

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3572F (001)

Canadian Literature and Multiculturalism

Fall 2023

(may be subject to small changes prior to September 2023)

NEW text added to Required Readings

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Brief calendar description:

This course explores Canadian literature in relation to "multiculturalism," one of Canada's most celebrated and contested national attributes. Readings may include works published before and/or after the passing of the Official Multiculturalism Act in 1982, as well as critical debates about the term "multiculturalism" itself.

Description for Fall 2023:

Multiculturalism officially became part of Canada's state apparatus and national identity with the entry of multiculturalism into the Constitution in 1982 and the passing of the Official Multiculturalism Act in 1988. Multiple cultures, however, have always been part of the making of "Canada." We will examine representations of multiculturalism before and after its official designation as Canada's national identity, through detailed analysis of primary texts and study of critical debates about multiculturalism in secondary texts.

As a nation-state, Canada has been developed through successive phases of immigration and settlement of peoples from other countries, especially following the British North America Act of 1867 in tandem with the colonization and displacement of Indigenous peoples. Dominated by the French and British in early exploration and the colonial development of mercantile capitalism, Canada's demographics changed significantly in the second half of the nineteenth century with the expansion of settlement into "the West," the rise of industrial capitalism, and government's intentional preferences for economic and political migrants from Northern and Eastern Europe in particular. The early through mid-twentieth century saw migrants from war-torn Europe, including from the northern shores of the Mediterranean, who contributed significantly to the growth of urban Canada. When immigration policy became significantly more open in the second half of the twentieth century, the nation's demographics and collective heritages changed significantly again, particularly with immigrants "of colour" (although racialized minorities in Canada's demography existed before these more open policies, from at least as early as the immigration of Black Loyalists from the American War of Independence in the eighteenth century and the import of Asian labourers for building the Canadian Pacific Railway).

