

The Arctic - A Canadian Perspective

SISCA 490 - Spring Quarter 2012
5 Credits -- Mon/Wed 3:30-5:20 p.m.
Location: Thompson 334

Instructor: Shane Pisani
Office: 122F Miller Hall
Email: pisani@uw.edu
Office Hours: TBD



Overview

SISCA 490 offers senior undergraduate students the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Canada's Arctic region and the forces that shaped its past and that will influence its future. At the foundation of the course is the ability to identify the unique human and environment systems present in the Arctic and their interdependent relationships. Discussion topics will include early indigenous settlement and European exploration, the sustainability and impacts of resource development, a geo-cultural and political exploration of Aboriginal cultures and current issues including differing national and international views on Arctic sovereignty. This interactive course will reflect the Canadian Arctic experience and its responses to the increasing cultural and environmental global importance of its far north regions.

Course Objectives

1. Identify the basic physical, biological and climate features of Canada's Arctic regions and describe their impacts on northern culture.
2. Describe the historical evolution of the Arctic and its contributions to Canada's political, economic and cultural perspectives.
3. Identify the driving forces of resource development in the Arctic, current projects and analyze the challenges stakeholders face in the Arctic economy.
4. Discuss the contemporary status of indigenous peoples of Canada's Arctic in relation to culture, government relations and environmental issues.
5. Analyze current issues in Canada's Arctic including sustainability and sovereignty and identify potential conflicts that competing national and international interests may pose.
6. Apply the broad knowledge you gain about Canada's Arctic to an in-depth analysis of a selected topic explored in the course.

Course Text

The Geography of the Canadian North: Issues and Challenges, 3rd ed., by Robert M. Bone, (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Supplemental Reading

After the Ice: Life, Death, and Geopolitics in the New Arctic, Alun Anderson, (Smithsonian Books, 2009.)

Ancient People of the Arctic, Robert McGhee, (UBC Press, 1996).

Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice, Jace Weaver (ed), (Orbis Books, 1996).

Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America, Shelagh Grant, (Douglas and MacIntyre, 2011).

Strategic importance of the Arctic in U.S. policy: hearing before a subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, special hearing, August 20, 2009, Anchorage, AK., United States Congress Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of Homeland Security, (2010).

The Future History of the Arctic, Charles Emmerson, (Public Affairs, 2010).

The Last Imaginary Place: a Human History of the Arctic World, Robert McGhee, (Oxford University Press, 2005).

The Weather of the Future: Heat Waves, Extreme Storms, and Other Scenes from a Climate-Changed Planet, Heidi Cullen, (Harper Paperbacks, 2010).

Who Owns the Arctic? Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North, Michael Byers, (Douglas and MacIntyre, 2010).

The University of Washington Library has also set up a comprehensive website dedicated to Arctic resources which you will find useful throughout the course as well:

<http://guides.lib.washington.edu/canada-arctic>

About Shane Pisani



Shane Pisani has had the opportunity to explore the Western Arctic at length, live in a few of its remote places and absorb the Inuit culture that has provided a unique perspective on Canada's North. Being able not only to live and work but also conduct research for his MSc. in Rural Planning and Development from the University of Guelph, Shane was able to identify valuable connections between community stakeholders in Inuvik and its surrounding communities on the Mackenzie River Delta as its eco and cultural tourism industry began to grow. The Arctic also lent itself to a number of fantastic outdoor experiences including hiking the Chilkoot Trail, camping on Herschel Island and regular excursions to the various mountain ranges that are readily accessible. SISCA 490 will allow students to understand the importance of Canada's Arctic through a number of lenses including historical, environmental, cultural, economic and geopolitical perspectives. Shane is currently a doctoral student in the College of Education's Curriculum and Instruction Department.

Syllabus for SISCA 490: The Arctic – A Canadian Perspective

Spring 2012

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Arctic sovereignty. This interactive course will reflect the Canadian Arctic experience and its responses to the increasing cultural and environmental global importance of its far north regions.

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Outline

Unit 1 – Stereotypes and Realities: Understanding the Arctic

Unit 2 – The Earth Science Sphere: Physical Landscape and Geological Features

Unit 3 – The Anthropological Sphere: From the Bering Land Bridge to European Exploration

Unit 4 – Economics of the Arctic: Resource Development, its Impacts and Challenges

Unit 5 – The Cultural Sphere: People of the North

Unit 6 – The Political Sphere: Treaties, Agreements and Government Relationships

Unit 7 – Arctic Sovereignty and Sustainability: Moving Forward in the 21st Century

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Evaluation

Assignment 1 (15%) – Book Report

Select a book that explores a historical or contemporary perspective on Canada's Arctic. You will be expected to produce a book report that provides an in-depth analysis of the issues explored. Do not provide a simple summary of the book. Maximum 5 pages double spaced.

