2) Discuss the social, cultural, and political impact of business cycles in Canada between 1896 and 1984. How has the economic “roller-coaster” of boom and bust cycles affected the overall narrative of Canadian history? In your response, make sure you pay specific attention to: a) at least one cycle of expansion and prosperity; b) at least one cycle of recession or depression; and c) the role of the State, including specific government initiatives.

In the early twentieth century, Canada became a diversified modern industrial economy that stretched from coast to coast. Transcontinental railways and tariff barriers framed the expansion. Captains of industry, merger kings and finance capitalists applied the capital. Foreign investment and technology flowed into the country. Booming exports of wheat, minerals and wood balanced the economy. Immigrants augmented the labor force and boosted consumption.

Banks, telegraph companies, department stores and mass-circulation newspapers catered to a national clientele. Manufacturers discovered mass production and new processes. Automobiles, aluminum, name brand processed food and sheet steel emerged from factories. Electricity fueled the advance, powering everything from streetcars to cigarette making. When war came in 1914, Canada directed its new industrial muscle to making steel and munitions.

Advertising, business education and applied research swelled the dignity and quantity of Canadian industry. The cities were the beachhead of the new prosperity, millionaires' mansions and tightly packed industrial suburbs mirrored the winners and wage laborers of Canada's new industrialism.

At the end of the First World War Canada transitioned from a war based full production economy to a peace time balanced supply and demand economy. This brought about a slump in the economy which lasted for a short period while things returned to normal. Business activity then began to pick up and the promises of the Great War for real democracy, fair wages, social justice and change in favour of the majority of the people were voiced. Labour movements sprung up, farmers coops were created and a general shift from a rural based economy to an urban based one began.

Canada's business and economic trends followed those of the U.S. and a general economic boom began to pickup speed as the 20's progressed. This was not an even or fair boom as some parts of the country did not enjoy or reap the benefits of the growth. The Federal government began to pull out of the large war time programs and by default left the general economy to business. As prosperity increased and no levels of government saw fit to regulate the private sector to intensely, a belief that business knew best became pervasive through the country. This boom period was to come to an abrupt end in October of 1929 when the stock markets in Canada, the U.S. and several other countries in the collapse and the Great Depression began.

The worldwide Great Depression of the early 1930s was a social and economic shock that left millions of Canadians unemployed, hungry and often homeless. Few countries were affected as severely as Canada during what became known as the Dirty Thirties, due to Canada’s heavy dependence on raw material and farm exports, combined with a crippling Prairies drought. Widespread losses of jobs and savings ultimately transformed the country by triggering the birth of social welfare, a variety of populist political movements, and a more activist role for government in the economy.
During the Great Depression, the two opposing parties (liberals-King and Conservatives-Bennett) had two very different solutions to get Canada out of an economic slump. Some government initiatives during the GD were to make-work projects, increased spending and intervention in formerly strictly provincial jurisdictions such as social services. R. B. Bennett’s Conservative government initially opposed increases in federal spending and an expansion of the federal role in social welfare because Bennett believed that free enterprise and tariffs would protect Canadian industry and ensure access to export markets. However, neither Bennett’s policies nor those of William Lyon Mackenzie King had the desired effect on the Great Depression, and many Canadians emerged from the period haunted by memories of poverty and acutely aware of the need for access to health care.

3) How did understandings and expressions of Canadian identity evolve in the period between 1945 and 1990? Write an essay exploring this theme and focusing in particular on at least three of the following aspects:

1. a) Communications Media
2. b) Gender and Sexuality
3. c) Race and Ethnicity
4. d) Regionalism
5. e) Religion
6. f) Globalization

Canadian identity refers to the unique culture, characteristics and condition of being Canadian, as well as the many symbols and expressions that set Canada and Canadians apart from other peoples and cultures of the world. The question of Canadian identity was traditionally dominated by three fundamental themes: first, the often conflicted relations between English Canadians and French Canadians stemming from the French Canadian imperative for cultural and linguistic survival; secondly, the generally close ties between English Canadians and the British Empire, resulting in a gradual political process towards complete independence from the imperial power, and, finally, the close proximity of English-speaking Canadians to the military, economic and cultural powerhouse of the United States. With the gradual loosening of political and cultural ties to Britain in the twentieth century, immigrants from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean have reshaped the Canadian identity, a process that continues today with the continuing arrival of large numbers of immigrants from non British or French backgrounds, adding the theme of multiculturalism to the debate.

The main crisis regarding Canadian identity came in World War I. Canadians of British heritage were strongly in favor of the war effort, while those of French heritage, especially in Quebec, showed far less interest. A series of political upheavals ensued, especially the Conscription Crisis of 1917. Simultaneously, the role of immigrants as loyal Canadians was contested, with large numbers of men of German or Ukrainian heritage temporarily stripped of voting rights or incarcerated in camps. The war helped define separate political identities for the two groups, and permanently alienated Quebec and the Conservative Party.

During this period, World War I helped to establish a separate Canadian identity among Anglophones, especially through the military experiences of the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the Battle of Passchendaele and the intense homefront debates on patriotism.