

**Queen's University: School of Policy Studies
MPA 867 Canadian Cultural Policy**

-Course Calendar and Outline-

2019 Summer Session: April 26-27, May 13-17 and June 3-7, 2019

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“Art is the voice of the nation speaking through time.”
-A. Y. Jackson (Canadian painter; member of the Group of Seven)

Summary

In MPA 867, we will examine *how* and *why* governments in Canada support the Canadian cultural sector. Throughout the course, we will consider public support for the performing arts, cultural goods and services, such as film and television, music and books, and cultural institutions (e.g. museums and art galleries). We will also explore policies and programs designed to foster a distinct ‘Canadian identity’, such as official bilingualism, multiculturalism, and sport, as well as the rationale behind these initiatives. We will take a look at the forces that have shaped these policies, such as technology, and globalization, as well as the tensions that exist within them, notably between different ideas of cultural identity, and between national cultural sovereignty and consumer choice. Finally, through practical assignments, students will learn how cultural policies are developed, implemented and evaluated in government, in preparation for future professional policy work.

Course Context

Culture is a simple word with complex meanings. Broadly speaking, culture describes ways of life, encompassing the values, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences that are particular to an individual, group, or society. Culture also refers to creative expression, and the tangible creative goods and services that result. Of importance, is that these definitions of culture are linked. In other words, our conditions inform both our creative expression, and how we engage with the creative expression of others.

Jackson and Lemieux (1999) define *cultural policy* as “the expression of a government’s willingness to adopt and implement a set of coherent principles, objectives and means to protect and foster its country’s cultural expression.” This definition invites several questions, notably: How and why does the government intervene (or not) in the cultural sphere? Specifically, how have governments in Canada assessed challenges to national and regional cultural expression in Canada, and what assessments are made about the effects of these policies? Can we identify future policy challenges? If so, how might they challenge the scope and intent of government engagement in culture?

This course probes answers to these and other questions of cultural policy in Canada, and in so doing, provides students with the knowledge and practical skills they need to make an effective

contribution to the development of Canada's cultural policy landscape, at governmental, institutional, and community levels. Through the course, an overview of the historical development of cultural policy in Canada will provide a foundation for a thematic survey of the Government's 'cultural policy toolkit.'

A critical engagement with current policy developments (e.g. review of the *Broadcasting Act*, Senate study on Canadian culture and international relations), supported by readings from relevant scholarly and policy literature will situate this overview in the context of contemporary issues that increasingly shape Canadian cultural policy, including globalization, technological developments, and Indigenous cultural resurgence.

Course Objectives

MPA 867 will be guided by the following learning objectives:

- Students will gain insight into how the tools of policy analysis and decision-making are employed in a practical setting. Specifically, they will be able to apply the skills and methodologies learned in core SPS courses to assist their understanding of the social, administrative and economic dimensions of cultural policies.
- MPA 867 will prepare students for the rapid research, writing, presentation and office debates that are typical in professional public administration. The ability to quickly synthesize the main findings from a wide range of sources is key. Assignments will mirror the types of materials routinely produced by policy analysts working in government or private organizations; assessment will focus on students' ability to express complex ideas in a clear, concise and engaging way.
- Students will engage in productive dialogues about culture to prepare them for diplomatic exchange within professional contexts. 'Culture' can be a complex and deeply personal subject. This is what makes cultural policy fascinating, but it's also the reason why particular attention will be paid to maintaining a respectful classroom environment. Collectively, we will foster inclusive dialogue and a sense of community so everyone feels empowered to fully participate in discussions and activities.
- Students will learn to synthesize, critique, and communicate complex policy issues. Within this context, class discussion is key to developing the confidence to talk about cultural policy issues in professional contexts, where it is important to speak persuasively and supported by evidence. To this end, at the start of each session, two or three students will each identify one or more recent media articles on cultural events or topics, explaining their significance. Students will also react to student presentations, reflecting their own reading and preparatory thinking.

