GEOG-301: THE GEOGRAPHY OF NUNAVUT
(Room/Time: Burnside Hall Rm.306/Tuesday-Thursday 8:35-9:55)

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Office Hours: by appointment
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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 concepts such as “tradition” and “subsistence” in terms of their theoretical and practical meanings in the lives of Nunavummiut.

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 [1 copy on reserve in McClennan Library]). The coursepack can be found at the McGill Bookstore and NUNAVUT GENERATIONS at The Paragraph 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 (15%) explaining the central focus and key sources pertinent to you 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 (15%) 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


Section Two: The Original Nunavummiut


Section Three: Inuit Research: Assimilation, Acculturation, Adaptation


Section Four: Becoming Nunavut and Contemporary Issues

Section Four: Nunavut and Nunavummiut: Issues


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)


Useful References:
Bone, Robert [one copy on McClennan Reserve]
New York: Oxford University Press.

Brody, H.

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

Damas, D. (ed.) [one copy on McClennan Reserve]

Damas, D.

Duffy, R.Q.

Dunbar, M.J.

Government of Canada

Henderson, Ailsa

Hughes, C.

Matthiasson, J.
McElroy, Ann [one copy on McClennan Reserve]

Purich, D.

Wenzel, G.W.

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 Contemporary Nunavut.

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

Literacy among Nunavummiut as it has developed from the 19th Century 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.