Instructor: M. Dowsley; mdowsley@lakeheadu.ca

Course Description:
This seminar focuses on the study of human-environmental interactions through time in the northern latitudes. Weekly readings, which serve as points of discussion, will be drawn from peer-reviewed literature from multiple disciplines (geography, ecology, archaeology, and anthropology). Although the geographic focus of this course is on Canada’s near and far north, case studies may be drawn from other regions as well. As a graduate student, you are now entering a community of scholars and are expected to contribute to scholarly discourse in your subject area. To develop and practise this suite of skills, the assignments for this course include readings and discussions using various academic styles of writing, but all focusing on main themes regarding northern environments. You will critically evaluate others’ work, both from the peer-reviewed literature and from your class mates and other graduate students. As well, you will be expected to contribute to the class through participation in discussions, formal presentations and written evaluations of others.

Evaluation:
Assignment 1. Book Review 15%
   10% for your review
   5% for your editing of the review of one peer
Assignment 2. Scholarship Application Using Someone Else’s Work 15%
   10% for your work
   5% for your written judgement and ranking of 2 others’ work
Assignment 3. Full Grant Proposal on your work 35%
   Grant proposal following tri-council guidelines
   20% marked by prof using tri-council evaluation
   5% for class’ evaluation of your work
   10% your written judgement of 2 others’ work
Assignment 4. Seminar Presentation of Grant Proposal 10%
   5% your presentation of the topic (content, references, presentation, visuals)
   5% providing readings and discussion questions to class, leading discussion
Participation Completing readings, participating in discussions, less formal presentations 25%

Attendance of weekly seminars is mandatory. Failure to attend two or more seminars throughout the term (for reasons other than illness or personal crisis) will result in a failing grade for the participation component of the course.

Technology:
Please bring a laptop, tablet, or smart phone to do some writing and refer to homework documents

Readings:
Weekly reading assignments are given below under the week in which they are due. Also, Adrian Tanner’s Ethnography on the Cree will be discussed as an example of one style of academic reporting, a report on aspects of one Northern culture, and as an example of a cultural landscape. It will be available in the bookstore towards the end of September. The other books are widely available and should be in libraries, used book stores or on-line.

Diamond, J. *Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed*. New York: Viking. (Read before week 5 esp. the introduction and the chapter on Norse Greenland)


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<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture topic</th>
<th>Discussion assignment/ Activity</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Sept 10</td>
<td>Intro, Ecological situation Intro to traditional societies</td>
<td>• Book Reviews –assigned in class • Discuss assignment 1</td>
<td>Rowley-Conly</td>
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<td>2 Sept 17</td>
<td>Part 1: How we might study env-human relations Part 2: Paleoenvironments, first peoples in North America</td>
<td>• Students explain main theories of human-landscape interactions • Abstract writing • Select main and supplemental books for Assignment 1</td>
<td>Part 1: Select own reading, see below Part 2: see list</td>
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<td>3 Sept 24</td>
<td>Mid-holocene historical overview Historical Ecology</td>
<td>• Abstract writing</td>
<td>Abstract writing 5-slide power point</td>
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<td>4 Oct 1</td>
<td>Environmental Determinism Permanent Residency in the Arctic</td>
<td>• SSHRC student scholarship information • Discuss Assignment 2</td>
<td><em>Guns Germs and Steel</em> Group Presentations</td>
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<td>5 Oct 8</td>
<td>Environmental Determinism Thule and Norse</td>
<td>• Assignment 3 information • Discuss how a thesis is proposed and constructed</td>
<td><em>Collapse Draft Book Review due</em></td>
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<td>Supplemental book</td>
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<td>6 Oct 15</td>
<td>Cultural Landscapes</td>
<td>• Tanner Discussion</td>
<td><em>Bringing Home Animals Assignment 1: Final Book Review due</em> 7-slide power point</td>
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<td>7 Oct 22</td>
<td>Human impacts on northern environments Arctic</td>
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<td><em>Assignment 2: SSHRC scholarship application for someone else’s work</em></td>
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<td>8 Oct 29</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>9 Nov 5</td>
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<td>10 Nov 12</td>
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<td>11 Nov 19</td>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>• Evaluate seminars, submit grant proposals</td>
<td>Assignments 3 and 4</td>
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<td>12 Nov 26</td>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>• Evaluate seminars, submit grant proposals</td>
<td>Assignments 3 and 4</td>
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**Week 1. Introduction to the Course**

- What Graduate school is all about
- perception and ‘measurement’ of the north
- the subarctic and arctic biomes

Rowley-Conly reading and questions

**Week 2**

**Part 1: Theories of human-environment interactions**

Select one of the following research programs, theories, or subdisciplines and using text books from the library and/or journal articles present a short (5-10 min.) synopsis of what it is (key postulates), some key thinkers in the field, example research conducted and critiques of the research program. Submit your bibliography (of at least 5 sources) for grading.

