

## **NORS 293: The Circumpolar North: An Introductory Overview**

**Fall 2013**  
**Gruening 614E**  
**Office Hours: TR 2:15 – 4:00**  
**Office: 613B Gruening**

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This course will introduce students to the human experience in the circumpolar north by exploring such themes in the social sciences and humanities as: a) the differences and commonalities between indigenous and non-indigenous visions, assumptions and experiences; b) the emphasis on nature and wilderness in popular culture and nature's inherent value to human physical and spiritual well being; c) political issues such as alienation from core political-economic and population centers and tension between pro-development and pro-conservationist forces; and d) how northern literature reflects these and other aspects of human experience in the north.

The course is designed for online delivery and the instructor anticipates geographic, national and ethnic diversity amongst the students in the class, which will enrich the learning experience for all. Each week the instructor will post in Blackboard an introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions, to call the students' attention to central themes in the week's readings. Each week the instructor will introduce through a lecture that will be posted in Blackboard essential background (historical and current) information to contextualize the readings for the week. She will then engage the students in a discussion of questions that surface in the readings to encourage the students to analyze critically the information, arguments and themes presented in the readings.

The course is structured to begin on Thursday, the first day of instruction each fall semester. **Thus, the book for week 2 must be read and students' responses to the BB questions must be posted no later than midnight Alaska Standard Time on the Thursday of week 2.** Sometimes you have two weeks to read a book, in which case there will be BB discussion on the first part of the book the first week and the latter half of the book the following week. I encourage students to post their comments well before the deadline, so that students have time to read the responses of others and consider them before and after they write their own responses. *That is, the purpose of the BB discussion questions is to prompt a discussion, not simply to offer a venue for students to post responses and log out.*

**I anticipate that students will spend at least 3 hours per week in contact activities: viewing Powerpoint slide lectures produced by the instructor, viewing Powerpoint slide lectures produced by all students, and contributing to the weekly BB discussion. I expect the other work will require an average of 7 - 9 hours per week.**

**Required books for the class are:**

- *Rowing to Latitude* by Jill Fredston
- *Shadows on the Koyukuk* by Jim Reardon and Sidney Huntington
- *Saqiyuk: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women* by Wachowich, Awa and Katsak
- *Growth of the Soil* by Knut Hamsun
- *JuhabyJuhaniAho*
- *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn
- *Reeling in Russia* by Fen Montaigne

The readings for Weeks 5 and 11 are in Electronic Reserves, which can be accessed through the UAF website. The password is **north**. Instructions are at the end of the syllabus.

**Objective:**

The goal of the course is that students will develop an awareness and understanding of historic and current challenges facing the residents of the circumpolar north and how the human experience is shaped by the northern environment.

***Student Learning Outcomes:***

Students will be able to apply information garnered through readings and class discussion to expand their understanding of historical and current social, cultural, political, and economic issues of concern in the circumpolar north.

- Students will be able to respond, using critical analysis, in both informal and formal writing to the required reading materials and discussion questions posed by the instructor.
- Students will be able to analyze critically historical and current topics and challenges in the north, including their short and long-term implications.
- Students will be able to apply the knowledge and insight they have developed in the class to analyze how northern people's perceptions of their physical, cultural and social environments, as well as their experiences, shape their collective and individual identities.

*Note that the readings are to be completed in preparation for the day/week they are listed.*

<b>Week:</b>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings:</b>
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Week 1:	Introduction to the course	None
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REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 1: Course Introduction (40 min)

BB Discussion: Introduce self, interests, and desires for the course (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 1)(60 min.)

READ: *Rowing to Latitude*

**Part 1: North America**

Week2 :                      The North American Arctic

Jill Fredston:  
*Rowing to Latitude*

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 2: Rowing to Latitude (40 min)

BB Discussion: Rowing to Latitude topic Qs (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 2)(60 min.)

READ: Shadows on the Koyokuk

Week 3:                      Alaska Native Cultures

Sidney Huntington:  
*Shadows of the Koyokuk*

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 3: Shadows on the Koyokuk (40 min)

BB Discussion: Shadows on the Koyokuk topic Qs (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 3)(60 min.)

READ: Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change

Week 4:                      The Environment/Climate Change    Elizabeth Kolbert:*Field Notes from a  
Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*  
Chapters 1-3, 7, 10 (on ERes)

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 4: Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change (40 min)

BB Discussion: Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change topic Qs (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 4)(60 min.)

READ: "The Ideology of the Canoe: the Myth of Wilderness and "The Great White Hope: The Myth of the North," Chapters in *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History*.

Week 5:                      Canada's North

Daniel Francis. "The Ideology of the  
Canoe: the Myth of Wilderness" and "The Great  
White Hope: The Myth of the North," chapters in  
*National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian  
History* ( Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997).

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 5: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 5)(60 min.)

READ: Saqiyuk: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women

Weeks 6-7: Canadian Inuit

Nancy Wachowich, Apphia

Azalakti Awa, Rhoda KaukiakKatsak :*Saqiyuk: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women*

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 6: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 6)(60 min.)

READ: Growth of the Soil; and, Juha

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 7: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 7)(60 min.)

READ: Growth of the Soil; and, Juha

**Formal Reading Response [North American]: is due at the end of week 7.**

## **Part 2: Scandinavia**

Weeks 8-10: The Nordic Countries

Knut Hamsun:*Growth of the Soil*(8-9)  
JuhaniAho: *Juha*(10)

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 8: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 8)(60 min.)

