

HISTORY 4708G TENTATIVE
Histories of the Circumpolar Norths :
“The Last Imaginary Places”

Fall/Winter 2021-2022
Tuesday 2:30- 4:30; location tba

Instructor: Dr. Peter V. Krats

Office Hours: TBA
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Course Description:

This course examines the circumpolar Norths - Alaska, Kalaallit Nunaat, Nunavut, Siberia, Saami homelands and more. These regions have long been coveted by resource-hungry southerners and home to "Northerners", Indigenous and otherwise. Coverage includes indigenous lives, southern imperialism, and how various Norths were conceived and re-conceived in the South.

Prerequisite(s):

2.0 courses in History at the 2200 level or above.

Course Syllabus:

This course examines the history of regions long imagined as *Ultima Thule* -- the circumpolar norths -- a huge swath of land, water and ice including but not limited to Alaska; the Yukon and Northwest Territories, provincial norths and Nunavut in Canada; Kalaallit Nunaat; Iceland, the Faroes, Svalbards; the Saami homelands of Scandinavia and Russia; and the taiga and polar reaches of Siberian Russia.

These northern regions are considered both from “south looking north” and “north as homeland” perspectives. For Indigenous or long-term “settler society”, the circumpolar north was home – a complex place of diverse peoples and cultures who nonetheless shared many characteristics. For the temporary sojourner from the south, the norths were “exotic” places offering resource wealth to be taken home.

Beginning with a brief examination of “imagined” and physical norths, this course then introduces Indigenous societies and impositions by more peopled southern states. Southern approaches are examined, beginning with feeble, often fatal explorations followed by more influential economic, spiritual, judicial, political-administrative and environmental impacts. Southern culture, too, pushed north, although the norths also “pushed back,” with real and imagined norths serving as national symbols like the “True North Strong and Free.”

The course then considers more recent norths. While resource exploitation persisted, by the Second World War the Norths were deemed strategically important; increased foreign policy attention led to the persistent southern insistence on “our” norths, attitudes persisting in recent claims of the Arctic Ocean and even the North Pole! Such

insistence contrasted with new attitudes toward Indigenous peoples that gradually challenged southern control: self-determination, land claims, and regional internationalism came into play.

In the end, then, students should better grasp the multilayered histories of the circumpolar norths, moving beyond imagined places to regions influenced by and influencing global history. These are large goals for a half-course -- the project relies heavily upon you and your classmates -- I will expect student participation on a regular basis. Given the breadth of the coverage, that discussion should be informative, if at times challenging.

Course Materials: TENTATIVE

Texts [other reading via OWL]

Charles Emmerson. *The Future History of the Arctic*. Public Affairs Publishers. 2010.

Shelagh Grant. *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America*. Douglas & McIntyre, 2010.

Dolly Jørgensen and Sverker Sörlin, eds. *Northscapes: History, Technology, and the Making of Northern Environments*, UBC Press, 2013.

John McCannon. *A History of the Arctic: Nature, Exploration and Exploitation*, 2010. Reaktion Books.

Course Evaluation [tentative]

Participation	25 %
Seminar "Lead" [including notes]	10
Comparative Northern Approaches Paper	10
Essay Topic Proposal	5
Essay	35
Final [take home]	15

Accommodation for missed assignment deadlines with a Self Reported Absence:

If a student reports a SRA for an assignment (i.e. an essay) the new due date will be 48 hours after the SRA was submitted.

Course Schedule and Readings: Tentative

Section One: Introduction to the Circumpolar North

1. Introduction : North as Concept [in the South]
2. At Home in Northern Environments
3. "Circumpolarity" – Where and whose "North" – Southern reconsiderations ?

Section Two: Norths in Evolution

4. Contacts from the South - Southern Incursions through the 18th Century
5. "Crusades": Southern Imperialism: 1800 – 1880
6. Seizing Fuller Control – Dealing with the Norths 1880-1945 [3 weeks]
 - a) Taking "Formal" Control
 - b) Taking Practical Control
 - c) The Second World War and the Norths

Section Three: The Circumpolar Norths since 1945

7. Expanding Administration / Exploitation of the Norths [2 weeks]

- a) Cold War and Continuing Foreign Policy Struggles
- b) Continued Government Impositions, Public and Private Exploitation and Consequences

8. Toward New Norths ?

9. Original Peoples & Modern Norths

10. Discussion of Essays / Conclusions.

Additional Statements:

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>,

for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness