

N.B. These proposals should be at least 2 or 3 pages, including the bibliography.

3.The research papers should be approximately 12-15 pp. or 3,000-4,000 words in length, including notes and bibliography. The notes and bibliography **MUST** conform to the **Chicago Style** outlined in the Department’s *History Student’s Handbook: A Short Guide to Writing History Essays*, which can be accessed on the Department of History web page at <http://hist.ucalgary.ca>

The research paper should be an in-depth exploration of biography and Canadian history. A number of basic approaches can be taken.

a) students may attempt a mini-biography of someone who has left behind personal records. It could be a family member or someone who has left a collection of papers in a local archive, such as the Glenbow. Good models for this kind of biographical study exist in numerous DCB articles or in some of the chapters of Elspeth Cameron & Janice Dickin McGinnis eds., Great Dames available

at: <http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/calgarypublisher/docDetail.action?docID=10219309>

b) students may write an historiographical assessment of how someone has been written about in the biographical and historical literature. This topic is limited to major figures in Canadian history. Obvious examples include: Nellie McClung, Louis Riel, any of the Prime Ministers.

There must be a substantial amount of literature on the subject in order to undertake this approach.

c) students may assess a prominent and prolific biographer, a certain period of biographical writing, or genre of biographical writing. Some suggestions include: 1) the “life and times approach to biography; 2) the “golden age of political biography” in the 1950s; 3) Donald Creighton: “character and circumstance”; 4) Charlotte Gray, popular biographer; 5) Michael Bliss, social historian & biographer; 6) military biography of Canadian Generals or 7) feminist biography; 8) Hugh Dempsey, biographer of Canadian Natives

d) students may also assess a cluster of biographies involving people whose lives intersected in some way, such as: 1) the 1840-1850s; 2) the Fathers of Confederation; 3) the key players in the North-West Rebellion; 4) the founding of the C.C.F.; 5) fighting World War I; 6) first wave feminism; 7) political life in mid-twentieth century prairie west; 8) the 1960s; 9) diplomats and foreign policy mandarins in the mid-twentieth century; 10) Supreme Court justices; or 11) political memoirs for a certain period. The purpose of these papers is to show how biographical writing contributes to an understanding of a particular period or event.

4. Book Reviews Graduate students in Htst 521 are required to write **TWO** book reviews. Each review should be approximately 3-5 pp or 1,000-1,250 words. And each review will be count for 10% of the Final Grade. The reviews are to be critical discussions of any two scholarly biographies of any Canadian historical figure.

The book reviews should focus on the following questions:

- How effectively does the author re-create the life of the subject under review?
- What contribution does the biography make to an understanding of the times in which the subject lived?

Important Departmental, Faculty, and University Information

Attention history majors: History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take it in your second year.

Department Twitter @ucalgaryhist

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580, or email artsads@ucalgary.ca. For detailed information on common academic concerns, you can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>.

- For program planning and advice, contact the Arts Students Centre (ASC) in SS 102, call 403-220-3580, email artsads@ucalgary.ca, or visit <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising>.
- For registration issues, paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK (7625), visit the office in the MacKimmie Library Block (MLB) or their website at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/>.

Writing:

This course will include written assignments. Faculty policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

Writing Support:

Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services and other Student Success Centre Services, located on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library (TFDL). Writing Support Services assist with a variety of assignments, from essays to lab reports. Students can book 30-minute one-on-one appointments online, sign up for 15-minute drop-in appointments, and register for a variety of writing workshops. For more information on this and other Student Success Centre services, please visit www.ucalgary.ca/ssc.

Copyright:

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. This means that instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. What this simply means is that no copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or that you will have to consult books on reserve at the library. For more information on the University of Calgary's copyright policy, see <http://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>.

Red Box Policy:

Essays and other assignments may be handed in to the red box located outside of the History Department office (Social Sciences, Room 656). Please include the following information on your

assignment: 1) **course name and number**, 2) **instructor**, 3) **your name** and 4) **your student number**. Assignments received after 4:00 p.m. will be date stamped with the date of the next business day. We do not time stamp any papers. Please do not bring your paper into the office to be stamped. The box is emptied promptly at 8:30 a.m. and at 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Departmental Grading System:

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme has been adopted for use in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent—superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
80-84	A-	3.70	
77-79	B+	3.30	
73-76	B	3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
70-72	B-	2.70	
67-69	C+	2.30	
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.
60-62	C-	1.70	Receipt of a grade point average of 1.70 may not be sufficient for promotion or graduation.
56-59	D+	1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
50-55	D	1.00	
0-49	F	0	Fail—unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. As noted in *The History Student's Handbook* (http://hist.ucalgary.ca/sites/hist.ucalgary.ca/files/history_students_handbook_2015.pdf), plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failure to cite sources properly may be considered plagiarism. This could include quotations, and wording used from another source but not acknowledged.
- Borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers are considered plagiarism, as is submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved.
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources is also considered plagiarism, even when notes are used, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works.
- The use of notes does not justify the sustained presentation of another author's language and ideas as one's own.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Arts' associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the *University of Calgary Calendar*.

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference. Please participate in USRI surveys.

Academic Accommodations (implemented July 1, 2015):

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Campus Resources for Mental Health:

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the SU Wellness Centre (Room 370, MacEwan Student Centre, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy website (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

Other Useful Information:

- Faculty of Arts Representatives: 403-220-6551, arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca.
- Campus Security & Safewalk: 403-220-5333, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>.
- Freedom of Information: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>.
- Emergency Evacuation Assembly
Points: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>.
- Student Union Information: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/>.
- Graduate Student Association: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa/>.
- Student Ombudsman Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Fall 2018