Date: April 11, 2012

Midterm (20%)

Date: May 2, 2012

Assignment 2 (15%) - Structured Academic Controversy

This is an in-class assignment in which groups will explore the opening of the Northwest Passage and its implications for the Canadian economy and its sovereignty over the Arctic. Maximum 5 pages double spaced.

Date: May 28, 2012

Final Paper (40%)

Select a topic that we have explored in class and conduct further research to gain an expanded understanding of the issue. Ensure that the paper includes a variety of perspectives and resources to allow for critical analysis and relevant conclusions. Maximum 10 pages double spaced.

Date: June 6, 2012

Participation (10%)

Students will be expected to actively engage in discussions stemming from readings and lectures presented each class.

Course Calendar

Week of March 26 – Stereotypes and Realities: Understanding the Arctic

Text: Chapter 1 – Northern Perceptions

Emmerson – Oracles and Prophets: Rethinking the North p. 3-57

Week of April 2 – Physical Landscape and Geological Features

Text: Chapter 2 – The Physical Base

Cullen – Chapter 8: The Arctic, Part 1 p. 149-172

Anderson – Trouble at the Top p. 135-149

The Arctic: First and Worst for Global Warming (1989):
http://archives.cbc.ca/environment/climate_change/clips/14650/

Week of April 9 – From the Bering Land Bridge to European Exploration

Text: Chapter 3 – The Historical Background

McGhee – Chapter 2: Eskimo History p. 12-23;

McGee - Chapter 4: The People of the Muskox Way p. 44-72

Week of April 16 – From the Bering Land Bridge to European Exploration

Text: Chapter 4 – Population Change and Its Geographic Expression

McGhee – Chapter 6: The Inuit p.102-129

Week of April 23 – Resource Development, Its Impacts and Challenges

Text: Chapter 5 - Resource Development and Northern Benefits

Chapter 6 – The Role of Megaprojects in Northern Development

Week of April 30 - Resource Development, Its Impacts and Challenges

Text: Chapter 7 – Environmental Impacts of Resource Projects

Kassi – A Legacy of Maldevelopment p. 72-84 (in Weaver)

Week of May 7 – People of the North

Anderson – In an Inuit Land p. 19-41

Inuit and the Arctic (1970)

http://archives.cbc.ca/society/native_issues/clips/13652/

Week of May 14 – Treaties, Land Claim Agreements and Government Relationships

Text: Chapter 8 – Aboriginal Economy and Society

Inuvialuit Land Settlement Resources

<http://www.atns.net.au/agreement.asp?EntityID=2090>

<http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com/about/finalagreement.html>

Comparing Northern Quebec and Inuvialuit Final Settlements (2000)

http://www2.brandonu.ca/library/CJNS/20.2/cjns20no1_pg283-308.pdf

Week of May 21 – Arctic Sovereignty and Sustainability: Moving Forward in the 21st Century

Text: Chapter 9 - Looking to the Future

Anderson – Who Owns the Arctic p. 103-121

Battle for the Arctic (2009)

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2009/02/27/f-arctic-sovereignty.html>

<http://video.nytimes.com/video/2009/01/26/science/1231546315552/the-battle-for-the-arctic.html>

As Polar Ice Turns to Water, Dreams of Treasure Abound (2005)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/10/science/10arctic.html?pagewanted=1&ei=5088&en=1f4059714b781260&ex=1286596800&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

The Big Melt (2009)

<http://www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/transcripts/story/2009/10/13/national-bigmelt-transcript3.html>

Week of May 28 – Arctic Sovereignty and Sustainability: Moving Forward in the 21st Century

Anderson – The Future of the Arctic p. 255-263

Canada's Ragtag Arctic Forces (2006)

http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20060828_132407_132407

The Cold Truth (OP-ED 2009)

<http://www2.macleans.ca/2009/08/28/the-cold-truth/>

Northern Exposure (OP-ED 2004)

http://www.macleans.ca/canada/national/article.jsp?content=20040524_81280_81280

Who Owns the Arctic? (2008)

<http://geology.com/articles/who-owns-the-arctic.shtml>