

GEOG-301: THE GEOGRAPHY OF NUNAVUT

(Room/Time: Burnside Hall Rm.306/Tuesday-Thursday 1:05-2:35)

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Course Precis

The Nunavut Territory is the newest and geographically largest political entity within Canada. While Nunavut was officially proclaimed only in 1999, following the division of the Northwest Territories, the process that led to its formation began in the 1970s and represents the creation of the first political unit in Canada with an Aboriginal majority. Indeed, while Nunavut is a territory until itself, its appearance is in part the product of a much larger North-South story.

This course will examine the evolution of Nunavut from its early occupation to the social, economic, political and other issues of concern to Nunavummiut in relation to their homeland, Canada and the world. Thus, the course will use economic, historical and political geographic approaches, as well as concepts drawn from anthropology, Native Studies and political science, to understand how Nunavut has come to be and to analyze the processes that affect this unique territory. In so doing, we will also explore the concept of Nordicity in terms of its theoretical and practical meanings.

Course Structure

“Nunavut” is principally a lecture course in which questions and discussion are welcome. Required reading will be from THE GEOGRAPHY OF NUNAVUT coursepack and Ann McElroy’s NUNAVUT GENERATIONS (Westview Press [2 copies on reserve in McClennan Library]). The coursepack can be found at the McGill Bookstore. The last section of this syllabus also lists a number of references that are important supplemental resources to the course. Please note that only a few are on reserve (as denoted by a [**R**]). These references are followed by a number of possible research topics; please note that these are examples and not required topics.

While Nunavut is very young, it is the product of cultural, political and economic frictions that first met and then took on momentum circa 1970. Course Sections 1 and 2 are intended to provide a broad introduction and basic cultural-historical context for understanding the framework of pre-modern relations between Inuit and *Qallunaat*. Section 3, in turn, concentrates on those political, social and economic processes that occurred between 1970 and 1990 and which led Inuit to seek a new relationship with Canada. Finally, the course’s last section will focus on the political and cultural creation of Nunavut with emphasis on the condition of Nunavummiut today.

Requirements

There will be no formal tests or final examination. Instead, you will be responsible for two papers five in-class quizzes. The first paper (30% of final grade) will be an overview

of a Nunavut community and the political-administrative region in which it is located. Thus, if the study community is Rankin Inlet (located in the Qivalliq Region), one would examine the human record of the region as relates to Inuit and how the community has developed over the period of its existence. This assignment will include information on the physical and biological systems, prehistory, European-Inuit contact (exploration, trade and missionary activity) and information on the contemporary community, including demographic and economic data.

The second paper (40%) can be on any Nunavut-related topic of your choosing and may be focused on northern ecology, Inuit prehistory, contemporary politics, climate change, or about any topic that attracts you. It must be submitted in the last week of classes and absolutely by the last class date preceding the start of final exams.

To assist you as best that I am able, you will be expected to submit an outline (10%) explaining the central focus and key sources pertinent to your second paper. It is also expected that if after receiving comments on the submitted outline it is recommended that a meeting be arranged, you will do so to discuss these comments.

Finally, there is the quiz component (10%) that contributes to the overall course grade. The quizzes will be short (5-10 minutes) and will focus on a current reading. For example, I may ask for an interpretation of an assigned reading for general discussion or, alternatively, direct questions to you about a reading.

Course Outline & Readings

Section One: Introduction to Nunavut

Inuit and the New North by G.W. Wenzel, 1994, Aquaticus 25(1):43-57
(coursepack)

Inuit and Astronauts by Ann McElroy, 2008, Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Pp.1-15.
(accompanying course text)

Section Two: The Original Nunavummiut

Thule Prehistory of Canada by Robert McGhee, 1984, Handbook of North American Indians, Vol.5, Arctic. D. Damas (ed.). Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution. Pp.369-376.

Early Encounters by Ann McElroy, 2008, Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Pp.19-42.
(accompanying course text)

Dance from the Heart by Ann McElroy, 2008, Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Pp.43-68.
(accompanying course text)

Central Eskimo: Introduction by David Damas, 1984, Handbook of North American Indians, Vol.5, Arctic. D. Damas (ed.). Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution. Pp.391-396 (coursepack)

Section Three: Inuit Research: Assimilation, Acculturation, Adaptation

Contemporary Canadian Inuit by Frank Vallee, Derek Smith and Joseph Cooper, 1984, Handbook of North American Indians, Vol.5, Arctic. D. Damas (ed.). Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution. Pp.662-675. (coursepack)

“Nunamiut” or “Kabloonamiut”: Which ‘Identity’ Best Fits Inuit (and Does It Matter)? by G.W. Wenzel, 2001, Études/Inuit/Studies 25(1-2):37-52. (coursepack)

