

## **NECU 5311: Aspects of Northern Environments & Cultures**

Instructor: M. Boyd

BB-2001-F, 807-343-8279, mboyd1@lakeheadu.ca

### **Course Description:**

A student-driven weekly seminar focused on Canada's North (Arctic/Subarctic) and 'near-North'—their histories, cultures, geography, and environments. This course is designed to:

1. Strengthen your ability to critically evaluate scholarly (peer-reviewed) literature;
2. Develop your public presentation skills, as well as your skills in leading small group discussions;
3. Strengthen your written communication skills (through completion of a research paper);
4. Expose you to the varied literature on northern peoples and their environments (past and present).

### **Evaluation:**

1. Weekly seminar development and leadership: **20%**

On a rotating basis, students are expected to: (1) develop a reading list on a topic for discussion in collaboration with the course instructor; (2) disseminate readings (in PDF format) to the instructor and other students well before the seminar (1 week); (3) lead the seminar and group discussions of the selected readings.

2. Class participation: **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. You are expected to participate fully in all of the seminars by engaging in all discussions.

3. Peer-reviewed assignment: **10%**

You will be required to conduct a critical review of a classmate's paper identifying its strengths and weaknesses and recommending changes prior to submission.

4. Research paper presentation: **15%**

15-minute, professional, presentation using PowerPoint followed by Q&A. You are assessed based on the quality of the presentation as well as on your ability to address questions from the audience.

5. Research paper: **30%**

Roughly 20-25 pages, double-spaced, including references. Any topic is fine as long as it fits the theme(s) of the course. You will be evaluated based on the quality of your writing, evidence of critical thinking, the comprehensiveness of your research, and your ability to synthesize the academic literature dealing with your subject.

## **Important Dates**

**October 10 – 14:** Fall Study Break (class cancelled)

**November 11:** Rough draft of research paper completed, peer-review assignment given

**November 18:** Research paper presentations

**November 25:** Peer-reviewed assignment due (submitted both to author and instructor)

**December 2:** Last class (research papers due)

## **Some examples of seminar topics chosen in previous years:**

- Perception and 'measurement' of the North
- Political economies of traditional northern forager societies
- Deglaciation and the shifting north, early northern paleoenvironments
- Subarctic and arctic archaeology
- The Thule and Greenland Norse: Divergent responses to climate change
- The Boreal forest and fire ecology
- Future climate change and the North
- Indigenous land-use
- Colonial contact, acculturation
- Decolonization and resistance
- Urbanization of the North
- Current challenges and opportunities for northern Indigenous communities and cultures

## **Preliminary seminar schedule:**

Sept. 9: Introduction to course

Sept. 16: Eric

Sept. 23: Taylor

Sept. 30: Toby

Oct. 7: Samuel

Oct. 14: **Cancelled (study break)**

Oct. 21: Williams

Oct. 28: Eric

Nov. 4: Taylor

Nov. 11: Toby

Nov. 18: **Presentations**

Nov. 25: Samuel

Dec. 2: Williams