

Imagining 150: The Ethics of Canada's Sesquicentennial

The 5th Annual
University of Toronto
Centre for Ethics
Graduate Student Conference

May 5th-6th, 2017
With keynote speaker,

Paul Bramadat
University of Victoria

Call for Papers

With the onset of Canada's sesquicentennial year, Canadian institutions, collectives, and individuals are organizing a myriad of retrospectives and celebrations. The sesquicentennial year itself, and these diverse recognitions, present an invaluable opportunity for ethical reflection as well as critical assessment, both of the anniversary and of the idea of Canada itself. It prompts essential inquiries, like what are the ethical and political consequences of counting back 150 years to Canada's "founding"? What kind of ethical exercise is the celebration of a national anniversary? In what ways does the category of national sovereignty reify identities and imaginaries that not all the territory's inhabitants accept? And how do moments of national reflection elicit ethical questions about multiple categories of the Canadian imaginary?

In May 2017 the University of Toronto's Centre for Ethics will host a graduate conference to explore the multiplicity of ethical questions this celebration prompts. Mobilizing its unique positioning as an interdisciplinary space examining ethics at the University of Toronto, and building on the groundwork of previous graduate conferences, the Centre for Ethics invites graduate students from the University of Toronto and the wider Canadian academic community to present work related to our theme from across the humanities and social sciences. This two day event will invite faculty discussants to participate, and will feature a public keynote address by University of Victoria Professor Paul Bramadat. For students and faculty who attend this conference it will be an indispensable opportunity to meet across disciplines and to use the shared questions of ethics to think carefully through what Canadian poet Al Purdy called "the more easily kept illusions."

Imagining 150 invites submissions on the following topics (but submissions need not be limited to these possibilities):

The ethics of Canadian history: how else might the story be told? What is the current story, and what are its consequences? What is the historiography of Canada's multiple histories? How does Canadian history change according to how it is theoretically constructed?

The ethics of Canadian sovereignty: rethinking borders (inclusion as well as exclusion). What other sovereignties resist or negotiate Canadian sovereignty? What does sovereignty as an ethical category mean in the context of the sesquicentennial?

The ethics of the Canadian literary canon: what political/ethical work does a national "canon" do? To the extent that such a canon exists, does it have an ethic different from, say, American canonical fiction? I.e., does it help us think through one set of issues rather than another (say, immigration rather than race)?

An ethic of wilderness imaginaries? What ideas of land, land use, and population shape ethics of space in Canada? How is the Canadian imaginary in conversation with land?

Canada in philosophical perspective: What categories need to be interrogated for the idea of Canada to be examined?

Religion and religious diversity in Canada: How do religion and other spiritual ways of knowing contribute to negotiating the idea of Canada? What part does religion, as one of the intersecting identities of Canadians, play in nationwide celebrations of unity?

Ethics of national belonging: how do elements of Canadian national unity negotiate and police belonging? How do historical realities of racist, sexist, and bigoted policies play a part in national remembrance?

Canada's economic history: what role does capitalism play in historical and ongoing national ideals, and ethics?

International case studies that will comparatively highlight important moments of critical inquiry.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words prepared for blind review, as well as a short 100 word bio, by Wednesday Feb 1 2017 to graduateassociates@gmail.com