

# **GEOG-502**

## **GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

Prof.: G.W. Wenzel

Office: Burnside 621/623

e-mail: <[wenzel@geog.mcgill.ca](mailto:wenzel@geog.mcgill.ca)>

Classroom: tentatively Burnside Hall 429, Thursday 11:35-2:35

### Course Precis

“Northern Development” is intended to provide students from a variety of disciplines with the opportunity to study and discuss a range of topics and issues relevant to Canadian Inuit today in a graduate-style seminar atmosphere. Thus, discussion and the exchange of ideas will be emphasized, supplemented with several review exercises and a major research paper.

The focus throughout the course will be: 1) the linkage (if any) between Inuit tradition and modernity; 2) the relevance of these two concepts to social, economic, and political matters of issue today. The geographic and cultural focus will be from the Mackenzie Delta to Labrador, with occasional comparative side trips to Alaska, Siberia and Greenland. Likewise, the intellectual focus will be broad, drawing from various Geography sub-disciplines and using concepts and ideas from ethnology, economics, political science and (horrors!) perhaps even law. For this reason, the seminar will not be predisposed toward any one theoretical perspective. Instead, an aspect of the seminar will be to discuss methodological and theoretical approaches appropriate to particular topics.

In general, a main theme throughout the term will be the compatibility or discordance between Inuit tradition and modernity. This year the thematic focus will be “Nunavut’s Vision, Nunavut’s Reality” (see Hicks and White 2000; Anonymous 2013).

### Course Structure

As is the case when studying any societal “other”, caution suggests that background preparation is indispensable. Thus, the first section (3 weeks) of the course will be used to develop a general knowledge base about Inuit. To accomplish this in so brief a period of time, it is expected that several overview works (Damas, Hughes) will be a basis of both discussion about pre-Nunavut Inuit culture and society and pique our curiosity to read beyond what is presented in the first few weeks of the seminar.

With this background in place, the remainder of the seminar will focus on the examination and analysis of specific issues related to the Nunavut since its inception. While the issues concerning Inuit and Nunavummiut are many and our time short, each focal topic will be addressed in 3-4 period blocks during which the emphasis will be on the introduction and discussion of both accepted and, hopefully, new perspectives to the topic at hand.

To facilitate discussion of chosen topics (five in total), each seminar member will have the opportunity to briefly introduce a section (15-30 minute overview of the

principal literature and thinking) and thereafter moderate discussion on the subject. Preparation for this role will obviously be paramount.

In addition to discussion responsibilities (as a moderator and as a contributor), each seminar member will be expected to complete two review papers of 12-15 pages. The first will focus on the socio-historical evolution of a contemporary Inuit community, while the subject of the second, to be concerned with a topic of more breadth, will be of your own choice. Finally, each person will develop a major research paper (=35pp) on a topic of his or her choice (wisdom suggests that the focus of one's second paper be used as a springboard into this major paper).

### Evaluation-Deadlines-Penalties

Grading will be discussed. One possible structure is: major paper – 40%; seminar participation – 30%; seminar leadership – 30%.

The nature of the research paper is somewhat opaque at this time. At present, I envision it to be focused on the seminar's central theme but with the theme developed in terms of a specific community or region (or possibly a type of development project).

Each seminar member will meet with me following submission of her/his paper topic. This meeting is intended to facilitate development of the topic that has been chosen for discussion and the major paper.

The requirements for seminar leadership and participation are self-explanatory. Leadership includes providing colleagues with the citations of key references (3-5) that will allow them to participate on your chosen focus. Beyond this the rules are prepared and do not let mouth disconnect from brain.

All assignment deadlines are firm. However, medical and other exigencies occur. If an absence or delay of an assignment is anticipated, please confirm such with me by e-mail or in person and be prepared to state when the assignment will arrive. (I do not; however accept electronic versions of assignments.) Regarding attendance: persistent absence or tardiness will affect the participation grade; likewise, unexcused absence while a topic moderator will also invoke full penalty.

### Useful Course References

Anonymous

2013 Nunavut's Vision, Nunavut's Reality. Nunanatsiaq News. 2 December.

Brody, H.

1975 Peoples' Land: Eskimo-White Relations in the Eastern Arctic. London: Penguin.

Dahl, J. J. Hicks and P. Jull

2000 Nunavut: Inuit Regain Control of Their Lands and Their Lives. IWGIA Document No.102. Copenhagen: International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs.

Damas, D. (ed.)

1984 Handbook of North American Indians, V.5: Arctic. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution. (2 copies on reserve in McClennan Library under GEOG-

301)

2002 Arctic Migrants, Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic. Montréal: McGill-Queen's Press. (on reserve for GEOG-301)

Duhaime, G. (ed.)

2002 Sustainable Food Security in the Arctic. Edmonton: CCI Press. (on reserve)

Duhaime, G. and N. Bernard (eds.)

2008 Arctic Food Security. Edmonton: CCI Press. (on reserve)

Dorais, L.J.

1997 Quaqtaq: Modernity and Identity in an Inuit Community. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hicks, j. and G. White

2000 Nunavut Inuit Self-Determination Through a Land Claim and Public Government? In Nunavut: Inuit Regain Control of Their Lands and Their Lives ed. by J. Dahl, J. Hicks and P. Jull. IWGIA Document No.102. Copenhagen: International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs. Pp. 30-115.

Hughes, C.

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

Stern, P. and L. Stevenson

2006 Critical Inuit Studies: An Anthology of Contemporary Arctic Ethnography. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Wenzel, G.W.

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

Note also these dedicated northern journals: Arctic, Arctic Anthropology, Polar Record, and Études/Inuit/Studies. Another potential source is NUNATSIAQ NEWS [www.nunatsiaqnews.com](http://www.nunatsiaqnews.com), the only Nunavut-wide newspaper.

### 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>)

