GEOG-301: THE GEOGRAPHY OF NUNAVUT
(Room/Time: Burnside Hall Rm.306/Tuesday-Thursday 4:05-5:25)

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Course Precis
The Nunavut Territory is the newest and the 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 in which an Indigenous People is in the 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 contemporary 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 fields as diverse as Anthropology, Wildlife Management, Native Studies and Political Science to understand how Nunavut came to be and to analyze the processes that effect this unique territory. In so doing, we will also explore the societal heterogeneity among Nunavummiut and how concepts such as “tradition” and “subsistence” have different theoretical and practical meanings in the lives of Nunavummiut.

Course Structure
“Nunavut” is principally a lecture course in which questions and discussion are welcome. Two ethnographies will be required texts for the course. These are: QUAQTUQ: MODERNITY AND IDENTITY IN AN INUIT COMMUNITY by Louis-Jacques Dorais and NUNAVUT GENERATIONS: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN INUIT COMMUNITIES by Ann McElroy. Each is priced at approximately $25.00 and available through the McGill Bookstore. In addition, these works will be supplemented with topical articles that accessible on the GEOG301 myCourses site.

The last section of this syllabus lists a number of works that may be useful as resources relevant to course papers. These references are followed by a number of possible research topics; please note that these are examples and not required topics. Note that two copies of the HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS, V.5, ARCTIC (David Damas, ed.) is available in the Humanities and Social Science Reserve Book room.) Finally, a three-ring binder with a number of past papers submitted for this course is on reserve. These papers provide examples of some past research topics and also provide some insight into how I evaluate papers.

While Nunavut is very young, it is the product of cultural, political and economic tensions that first arose and then took on momentum circa 1950. To provide order to this examination, the course is divided into four sections. The first and second are intended to provide socio-cultural and historical contexts relevant to understanding relations between
Inuit and *Qallunaat*. The third section concentrates on those political, social and economic processes that occurred between 1950 and 1990 and which led Inuit to seek a new relationship with Canada. Finally, the last section will focus on the political and cultural creation of Nunavut with emphasis on the condition of Nunavummiut today including critical topics such as climate change, food security and self-governance.

**Requirements**

There are no formal tests nor is there a final examination. Instead, grading will be based on three papers and five random in-class quizzes.

The first paper (20% of final grade; due September 27th) will be an overview of a Nunavut community and the political-administrative region in which it is situated. Its purpose is to provide the opportunity to develop some depth of information about Thus, if the study community is Rankin Inlet (located in the Qivalliq Region), one would examine the environment as it pertains to Inuit occupancy of the region, including archaeological information, 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 (20%; October 25th) will be a comparative examination through the two course texts of Inuit community and regional development. This examination should include how various internal cultural dynamics as well as inter-cultural frictions have contributed to contemporary Inuit identity.

The third paper (40%; December 3rd) 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 and relates directly to Nunavut. It must be submitted by the final 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%; to be submitted by November 13th) explaining the central focus and key sources pertinent to your third paper. It is also expected that, if after receiving comments on the submitted outline it is recommended that a meeting with me be arranged, you will do so to discuss these comments.

Finally, there is a random 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.

**myCourse Readings (additional papers may be added)**

**Section One: Introduction to Nunavut**


**Section Two: The Original Nunavummiut**


Section Three: Inuit Research: Assimilation, Acculturation, Adaptation
Hughes, C.


Section Four: Becoming Nunavut and Contemporary 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 Reference Works:
Bone, Robert

Brody, Hugh

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

Damas, D. (ed.)

[R] Damas, D.

Duffy, R.Q.

Dunbar, M.J.

Government of Canada

Henderson, Ailsa

Matthiasson, J.
McElroy, Ann  
2008  Nunavut Generations: Change and Continuity in Canadian Inuit Communities.  

Purich, D.  

Wenzel, G.W.  

There are also several northern dedicated journals to be aware of. These are ÉTUDES/INUIT/STUDIES, POLAR RECORD, ARCTIC, POLAR RESEARCH, ARCTIC ANTHROPOLOGY.

**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 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?

Again, be aware that there is also a Research Reference Folder consisting of 7 or 8 photocopies of past papers on reserve in the Humanities and Social Science Reserve room. These papers are intended to provide course members further topic ideas from 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)

FORM OF PAPERS

Any written assignment may be submitted in either French or English. All papers must be typed (Times New Roman, 12Pt) and submitted in hardcopy. Maximum text length of final papers is 35 pages.