Canadian Immigration History
Syllabus

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A Canadian Immigration History Syllabus

This syllabus brings together key themes, readings, sources, and questions in the history of migration to, from, and within Canada, offering a resource to educators and students, and valuable historical context for contemporary debates. It is inspired by the example of the #ImmigrationSyllabus created by migration historians in the United States in 2017.

Please feel free to share, download, and print this syllabus, or otherwise incorporate it into your teaching and immigration history related work. Wherever possible we have tried to use and link to free, open-access readings and resources.

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SECTION I
THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
1. On Migration History

What is migration history? How does it differ from immigration history?
What is ethnicity and how is it constructed?

Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder, with Donna Gabaccia, “Migration in Human History—the Long View,” in What is Migration History? (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009), 8-52


Franca Iacovetta, Les immigrants dans l'historiographie anglo-canadienne (Société historique du Canada, 1997)

or/ou

Franca Iacovetta, The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History (Canadian Historical Association, 1997), 1-23.


et/ou


**Historical overviews**


ou/or


or/ou


2. Migration and Methodology

What methods do scholars use to study migration history? What are the possibilities and the limits of the different types of sources they use?


or/ou


Alexander Freund, Oral History and Ethnic History (Canadian Historical Association, 2014).

or/ou


Resources

Library and Archives Canada has several useful digitized databases and document collections allowing students to examine original immigration documents. These include databases of ship arrivals, passenger lists, migrant porters and domestics, Chinese migrants, and naturalization documents. Visit them here.

La Bibliothèque et Archives Canada possède une vaste collection de sources historiques numérisées sur l'immigration, dont des bases de données d'immigrants pour le Canada, de navires, de porteurs et domestiques, de migrants Chinois, et de dossiers de naturalisation.

Visitez leur site ici.

Pier21/Quai21 https://pier21.ca/
https://masscapture.ca, a collection of Chinese head tax certificates

The Portuguese Canadian History Project https://pchp-phlc.ca/

The Greek Canadian History Project http://archives.library.yorku.ca/gchp/

The Coptic Canadian History Project https://thecchp.com/about/

The Italian–Canadian Archives Project https://icap.ca/
SECTION II
CHRONOLOGICAL MODULES
3.

Who was mobile in colonial North America of the 16th–19th centuries? How were migrations in what would become Canada shaped by race, slavery, and indenture?


Jan Noel, Along a River: The First French Canadian Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).


Charmaine Nelson, Slavery, geography and empire in nineteenth-century marine landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica (London: Routledge, 2016), Chapter Two “A Tale of Two Empires” and Chapter Three “Representing the Enslaved in Montreal.”


**Resources**

Norma Bailey, Ikwe, 1985, 57 min.

Toronto Public Library, Freedom City.

Naomi Moyer & Funké Aladejebi, Remember / Resist / Redraw #02: Chloe Cooley, Black History, and Slavery in Canada (Graphic History Collective, 2017).
4. Canada and Global Migrations, 1830-1918

In what way was Canada part of the global movement of people during the long nineteenth century? What propelled or inhibited migration in this period?

Walter Nugent, Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870-1914 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), Chapter 1 (pgs. 3-39) [overview of historiographic debates (i.e. “exceptionalism”), patterns and motives of European transatlantic migration]; Chapter 2 (pgs. 41-107) if you want more detail about some sending countries/regions; and Chapter 3, section 14 (pgs: 136-148), about Canada, and section 16 (pg. 163-166), conclusion.


ou/or


Lisa Chilton, Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860s-1930 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

Lisa Chilton, Receiving Canada’s Immigrants: The Work of the State Before 1930 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2016).

ou/or


or/ou


5. The Exclusion Era, 1885-1947

For what reasons did Canada place restrictions on immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? How was this process connected to changing images of the nation and the role of the state?


John Price, Orienting Canada: Race, Empire and the Transpacific (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011). Prologue to War: Race, Empire and Migration (focuses on 1907 race riot and Gentleman’s Agreement).