Research programs/subdisciplines/theories: Systems theory, cultural ecology, equilibrium theory of ecology, landscapes, environmental anthropology, ethnoecology, optimal foraging theory. Check with the instructor regarding your choice.

**Hints:** Wikipedia may be used as a starting point to help you select a topic of interest to you, but you can’t cite it in your bibliography. Summaries of the research programs might be found in Annual Review of Anthropology.

**Part 2: Early northern paleoenvironments and the first peopling of N. America**

- Deglaciation and the shifting north, early northern paleoenvironments


   
   Hint: Look carefully at the maps! But you can skim the rest if this isn’t your field


Hint: If you are not familiar with Latin names of plants, team up with some peers who are so that you can understand the shift in plant communities when humans first began to move into North America and into Ontario.

Week 3

**Class Activity 1 Abstract Writing:** Select one of the short conference papers made available by the instructor last class. Prepare an abstract of the article. Print 3 copies of your abstract and bring to class. Remember to work independently on this assignment.

**Part 1: Holocene and Boreal Forest**

Mid-Holocene climate and implications for subarctic hunter-gatherers


**Class Activity 2 Power Point Presentations:** Using these 2 papers and Scott Hamilton’s slide show, create a 5 slide presentation on some aspect of the readings that you find interesting. Present it in class.

Supplemental references are out there, like:


**Part 2: Historical Ecology**


Week 4. Permanent Residency in the Arctic.

**Assignment 2 readings**

Read York and Keffer’s SSHRC apps

Each student will select either Anna Bunce or Dressler et al. for assignment 2. **No need to work on it yet!!!**

**Environmental Determinism**
• Environmental Determinism suggests that the environment shapes human adaptation and therefore culture; like Social Darwinism it is closely tied to politics
• This week and next we will look at the most extreme environment, the Arctic, and 3 cultures that occupied it in the last 1000 yrs, the Dorset, the Thule and the Norse in order to understand how environment and history affect a culture

   • Focus on his critique of Diamond’s work. Having read Diamond, how would you defend him?


Part 1 Arctic First Peoples

   • How did the environment constrain culture (or not)? What influences culture more, its environment or history?

Group 1: Teach us about the Arctic Small Tool Tradition, emphasis on the Dorset culture (45 min)

Group 2: Teach us about the Thule culture (45 min)

For each, the group should focus on the following: How did history and environment influence your culture? What technologies were invented to deal with the environment? What else did your culture do, besides survive? What happened to your culture?

Some references to get you started find these on your own. Read more, and submit your group bibliography. Your group will be marked together and the groups will be ranked against each other for the content and quality of your presentation.

ASTt (Paleoeskimo)


Mobjerg, T. 1999. New adaptive strategies in the Saqqaq culture of Greenland, c. 1600-1400 BC. World Archaeology 30(3):452-465. (see others in this volume –some may be of interest to Thule group as well)


Thule (Neoeskimo)


Schledermann (1976). The effect of climatic/ecological changes on the style of Thule culture winter dwellings. Arctic and Alpine Research, 8(1), 37-47.


**Week 5. The Thule and Greenland Norse: Divergent responses to climate change**

**Draft book review due** – bring 3 hard copies to class (or email if you are in Orillia!)

Deadline for reading your supplemental book for the book review. Today you will read your peer’s review and give comments.

Read *Collapse*

**Readings**


**Weeks 6 Cultural Landscapes of the Boreal Forest**
Submit Assignment 1.

**Part 1: Bringing Home Animals**

- Discussion on the book.
- Find a book review of this book, critique the review and book verbally for the class
- Find an article that cites Tanner’s Bringing Home Animals, how is the book used and valued by later researchers?

**Readings**


   **Study Qu:** What are ‘Cultural Landscapes’ and Davidson-Hunt’s argument for looking at them as dynamic?


**Part 2**

Find another paper on cultural landscapes (not in Boreal or Arctic ecozone). Prepare 7 slides outlining the theory presented in the paper (how does the paper’s case study advance theory?) and explaining the case study and comparing to ours in the boreal forest.

**Week 7. Human Impacts on Arctic Environments**

**Assignment 2 due.** Bring 3 copies to class. Orillia students email to prof ahead of time for printing.

**Part 1.** Receive grant applications from 2 other students in the class. Evaluate them and rank them. Be sure to write at the top of your submission: Your name, and the two students you evaluated. Submit to prof.
Readings


Part 2.

Select one of the papers above and find 2 other readings related to it. Present them in class informally (no slides needed).

Week 8. TBA

Week 9. TBA

Week 10. TBA

Weeks 11 & 12. Assignment 4 presentations

Bring 3 printed copies of your proposal.

Collect 2 from peers to evaluate in class or as homework. Rank them and submit to prof with your name and the name of the two students you marked at the top.