Section Four: Becoming Nunavut and Contemporary Issues

Living With the People by Ann McElroy, 2008, Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Pp.67-86. (accompanying course text)

Section Four: Nunavut and Nunavummiut: Issues

Nunavut: Self-Determination Through a Land Claim and Public Government? by Jack Hicks and Graham White, 2000, Nunavut Inuit Regain Control of Their Lands and Their Lives. J. Dahl, J. Hicks and P. Jull (eds.), Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Pp.30-115. (coursepack)

Finding a Political Voice by Ann McElroy, 2008, Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Pp.153-170. (accompanying course text)

Gender, Nationalism, Citizenship and Nunavut’s Territorial House: A case Study of the Gender Parity Proposal by Elena Wilson, 2006, Arctic Anthropology 42(2):82-94 (coursepack)

Cultures in Collision: Traditional Knowledge and Euro-Canadian Governance Processes in Northern Land Claims Boards by Graham White, 2006, Arctic 59(4):401-414. (coursepack)

Subsistence, Work and Leisure by Pamela Stern, 2000, Études/Inuit/Studies 24(1):9-24. (coursepack)

Canadian Inuit Subsistence and Ecological Instability - If the Climate Changes Must the Inuit? By G.W. Wenzel, 2009, Polar Research 28(1):89-99. (coursepack)

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation will be done through several means, including a community-regional studies (30% each), major paper outline and meeting (15 + 5=20%), class presence/responsiveness (10%) and a major research paper (40%). Late submission of any assignment will be penalized one full grade per day. The community-regional overview (Assignment #1) is to be submitted October 10th, the final paper outline (Assignment #2)

on November 7th, the major paper outline by November 4th (with the follow-up interview Assignment #3)), and the major research paper (Assignment #4) is to be submitted on any day in the last week of the term. As there is no final examination in the course, there will be not be a supplemental examination or extra exercises offered. Last, at the end of the syllabus, see the excerpt on academic integrity.

Useful References:

Bone, Robert

The Geography of the Canadian North: Issues and Challenges.

New York: Oxford University Press.

Brody, H.

The Peoples' Land: Inuit-White Relations in the Eastern Arctic. London: Penguin.

Dahl, J., J. Hicks and P. Jull (eds.)

2000 Nunavut: Inuit Regain Control of Their Land and Lives. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.

Damas, D. (ed.) [two copies on McClennan Reserve]

1984 Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 5: Arctic. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution.

Damas, D.

2002 Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Eastern Arctic. Montréal: McGill-Queen's Press.

Duffy, R.Q.

The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit Since the Second World War. Montréal: McGill-Queen's Press.

Dunbar, M.J.

1968 Ecological Development in Polar Regions: A Study in Evolution. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Government of Canada

1995 Nunavut Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada.

Henderson, Ailsa

2007 Nunavut: Rethinking Political Culture. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Hughes, C.

1965 Under Four Flags: Recent Culture Change Among the Eskimos. Current Anthropology 6(1):3-69.

Matthiasson, J.

Living on the Land: Change Among the Inuit of Baffin Island. Peterborough:
Broadview Press.

McElroy, Ann [2 copies on McClennan Reserve]

2008 Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities.
Long Grove (CA.): Waveland Press.

Purich, D.

1992 The Inuit and Their Land: The Story of Nunavut. Toronto: J. Lorimer &
Company.

Wenzel, G.W.

1991 Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian
Arctic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

A Sampling of Major Paper Research Topics

Compare the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement with respect to ownership of lands and/or access to renewable resources to similar provisions in either the Inuvialuit Land Claim or the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

Discuss the political evolution strategies of for either renewable resource co-management or for protected areas as these have developed in Nunavut.

Compare and analyze the traditional ecological-economic adaptations evidenced by Iglulik, Netsilik and Copper Eskimos.

Analyze the viability of renewable resource harvesting as an economic strategy in Nunavut.

Examine the role of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated within the political structure of Nunavut.

Literacy among Nunavummiut as it has developed from 1950 to today.

The role of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board in the development of a renewable resource conservation strategy in the Nunavut Territory.

Does Nunavut have a demographic crisis?

There is also a Research Reference Folder consisting of 7 or 8 photocopies of past papers. This is to provide you with some idea about past paper topics and to give a sense of how I grade final papers.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

No student shall, with intent to deceive, represent the work of another Person as his or her own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, research Report, project or assignment submitted in a course or program of study Or represent as his or her own an entire essay or work of another, whether The material so represented constitutes a part or the entirety of the work submitted. (<http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/studentguide>)

Also note that written assignments may be submitted in either French or English.