

Lakehead University
Department of Sociology

Sociology 5217 FA 2026
Social Issues in the Canadian North

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Tuesdays, 11:30 to 14:30
Seminar: Zoom

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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 less than 70 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 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: What are the major challenges facing Northern communities?

Cooke, M. (2018). Implications of Global Peak Population for Canada's future: Northern, rural, and remote communities. *Canadian Studies in Population*, 45(1-2), 55-61.

O'Sullivan, E. (2011). *The Community Well-Being Index (CWB): Measuring Well-Being in First Nations and Non-Aboriginal Communities, 1981-2006*: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada Ottawa.

O'Keefe, V. M., Tucker, R. P., Cole, A. B., Hollingsworth, D. W., & Wingate, L. R. (2018). Understanding Indigenous Suicide Through a Theoretical Lens: A Review of General, Culturally-Based, and Indigenous Frameworks. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 55(6), 775-799.

Session 2: The Historical Development of Northern Canada

Coates, K., Holroyd, C., & Leader, J. (2015). Managing the Forgotten North: Governance Structures and Administrative Operations of Canada's Provincial Norths. *Northern Review* (38).

Southcott, C. (2010). Migration in the Canadian North: An Introduction. In L. Huskey & C. Southcott (Eds.), *Migration in the Circumpolar North: Issues and Contexts* (pp. 35-56). Edmonton: CCI Press.

Dunk, T. (2007). Thunder Bay: Between a rock and a hard place in Northwestern Ontario. *Our Diverse Cities*, 4, 99-103.

Session 3: Rise and Fall of Northern Resource Dependent Communities

O'Shaughnessy, S., & Krogman, N. T. (2011). Gender as contradiction: From dichotomies to diversity in natural resource extraction. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(2), 134-143.

Storey, K. (2018). From 'new town' to 'no town' to 'source', 'host' and 'hub' communities: The evolution of the resource community in an era of increased labour mobility. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 13(3), 92-114.

Teitelbaum, S., Montpetit, A., Bissonnette, J. F., Chion, C., Chiasson, G., Doyon, F., . . . Tardif, J. (2019). Studying Resource-Dependent Communities Through a Social-Ecological Lens? Examining Complementarity with Existing Research Traditions in Canada. *Society & Natural Resources*, 32(1), 93-112.

Session 4: Development and Canada's Northern Reserves

Marquina-Márquez, A., Virchez, J., & Ruiz-Callado, R. (2016). Postcolonial healing landscapes and mental health in a remote Indigenous community in subarctic Ontario, Canada. *Polar Geography*, 39(1), 20-39.

Fraser, S. L., Parent, V., & Dupere, V. (2018). Communities being well for family well-being: Exploring the socio-ecological determinants of well-being in an Inuit community of Northern Quebec. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 55(1), 120-146.
doi:10.1177/1363461517748814

Morin, A., R. Edouard and G. Duhaime. 2010. "Beyond the Harsh. Objective and Subjective Living Conditions in Nunavut." *Polar Record* 46(237):97–112. doi: 10.1017/s0032247409990131.

Session 5 The Rise of Service Communities

Searles, E. 2010. "Placing identity: Town, land, and authenticity in Nunavut, Canada." *Acta Borealia* 27(2): 151-166.

Christensen, J. 2012. ""They want a different life": Rural northern settlement dynamics and pathways to homelessness in Yellowknife and Inuvik, Northwest Territories." *Canadian Geographer* 56(4): 419-438. {Guo, 2015 #8814}

Guo, Y., L. Berrang-Ford, J. Ford, M. P. Lardeau, V. Edge, K. Patterson, Ihacc Research Team and S. L. Harper. 2015. "Seasonal Prevalence and Determinants of Food Insecurity in Iqaluit, Nunavut." *Int J Circumpolar Health* 74:27284. doi: 10.3402/ijch.v74.27284.

Session 6: Theoretical Considerations: The Rise of Settler Colonialism as an Explanation

Watkins, M. 1977. "From Underdevelopment to Development." Pp. 84-99 in *Dene Nation - the Colony Within*, edited by M. Watkins. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Wolfe, Patrick. 2006. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of genocide research* 8(4):387-409.

Coulthard, Glen S. 2007. "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada." *Contemporary political theory* 6(4):437-60. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300307.

Part Two: Major Challenges

Session 7: Health and Well-being

Schiff, Rebecca and H. Moller. 2021. "Introduction: Health and Health Care in Northern Canada." Pp. 3–13 in *Health and Healthcare in Northern Canada*, edited by R. Schiff and H. Moller. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

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

Healey, Gwen. 2016. "(Re) Settlement, Displacement, and Family Separation: Contributors to Health Inequality in Nunavut." *Northern Review* (42):47–68–47–68.

Session 8: Housing, Homelessness, and Poverty

Christensen, J., S. Arnfjord, S. Carraher and T. Hedwig. 2017. "Homelessness across Alaska, the Canadian North and Greenland: A Review of the Literature on a Developing Social Phenomenon in the Circumpolar North." *Arctic* 70(4):349–64. doi: 10.14430/arctic4680.

Sultan, A. 2023. "Solving the Housing Crisis in Nunavut, Canada." *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health* 51(7):1023–26. doi: 10.1177/14034948231152637.

Duhaime, Gérard and Roberson Édouard. 2015. "Monetary Poverty in Inuit Nunangat." *Arctic* 68(2). doi: 10.14430/arctic4481

Session 9: Inequality

Daley, Angela, Peter Burton and Shelley Phipps. 2015. "Measuring Poverty and Inequality in Northern Canada." *Journal of children & poverty* 21(2):89–110. doi: 10.1080/10796126.2015.1089147.

Hodgkins, Andrew P and Barret Weber. 2016. "Introduction. Northern Inequalities: Global Processes, Local Legacies." *Northern Review* (42):1–6–1–6.

Lévesque, Sébastien and Gérard Duhaime. 2016. "Inequality and Social Processes in Inuit Nunangat." *The Polar Journal* 6(1):69–86.

Session 10: Education

Berger, P. (2009). "Eurocentric roadblocks to school change in Nunavut." *Études Inuit Studies* 33(1/2): 55-76.

McGregor, Heather E. 2012. "Curriculum Change in Nunavut: Towards Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit." *Mcgill Journal of Education* 47(3):285–302.

Sallaffie, Moriah, Jessica Penney, Maria Cherba, Gwen K Healey Akearok and Jean-Luc Ratel. 2022. "Key Informants Perspectives on Education Success, Supports, and Barriers in Nunavut Education." *Canadian Journal of Education* 45(1):53–79.

Sessions 11 to 12: Research paper presentations

Basis of Evaluation:

Take-home assignment.....	25%
Participation	15%
Research Proposal.....	10%
Presentation.....	10%
Research Paper.....	40%

Mid-term Assignment: Participants will be given a take home assignment on Feb. 10th to be completed and handed in by Feb. 24th. The assignment will be comprised of a list of short essay questions relating to material dealt with in the first part of the course.

Research Proposal: One of the main requirements of this course is to prepare a research paper on a key question relating to the social and economic challenges facing northern communities. The paper itself is described below but to ensure that you are prepared to write this paper you will be required to hand in a 4 page (1000 word) proposal on Feb. 25th. This proposal should contain: a background section explaining why the topic you chose is important (why you chose it), a section containing a clear hypothesis/research question, a section describing how you will examine your hypothesis/research question (ie a road map of the paper), and a suggested bibliography with at least 6 key sources.

Presentation: During the last two weeks of the course, you will be required to present the findings of your research paper during a joint class Zoom meeting. Presentations should be 20 minutes long followed by 10 minutes of questions. The time and date of these presentations will be determined in consultation with participants.

Research Paper: Participants will be required to write a 20 to 25 page (5000 to 6000 word) research paper on a key question relating to the social and economic challenges facing northern communities in Canada. Topics should be chosen in consultation with the professor. The completed paper is due on April 7, 2026. Research papers should use the manuscript format suggested by the American Sociological Association (or MLA or APA if you are not a sociology student).

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 with Special Needs

Students with special needs may request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Such students should at the earliest opportunity advise the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the instructor of such needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate their needs. Those who encounter extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course should, as soon as possible, discuss these circumstances with the instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

Lakehead Policy on Academic Dishonesty

As academic integrity is crucial to the pursuit of university education, students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. In order to make sure that a degree awarded by Lakehead University is a reflection of the honest efforts and individual academic achievement of each student, Lakehead University treats cases of academic dishonesty very seriously and severely penalises those caught in violation of the university's policy on academic honesty.

LAKEHEAD RESOURCES

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! If it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your academic advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus, including:

The Student Success Centre has many programs and support services in place to help you achieve your academic and personal goals while studying at Lakehead University. They provide academic support through tutoring services, career exploration, co-operative opportunities and leadership development.

More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre>.

The Lakehead Library provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person with more details available here <https://library.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Public Computer Labs are available on campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For more details go to <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/helpdesk/computer-labs>.

Student Life and Services offers health and wellness resources both on and off campus, as well as opportunities for involvement in health and wellness activities. More information is available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/or>.

Office of Human Rights and Equity. You have the right to an education that is free from any form of discrimination. A wide variety of resources are available here <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity/resources>.

Use of AI. Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google) among several others. Other generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E.

GenAI tools can provide valuable assistance and support in academic work. However, it is essential to use them responsibly and ethically. The following information and guidelines apply to the use of AI-based tools in this course:

- a. **Student Responsibility** – It is the responsibility of the student to understand the limitations of AI-based tools. While these tools can provide suggestions and insights, final decisions and critical thinking should come from the student's own understanding and effort. Before submitting, review your work with this in mind. If you don't understand what type of GenAI usage is appropriate, ask the course instructor for clarification.
- b. **Formative Usage** – In this class, you may use GenAI for formative, but not summative, work. That means it can be used as a “possibility engine” (brainstorm tool), a “study buddy,” a “collaboration coach,” a “guide on the side,” a “personal tutor,” a “co-designer,” etc. to help you learn course content, but it cannot be used as the primary vehicle for any work that is submitted for marks or evaluation. (See UNESCO's “[ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education Quick Start Guide](#),” page 9, for explanations and examples of these and other roles GenAI can productively serve in a formative capacity.)
- c. **Error & Bias** – AI content is created by computer algorithms that have been trained using large amounts of data. The AI learns from patterns and examples in the data to generate new content that resembles what it has been trained on. If the training data used to train the AI model is biased or limited in scope, the AI may reproduce content that is inaccurate, incomplete, offensive, and/or biased. Students should weigh this as they consider material produced by AI.
- d. **Trustworthiness** – Generative AI can be vulnerable to manipulation and misuse. It can be used to generate fake news, misinformation, or deepfake content, which can have harmful consequences. Students should check AI generated content against reputable sources.
- e. **Plagiarism** – Since [writing and critical thinking ability] are learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted for evaluation must be the student's original work. Using the work of others (including content curated/generated by AI) without proper citation is considered plagiarism. See “[Citing Artificial Intelligence](#)” for assistance with correct documentation.

- f. **Citation of Sources** – If you use material generated by an AI program for an assignment in this course, it must be cited like any other source (with due consideration for the quality of the source, which may be judged as poor). Failure to do so will be considered a violation of academic integrity. [See Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity](#).