

# The Best Bookshops in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

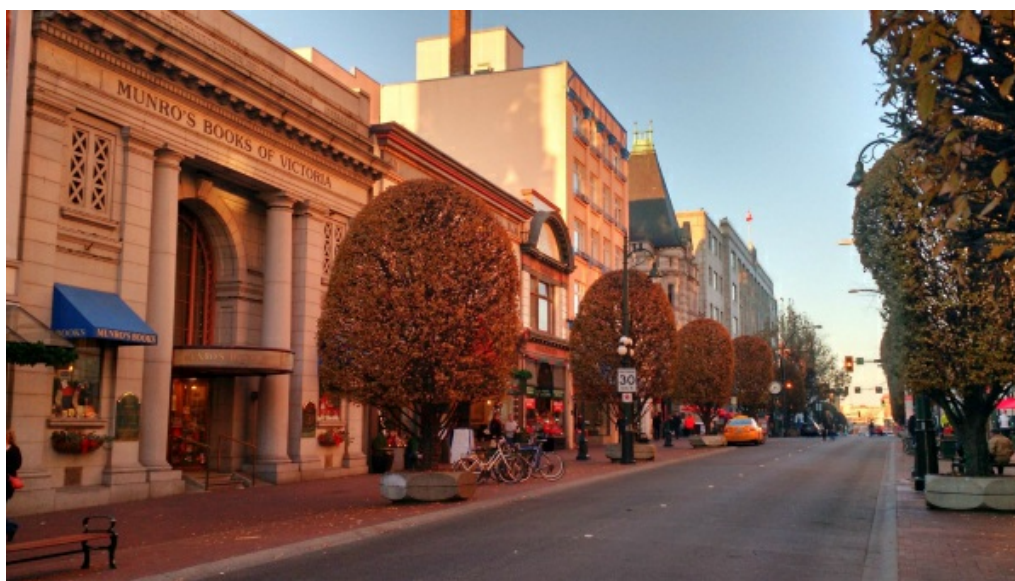
**Tiffany Chan** takes us on a tour of the best bookshops in **Victoria, British Columbia, Canada**. If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when undertaking research or in a city for a conference, further information about contributing follows this article.

This review is published as part of a March 2018 endeavour, '[A Month of Our Own: Amplifying Women's Voices on LSE Review of Books](#)'. If you would like to contribute to the project in this month or beyond, please contact us at [Lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk](mailto:Lsereviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk).



Image Credit: Inner Harbor Causeway, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada ([ChrisJohnstone86 CC BY SA 3.0](#))

Although overshadowed by its larger cousin, Vancouver, Victoria (British Columbia) has a quirkiness and charm all its own. During the summer months, tourists flock to this island city and it's not hard to see why—Victoria boasts some of the nicest views, beaches and weather along Canada's west coast. These hangouts become opportunities for locals and visitors alike to relax, breathe in the fresh ocean air and crack open a good book.



## Munro's Books

Look up and it's not hard to see why Munro's Books frequently appears on lists of top bookstores in the world: its architecture and cloth banners create an almost reverent atmosphere. Originally designed by Thomas Hooper as a bank in 1909, Munro's has become a haven for book launches, book signings and other literary events as much as it has for casual browsers. You might also recognize it as the namesake of Jim and Alice Munro—the latter of whom won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature. From there, it's a short wander to the Inner Harbor or next door to Murchie's Tea and Coffee for a drink to go with your new books.

## Russell Books



This triple-decker is packed floor-to-ceiling with interesting finds. The upper floor boasts science fiction, mystery, graphic novels and other genres, while vintage and rare titles line the basement shelves. Below, you can find many leather-bound volumes, collectibles and even old scientific and technical magazines dating back to the 1930s. With yet another location open on View Street, Russell Books provides plenty enough to lose yourself in for hours.

## Camas Bookstore and Infoshop

The sign on the front proclaims 'more than just a bookstore', and the inside of Camas Bookstore and Infoshop certainly lives up to its promise. In one corner, you can lounge on some couches by the window or idly strum a guitar. Or you can thumb through the store's sketchbooks, examining the doodles that previous patrons have left behind. In another corner sits a herb library and exchange where you can take some dried remedies home or donate your own. With sections labelled with themes such as 'Feminist Theory', 'Socialism' and 'Disability and Ableism', Camas isn't afraid to wear its politics on its dust jackets.

## Sorensen Books and the Chronicles of Crime

This bookstore is actually two-in-one. At the front of the shop, Chronicles of Crime specialises in mystery, sorted by subgenre ('Female PI') or geography ('International'). Behind it, Sorensen Books has fare for the general reader, including cookbooks, art and local history. Between the bookstores-within-a-bookstore is 'the Evidence Locker', a room full of vintage books, postcards and other collectibles—fitting, since Sorensen and Chronicles stand on a part of Fort Street known as 'Antique Row'.

There's lots more to explore in Victoria, from larger shops, such as **Bolen Books**, to smaller neighbourhood hangouts like **James Bay Coffee and Books**. Whatever your taste, this small city offers a wide selection and a refreshing change of pace.

**Tiffany Chan** received an M.A. in English Literature from the University of Victoria, where she specialised in digital humanities and nineteenth-century studies. Her final project used neural networks and machine learning to imitate, and then produce, text written in the style of Grant Allen (1848-99).



*Note: This bookshop guide gives the views of the author, and not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics. Thank you to Tiffany Chan for providing the bookshop images included in this guide.*

**Do you have a favourite bookshop?** If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, then this is your chance to tell us all about it.

As part of a [regular feature](#) on *LSE Review of Books*, we're asking academics and students to recommend their favourite two or three bookshops in a particular city, with the aim of building an exciting online series for our book-loving community of readers the world over.

Bookshops could be academic, alternative, foreign language, hobby-based, secret or underground institutions, secondhand outlets or connected to a university. We'd like to cover all world regions too.

If something comes to mind, we're looking for around 150 words per bookshop, detailing why each place is a must-see. Our editorial team can then find suitable photos and links to accompany the piece, though you're welcome to supply these too. We only ask that you focus on just one city or region, and two or three bookshops within it.

**Email us now if you'd like to contribute:** [lseviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk](mailto:lseviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk)