

NECU 5311: Aspects of Northern Environments & Cultures

Instructor: M. Boyd

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Office hours by appointment

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 presentation and collaboration skills, as well as your skills in leading small group discussions;
3. Strengthen your written communication skills;
4. Expose you to the varied literature on northern peoples and their environments (past and present).

Evaluation:

Seminar leadership: **25%**

- Every week, two to three students will be responsible for selecting a topic and leading the discussion of roughly 2 key articles (each). These articles must be distributed to the other students in the class well in advance of the seminar. The topic chosen is open but it should comfortably fall within the overall 'theme' of the week. Evaluation is based on: the appropriateness and relevance of papers selected; the quality of seminar leadership; and depth of background knowledge of the selected topic.

Class participation: **25%**

- Regular attendance and thoughtful, informed, participation are expected for each seminar.

Short written assignments: **50%**

- **Paper #1:** Personal reflection on the relevance of northern research, description of your career aspirations and what practical steps are required for you to achieve them. Length: ~500 words. Value: **5%**. Due: Week 3
- **Paper #2:** A concise summary of sub-topic selected under theme #1. Length: ~1000 words. Value: **15%**. This paper must be well-researched and referenced. Due: Week 6.
- **Paper #3:** A concise summary of sub-topic selected under theme #2. Length: ~1000 words. Value: **15%**. This paper must be well-researched and referenced. Due: Week 9.
- **Paper #4:** A concise summary of sub-topic selected under theme #3. Length: ~1000 words. Value: **15%**. This paper must be well-researched and referenced. Due: Week 12.

Seminar schedule:

Week 1 (Sept. 5-8): Introduction to course, expectations, etc.

Mini-topic for next week: what is the value of a degree specializing in northern environments and cultures? What are the job prospects potential avenues for someone with this degree?

THEME #1: Ancient cultures and environments of the North

Week 2 (Sept 11-15): Leader: M. Boyd

Topic: Deglaciation and the origins of Canada's North

1. Dyke, A. S. 2004. An Outline of North American Deglaciation with Emphasis on Central and Northern Canada. In Quaternary Glaciation - Extent and Chronology, Part II, edited by J. Ehlers and P. L. Gibbard, pp. 373-424. Developments in Quaternary Science, Volume 26. Elsevier, The Netherlands.

2. Bigelow, N.H. et al. 2007. Arctic North America. In: Encyclopaedia of Quaternary Science. Elsevier.

3. Liu, K-B. 1990. Holocene paleoecology of the Boreal Forest and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest in Northern Ontario. Ecological Monographs 60: 179-212.

Week 3 (Sept 18-22): Leaders: Holly, Hudson

Topic:

Week 4 (Sept 25-29): Leaders: Joseph, Brant

Topic:

Week 5 (Oct 2-6): Leaders: Michelle, Holly, Natalie

Topic:

Week 6 (Oct 9-13): **STUDY BREAK (class cancelled)**

THEME #2: Colonialism, and the 'modernization' of the North

Week 7 (Oct 16-20): Hudson, Joseph

Topic:

Week 8 (Oct 23-27): Brant, Michelle

Topic:

Week 9 (Oct 30 – Nov 3): Holly, Hudson, Natalie

Topic:

THEME #3: Looking ahead: future issues relevant to the North

Week 10 (Nov 6-10): Joseph, Brant

Topic:

Week 11 (Nov 13-17): Michelle, Holly, Natalie

Topic:

Week 12 (Nov 20-24): Hudson, Joseph

Topic:

Week 13 (Nov 27-Dec 1): Brant, Michelle, Natalie

Topic: