

QUEBEC QUESTIONS QUEBEC STUDIES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Stephan Gervais, Christopher Kirkey, and Jarrett Rudy (eds),
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What are the important questions that need to be asked for a comprehensive and thorough understanding of Quebec society, past and present? Scholarly researchers are keenly aware that the types of questions asked of their investigative topics determine both how answers are generated and what kinds of results will be obtained. The questions raised by the editors of this anthology become the foundation for the reader's excursion into the multi-faceted study of Quebec. The second edition of *Quebec Questions Quebec Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, offer English-speaking students, teachers, researchers and those simply interested in discovering how fascinating it is to explore Quebec as a topic worthy of academic debate, a pathway into the thinking about the inner mechanics of the province. Alongside a number of other English (and French) language texts in the distinct fields of history or political science that provide practical reviews of Quebec, *Quebec Questions* is unique in its commitment to exploring a wide range of issues within a multidisciplinary and comparative framework thereby provoking a critical reflection of the contours defining Quebec society, its culture, politics, people and much more.

The editors have assembled twenty-nine talented academics from across the disciplines including history, political science, philosophy, sociology, linguistics, law, education, film studies and literature to foster a dialogue within the contemporary conduits of thinking about Quebec. Although the majority of the contributors are based at Quebec universities, a few of our scholarly neighbors from the south supplement the discussion from a cross-border perspective.

The twenty-nine essays are grouped into six sections with interrelated topics: memories, identities, language, citizenship, Quebec models and international relations. The first part of the text

traces the important events and figures in Quebec's memory but rather than simply being an introductory section on history, it asks the more pertinent question of how Quebecers remember their past and how that record is used today. The section on 'identities' helps readers understand the social and cultural vectors used to express one's identity, both at the individual and collective levels. What study of Quebec would be complete without delving into language issues? In section three, essays on the language theme include planning and policies, the French majority conflict with its linguistic minorities and language acquisition. Part four is a journey into the gender, ethnic, secular and nationalist interrelations that shape the landscape of Quebec's diverse population. Section five explores the Quebec model for doing things. The chapters here focus on how Quebec's civil society, along with its political personalities have developed unique approaches to dealing with social and economic matters. Finally, in the last section, the six essays survey, in different ways, Quebec on the international stage. Together these works provide the most up to date and inclusive narratives currently being disseminated among scholars of Quebec society. These themes are not only relevant to the research issues in this anthology, but can be used as a comparative lens to situate Quebec among other parts of the world.

As a university textbook at the undergraduate level in an upper year lecture course or a graduate seminar class, students and their professors will find an intellectually stimulating guide into the dynamic study of a distinctive society and the most important issues it shares with others around the globe today. Each section begins with its own introduction to orient students to the essay topics and even more helpful are the chronological timelines, case studies and 'questions for critical thinking' contained in all chapters. According to the editors, students will find *Quebec Questions* an invaluable part of their study across a number of disciplines for three key reasons: the broad overview of crucial issues, the multidisciplinary research it showcases, and the comparative analysis that stresses "the links between themes presented here and their [students'] readings and research on other places" (General Introduction; xv). As a professor, researcher and self-identified Quebecer, I could not agree more. *Quebec Questions* should be on the bookshelf of anyone inside and outside the academic community interested in the study of Quebec society, its relations with Canada, and its place on the world stage.