Resources

6. Migration and Ethnicity in the First World War

How did race and ethnicity shape the experience of Canadians in the First World War? In what ways did the First World War change migration opportunities?


ou/or


**Resources**

7. Deportation and Internment

How did race, class, and gender affect deportation and interment policies during the Interwar and Second World War periods? How did people targeted by these policies respond?

Dennis Molinaro, *Deportation from Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2018).

or


et/ou


Greg Robinson, *Un drame de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale. Le sort de la*
minorité japonaise aux États-Unis et au Canada (Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2012).

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

or


David Zimmerman, “‘Narrow Minded People': Canadian Academics and the Academic Refugee Crises, 1933-41,” Canadian Historical Review 88, 2 (June 2007), 291-316.

Ivana Caccia, Managing the Canadian Mosaic in Wartime: Shaping Citizenship Policy, 1939-1945 (McGill-Queen's, 2010), “Setting Up the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship.”

Resources

Orion Keresztesi and Kassandra Luciuk, Remember/Resist/Redraw 17: Canada's Internment of Ukrainians (Graphic History Collective, 2018).


“Enemy Aliens“, NFB, Jeannette Lerman, 1975, 26 min.

“Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of World War II,” Columbus Centre/Villa Charities.
8. Migration and Ethnicity in the Cold War

How did the context of Cold War anxiety and post-WWII prosperity shape immigration priorities and experiences, and the changing meanings of citizenship in Canada?


ou/or

9. Multiculturalism, Pluralism, and Nation-Building

How has ethnic diversity been managed by civil society and the state in the past? What are interculturalism and multiculturalism, and how are they connected to nationalist projects in Canada?


Kevin Woodger, “Whiteness and Ambiguous Canadianization: The Boy Scouts Association and the Canadian Cadet Organization,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association, 28.1 (2017): 95-126. This article focuses mostly on the interwar period but will be helpful in understanding the origins of postwar multiculturalism.


Wenona Giles, Portuguese Women in Toronto. Gender, Immigration and Nationalism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), Conclusion (112-130).

Paul Eid, Being Arab: Ethnic and Religious Identity Building among Second Generation Youth in Montreal (McGill–Queen’s University Press, 2007) – Chapter 3 (47-61) and chapter 7 (151-178).

Resources


Tahani Rached, *Haïti (Québec)* NFB, 1985, 59 min
10. Refuge and Asylum

How has the experience of refugees to Canada changed over time? How have Canadian refugee and immigration policies changed over time?


or/or


Marlene Epp, Refugees in Canada: A Brief History (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2017).

or/ou


Jan Raska, “Remembering the Prague Spring Refugees,” in Daniel Ross, ed. Confronting Canadian Migration History (Active History, 2019).

Stephanie Bangarth, “Canada's Complicated History of Refugee Reception,” in Daniel Ross, Confronting Canadian Migration History (Active History, 2019).
Resources


or/ou


SECTION III
THEMATIC MODULES
II. Indigenous Migrations

How does a focus on Indigenous mobility, or lack thereof, shape our understanding of migration history more generally?


or


Victoria Freeman, ““Toronto Has No History!” Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City” *Urban History Review* 38, 2 (2010), 21–35.


Resources

Alex Williams, *The Pass System*, 50 min.

Benjamin Hoy, “Little Bear's Cree and Canada's Uncomfortable History of
Refugee Creation,” in Daniel Ross, ed., Confronting Canadian Migration History (Active History, 2019).

Fort Odanak: http://www.fort-odanak.ca/index-eng

ou/or

Fort Odanak : http://www.fort-odanak.ca/index-fra
12. Migration and North American Borderlands

How important is the border to studies of North American migration? In what ways?


Bruno Ramirez, Crossing the 49th Parallel: Migration from Canada to the United States, 1900-1930 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001)

ou/or


Benjamin Bryce, “Entangled Communities: German Lutherans in Ontario and North America, 1880-1930” in Benjamin Bryce and Alexander Freud,

13. Work and Economic Migrations

How have migrants experienced work and the labour market in Canada? How have they been perceived and treated as workers?


Marilyn Barber, Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991).

ou/or


or/ou

Sean Mills, Une place au soleil : Haïti, les Haïtiens, et le Québec (Montréal : Mémoire d'encrier, 2016), ch 6 «La place de la connaissance », p. 237-81

Glenda Tibe Bonifacio, “I Care for You, Who Cares for Me? Transitional

Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail Bakan, ““Underdevelopment, Structural Adjustment and Gendered Migration from the West Indies and the Philippines” (Chapter 3)” in Negotiating Citizenship: Migrant Women in Canada and the Global System (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).


**Resources**

Kwentong Bayan Collective and Ethel Tungohan, Remember / Resist / Redraw #03: Caregiving Work in Canada (Graphic History Collective, 2017).


14. Labour and Radicalism

How have migrants organized politically along lines of class and ethnicity? How has organized labour influenced the politics of inclusion and exclusion?


Ruth A. Frager, Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement of Toronto, 1900–1939 (University of Toronto Press, 1992), ch. 3.

Ruth A. Frager, “”Mixing with People on Spadina”: The Tense Relations between Non-Jewish Workers and Jewish Workers,” in A History of Human Rights in Canada: Essential Issues (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2009).

et/ou

15. Gender, Family, and Migration

In what ways have gender and family structured migrations and settlement in the past? How has this changed over time?


Franca Iacovetta, “Chapter 4: From Contadina to Woman Worker,” Such

Wenona Giles, Portuguese Women in Toronto. Gender, Immigration and Nationalism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).


Resources

16. On Migration and Settler Colonialism

**What is the relationship between migration and settler colonialism? How might this relationship affect our study of the history of migration?**


ou/or


Franca Iacovetta and Heidi Bohaker, “Making Aboriginal People ‘Immigrants Too’: A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous


Sarah Carter, Old Stock Canadians: Arab Settlers in Western Canada, in Daniel Ross ed., Confronting Canadian Migration History (Active History, 2019).


17. Migrants and the Canadian City

How have migrants shaped Canadian cities, and how have their lives been shaped by the urban environments they have lived and worked in?


and/or


John Zucchi, A History of Ethnic Enclaves in Canada (Canadian Historical Association, 2007), 1-23.

or/ou

John Zucchi, Une histoire des enclaves ethniques au Canada (Ottawa: Société historique du Canada, 2007).


or/ou


Resources

Historica Canada Heritage Minute, Kensington Market (2017).
18. Building Communities of Faith and Solidarity

How have newcomers created community through collective action and religious and secular institutions in different periods of Canadian history?


ou/or


Gilberto Fernandes, “Beyond the “Politics of Toil”: Collective Mobilization

Francis Swyripa, Storied Landscapes. Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies (University of Manitoba Press, 2010).

et/ou

Royden Loewen, Traits de culture des agriculteurs allophones dans l’ouest du Canada (Ottawa : Société historique du Canada, 2002).

or/ou

Royden Loewen, Ethnic Farm Culture in Western Canada (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2002).


or/ou

Roberto Perin, The Third Force in Canadian Catholicism, 1880–1920 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1998).

19. Migration, Community, and Memory

How do different generations experience migration? What is the relationship between migration and memory?


Mark McGowan, Creating Canadian Historical Memory: The Case of the Famine Migration of 1847 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2006).

ou/or

Mark McGowan, Produire la mémoire historique canadienne. Le cas des migrations de la famine de 1847 (Ottawa : Société historique du Canada, 2006).


Jodi Giesbrecht and Travis Tomchuk, Redress Movements in Canada (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2018).

ou

Jodi Giesbrecht et Travis Tomchuk, Mouvements de réparation au Canada (Société historique du Canada, 2018).

Resources

Nikkei Tapestry.

Vijay Agnew, Where I Come From (WLU Press, 2003), introduction, chapters 1, 2.