Course Outline and Organization

In MPA 867, we will examine governmental choices and private actions designed to encourage cultural expression and expand access to it. Culture is an area of shared jurisdiction between levels of government. While our focus will be on pan-Canadian activities by the federal government, we will also reference provincial and municipal initiatives, notably (but not exclusively) in Quebec.

Where appropriate, engagement with critical perspectives on these initiatives will help provide context and situate Canadian cultural policy development in both historical and contemporary debates. Ideally, this approach will yield a nuanced understanding of cultural policies that can be applied in professional contexts.

The MPA 867 course is divided into three parts for the Summer 2019 Term.

- During the opening two days (April 26-27), we will look at different definitions of culture and explore the basis of cultural policy in Canada by identifying past and present challenges, and the evolution of policies. Is there a pattern to policy interventions? How have they evolved? Some current controversies and alternative approaches will be discussed to provide greater insight.
- During week one (May 13-17), we will examine specific institutions and programs. On the public side, this includes regulatory, legislative, fiscal and institutional mechanisms. On the private side, these include activities to produce and market cultural content on a for-profit model (known as the 'cultural industries') or on a not-for-profit model (usually in the performing arts).
- During week two (June 3-7), we will examine policy issues that are part of Canada's wider cultural identity. Topics will include international cultural relations and cultural trade, official bilingualism, multiculturalism, Indigenous cultural resurgence and cultural policy, and sport, among others. Attention will be given to current pressures that have significant impacts, such as technological innovation, international trade agreements, and financial capacity.

MPA 867 will be delivered in a combined lecture and seminar format. In addition, a guest participant from the cultural field will be invited to speak to the class to give an on-the-ground perspective (time permitting). A list of sources and a day-by-day syllabus will be discussed during the opening class section. The syllabus will be sent to registered students before the course begins.

While secondary sources on Canadian cultural policy are limited, there are excellent primary information sources available. These include Parliamentary reports, government policy statements, submissions by industry associations and interest groups, speeches by public officials. The annual reports of government departments, companies and agencies, as well as evaluation reports for specific funding programs are all highly useful.

Sample of Current Issues

Changing technology and evolving social norms are having important impacts on Canadian culture at this time. Here are three examples drawn from the current climate, identifying challenges and some policy choices.

1. Indigenous Cultural Resurgence

Louis Riel foretold Indigenous cultural resurgence when he said: “my people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.” In this moment, it is important to recognize that policymakers can no longer assume that Western culture will be dominant, or Western “universal” values accepted, especially related to “culture.” As Canada seeks to reconcile itself with its colonial legacy and engage in meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, how can policymakers craft initiatives that do not merely perpetuate the marginalization of Indigenous cultural voices?

For example, while the Federal Government has signaled it is working with Indigenous groups to “co-develop national First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages legislation,” Natan Obed, President of Inuit Tapirit Kanatami (ITK), which represents Inuit in Canada, has called the proposed legislation a “symbolic gesture.” In his words, “It contains no federal obligation to fund Indigenous languages, nor does it provide for reliable federal support, and Indigenous participation, in multi-party agreements and other arrangements that would extend Indigenous language programs and services at provincial, territorial and municipal levels.” (CBC News, February 5, 2019).

From a policy standpoint, how could the proposed legislation be strengthened in order to not appear merely as a symbolic gesture? Is it just a question of money, or does policy development entail a deeper reconceptualization of how issues of language and culture are considered?

2. Taxation and Regulation of Foreign Digital Multinationals, such as Netflix.

Streaming services, such as Netflix have gained significant attention in Canada because they exemplify the challenge posed by digital technology to Canada’s longstanding cultural policies. Since they are delivered “over-the-top” via the Internet, they are subject neither to sales tax nor the financial contributions incumbent upon cable companies to assist Canadian content production.

