

Lakehead University
Department of Sociology

Sociology 5217 WA 2014
Social Issues in the Canadian North

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Course Description

Few places in the world have gone through social change with the speed and intensity that the communities of the Canadian North have. In a space of 50 years the Indigenous people of this region have had to adapt themselves from a traditional migratory hunting and fishing existence based on community co-operation and self-reliance that had served them for generations to an urban lifestyle characterized by dependence and new economic and social values such as individualism, competition, and industrialism. This transition has not been easy. The loss of much of their former self-reliance and the disparagement of their traditional culture has taken a toll on these communities. The region has also seen resource-based communities created only to be exposed to constant boom and bust periods which constantly put the future of these communities in doubt.

Despite these challenges it is not unfair to say that, despite the odds against them, the people of Northern Canada have been able to survive this transition and past problems caused by resource dependence. They are now looking to change the power relations that characterized their adaptation processes in the past. Rather than adapting their cultural values and lifestyles to Western patterns, they are now increasingly adapting Western values and lifestyles to meet their needs. In addition they are looking at new ways of ensuring that resource exploitation is done in a manner that offers greater benefits to their communities.

The objective of this course is to examine the social issues facing communities in Canada's North. In particular we will examine the usefulness of sociological theory and research to understand and deal with the challenges northern communities are facing. Participants will be introduced to the unique social, economic, and historical conditions of the region followed by those challenges that have received the recent attention of social science researchers. Discussions will hope to link these challenges to social theories of change in an attempt to understand the global context of these challenges.

Course Outline

Session 1: Introduction

The first seminar will be an introduction to the course. It will introduce participants to the basic historical and social characteristics of northern communities. Participants will discuss the structure

of the course. As well, I hope to establish the necessary groundwork for the student seminars.

Session 2: What are the major challenges facing the Canadian North?

Banta, Russell 2006 “The Resource Curse and the Mackenzie Gas Project” *Policy Options*, December, Pp. 80-86. Found at <http://www.irpp.org/po/archive/dec06/banta.pdf>

Williamson, Karla Jessen et al. 2004. “Chapter 11 Gender Issues” in *The Arctic Human Development Report*. Found at <http://www.svs.is/AHDR/AHDR%20chapters/English%20version/Chapters%20PDF.htm>

Duerden, Frank. 2004. “Translating Climate Change Impacts at the Community Level.” *Arctic*, 57(2) : 204–212. Found at <http://arctic.synergiesprairies.ca/arctic/index.php/arctic/article/viewFile/496/526>

Hicks, Jack. 2005. “Education in the Canadian Arctic: What Difference has the Nunavut Government Made?” *Indigenous Affairs*, 1. Found at <http://www.iwgia.org/sw7825.asp>

Kral, M. J. 2012 “Postcolonial Suicide Among Inuit in Arctic Canada” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 36 (2): 306-325.

Session 3: The Historical Development of Northern Canada

Coates, K. (1985). *Canada's colonies: A history of the Yukon and Northwest Territories*. Toronto: Lorimer.

Session 4: The Social Characteristics of Communities in the Canadian North

DiFrancesco, R. J. (2000). A diamond in the rough?: An examination of the issues surrounding the development of the Northwest Territories. *Canadian Geographer-Geographe Canadien*, 44(2), 114-134.

Duerden, F. (1992). A critical-look at sustainable development in the Canadian north. *Arctic*, 45(3), 219-225.

Saku, J. C. (2002). Modern land claim agreements and northern Canadian aboriginal communities. *World Development*, 30(1), 141-151.

Session 5: Health Issues and the Canadian North

Furgal, C., & Seguin, J. (2006). Climate change, health, and vulnerability in Canadian northern aboriginal communities. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 114(12), 1964-1970.

Parlee, B., O'Neil, J., & Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation. (2007). "The dene way of life": Perspectives on health from Canada's north (Canada's aboriginal people). *Journal of Canadian Studies-Revue D Etudes Canadiennes*, 41(3), 112-133.

Tester, F. J. (., & McNicoll, P. (. (2004). Isumagijaksaq: Mindful of the state: Social constructions of Inuit suicide. *Social Science and Medicine*, 58(12), 2625-2636.

Session 6: Food Security Issues and the Canadian North

Chan, H. M., Fediuk, K., Hamilton, S., Rostas, L., Caughey, A., Kuhnlein, H., et al. (2006). Food security in Nunavut, Canada: Barriers and recommendations.65(5)

Duhaime, G., Canadian Circumpolar Institute, & Université Laval. Groupe d'études Inuit et circumpolaires. (2002). *Sustainable food security in the arctic : State of knowledge*. Edmonton: CCI Press.

Gombay, N. (2005). The commoditization of country foods in Nunavik: A comparative assessment of its development, applications, and significance. *Arctic*, 58(2), 115-128.

Session 7: Resources and Co-management in the Canadian North

Armitage, D. (2005). Adaptive capacity and community-based natural resource management. *Environmental Management*, 35(6), 703-715.

Berardi, G. (1998). Natural resource policy, unforgiving geographies, and persistent poverty in Alaska native villages. *Natural Resources Journal*, 38(1), 85-108.

Durst, D. (1994). "Heavy sledding": Barriers to community participation in Beaufort Sea hydrocarbon developments. *Community Development Journal*, 29(1), 62-74.

Nadasdy, P. (2003). Reevaluating the co-management success story. *Arctic*, 56(4), 367-380.

Natcher, D. C., & Davis, S. (2007). Rethinking devolution: Challenges for aboriginal resource management in the Yukon Territory.20(3)

Stedman, R. C., Parkins, J. R., & Beckley, N. M. (2004). Resource dependence and community well-being in rural Canada. *Rural Sociology*, 69(2), 213-234.

Sessions 8 to 12: Students presentations

Basis of Evaluation:

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| Two article critiques (15% each)..... | 30% |
| Seminar Presentation | 20% |
| Research Paper | 50% |

Students will prepare two short written critiques of articles. Each critique should be 2 or 3 pages. The critiques will be read during seminars 4 to 8.

The research paper should be between 20 to 25 typewritten pages. Topics should relate to the subject matter of the course and should be chosen in conjunction with the professor. Research papers should use the manuscript format suggested by the American Sociological Association.

Please note that plagiarism is unacceptable and subject to various sanctions. Please see the university regulations section on academic dishonesty in the Calendar. For advice to avoid plagiarism please see <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>

Students will organize a seminar around the topic of their research paper.