The 2017 decision by Canadian tax exemptions for Netflix, in exchange for more investment in “content made in Canada”, was deeply controversial. Many felt that this arrangement perpetuates an unfair playing field between Canadian and foreign players, and encourages the production of film and TV content that, while involving Canadians, may not necessarily reflect Canadian perspectives: “as an incubator of Canadian culture, laissez faire may not be enough. The industry could survive, but not the artists. There could be lots of film production in Vancouver or Toronto, but nothing produced about Vancouver or Toronto, or any other place or people in Canada.” (John Ibbitson, *Globe and Mail*, October 2017)

From a policy standpoint, how should streaming services (foreign or Canadian) be incorporated into the Canadian broadcasting/communications framework? What regulatory and legislative tools could achieve this? Alternatively, should the existing broadcasting policy framework be radically reduced to reflect the new technological environment?

3. Support for newspapers and digital media in the “fake news” era.

While many European countries provide direct support to daily newspapers to encourage a healthy news ecosystem, governments in Canada have traditionally declined to do so, believing that such support would directly interfere the ability of journalists to provide balanced reporting and keep governments accountable. However, the decline of traditional media due to falling advertising revenue and the rise of “fake news” are raising concerns about the way citizens are informed on current issues; a crucial element in a democratic society. In light of these concerns, the federal government reversed its longstanding policy and pledged nearly \$600 million over five years to protect the “vital role that independent news media play in our democracy and in our communities.” (Finance Minister Bill Morneau, National Post, November 21, 2018). While the injection promises to stabilize the struggling newspaper industry, it could be a case of too little too late, since advertising revenues continue to fall, jeopardizing newspapers’ bottom line.

From a policy standpoint, when should the Government bailout struggling cultural industries? What mechanisms can be used to provide support while also safeguarding freedom of creative expression and press freedom? Finally, are there cases in which the Government should just let unsuccessful business models die naturally in order to encourage innovation?

Course Assignments

There will be **four** assignments that roughly parallel the three sections of this course. As mentioned earlier, assignments will mirror products currently used in government, allowing students to apply the knowledge acquired in this course to develop the practical skills (writing, analysis, public presentation, teamwork) needed for professional roles in the cultural policy sector. Students will also be evaluated on their class participation. Assignments will be fully explained in the detailed syllabus. I will also be available in person or by email to discuss assignments.

1. Briefing Note (500 words): Outline, background, considerations and proposed next steps necessary to clearly and succinctly inform decision makers about a cultural policy issue.	15%
2. Class presentation. Individual (or team, depending on class size) will present on a cultural policy program or institution, directly related to the theme of that day’s session.	20%
3. Policy Problem Case Study and Interactive Presentation: Mirroring a key element of the cultural policy process, students will work in groups to identify a policy weakness/gap and develop a proposal to address it. Each group will present their case study to the class through an interactive session where the audience will act as the “Minister’s office”, providing a challenge function and addressing political considerations.	25%
4. Final Essay/Policy Brief (2,000 words): Students will draw on policy literature and theory to describe and analyze a contemporary cultural policy issue (a list of potential topics will be available, but students can also choose their own).	30%
5. Class Participation. Students will be evaluated on the thoughtfulness of their participation in class discussion and reaction to student presentations. As part of their class participation, students will also present media articles related to cultural events/topics and explain their significance to class themes.	10%

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities#values>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Graduate Studies Calendar (http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/sgrs/Academic_Integrity_Policy.html) Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Disability Accommodations Statement

The following statement on disability accommodations builds on a definition approved by Senate that clearly articulates both the commitment that Queen's University has to facilitating the integration of students with disabilities into the University community and the responsibility that students with disabilities have to identify needs requiring accommodation. All educators are encouraged to add the following statement to their course syllabi provided by the Queen's University Equity Office (<http://www.queensu.ca/equity/accessibility/policystatements/accommodation-statement>).

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Wellness Services (SWS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the Student Wellness website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services>