READ: Insider, Outsider: An Inari Saami Case

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 8: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 9)(60 min.)

READ: Insider, Outsider: An Inari Saami Case

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week's readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 8: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates' discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 10)(60 min.)

READ: Insider, Outsider: An Inari Saami Case

Week 11: The Saami /Sámi

Thomas Dubois:  
“Insider, Outsider: An Inari Saami Case”

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week’s readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 9: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates’ discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 11)(60 min.)

READ: One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

*Formal Reading Response [Scandinavia]: is due at the end of week 11.*

### Part 3: Russia

Week 12-14: Russia/Soviet Union

Solzhenitsyn: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (12)

Fen Montaigne: *Reeling in Russia* (13-14)

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week’s readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 10: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates’ discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 12)(60 min.)

READ: Complete Russian Readings

REVIEW: Introductory overview to the week’s readings and discussions (30 min.)

VIEW: Power Point 9: (40 min)

BB Discussion: Weekly Reading Topics (40 min)

READ: Classmates’ discussion responses and reply (BB responses due by Thursday of week 13)(60 min.)

*Formal Reading Response [Russia]: is due at the end of week 14.*

Week 15: Present essay summary online in Blackboard

*Paper on Northern Identity due at the end of Week 15.*

*Presentation on Northern Identity is due at the end of Week 15.*

## Course Requirements and Assignment of Grades:

There are a total of 1,000 points associated with the requirements in the class.

**Reading and Participation in Blackboard Discussions:** Reading the assigned readings, viewing the assigned films and participating in Blackboard discussions are essential to learning and to contributing to the course experience. Each week questions for discussion based on my lecture notes and on the readings and films will be placed in Blackboard. Students are required to respond to the questions and are expected to engage with other students in the Blackboard Discussion Board, as well. **BB postings are due by midnight Thursday AST each week.** Each week is worth 10 points, including the first week, when you will introduce yourselves and the last week when you are expected to comment (constructively!) on students' presentations of their final papers.

**Blackboard Discussion = 150pts**

**Reading responses:** *Three times during the semester, one time during each unit (that is, one in the unit on North America, one in the unit on Scandinavia, and one in the unit on Russia),* students will write a formal response to the book or article assigned. Students will identify and analyze 3 themes of their choice in the book, using examples from the text to illustrate their arguments. Each response must be 3-4 pages in length. *Guidelines for the response are at the end of the syllabus.* **The paper will be due at midnight AST on the day the discussion is due in BB for that reading (if we're taking two weeks on the book, then it is due the second week).** You do not need to sign up ahead of time for the reading responses that you will do, as distribution doesn't matter, since I will be the only one reading these responses. You will send these to me. They will not be posted in BB.

**Reading responses –150 pts X 3 = 450pts**

**Paper on Northern Identity:** Based on class readings and lectures, students will write a ten page essay on the topic of northern identity following guidelines I provide. In the final week, students will post and present power point summaries of their northern identity essays using voice thread (free to you and you'll have instructions). **Both assignments are due by midnight AST on Thursday of week 15.** The paper is worth 350 points and the power point presentation of it is worth 40 points.

**Final essay 360 + 40 = 400 pts.**

**Total      1,000 points**

### Grade Scale:

975 – 1,000 points = A+

925 – 974 points = A

895 – 924 points = A-

875 – 894 points = B+

825 – 874 points = B

795 – 824 points = B-

775-794 points = C+

725 – 774 points = C

695 – 724 points = C-

675 – 694 points = D+

625 – 674 points = D

595 – 624 points = D-

< 595 = F

**No extra credit will be allowed.**

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:** All submissions by students must be their own original writing. If direct quotations of others are used, they must be cited as such. If the ideas of others are paraphrased, then the source of the ideas must be cited. **Submitting anyone else's writing than the student's own will result in a zero on that assignment. A repeat offense will result in a grade of F in the course and the student will be reported to the Dean of Students at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

The **Center for Distance Education** provides student service support for this online course. See their website at: <http://distance.uaf.edu>.

**Disabilities Services:**UAF's Disability Services office operates in collaboration with the UAF Center for Distance Education (CDE). Disability Services arranges for academic accommodations to students who are identified as eligible for services. If you believe you are eligible, please see the Office of Disability Services' website at <http://www.uaf.edu/disability> or at (907)-474-5655, or contact a student affairs staff person at your nearest local campus. I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

**Support Services:** The Division of Student Services provides services designed to assist students in achieving their academic goals. Go to <http://www.uaf.edu/ses/> to learn more about Student Support Services.

**Writing support:** The Writing Center in 801 Gruening offers assistance with meeting writing requirements in classes. The Writing Center may also be contacted at (907) 474-5314 or online at: <http://www.alaska.edu/english/studentresources/writing/>.

The **OIT Support Center** at UAF provides technology support services to students. The OIT Support Center may be contacted at 450-8300 (Toll Free: 800-478-8226), online at: <http://www.alaska.edu/oit/sc/about/contact.xml> or by email at [helpdesk@alaska.edu](mailto:helpdesk@alaska.edu).

### **Instructions for accessing readings in ERes:**

Go to [www.uaf.edu](http://www.uaf.edu).

Choose Academics.

Choose Libraries.

Choose Electronic Reserves.

Choose Electronic Reserves and Course Materials.

Find readings by choosing instructor. Select Ehrlander

Choose NORS 293: The Circumpolar North

Type in the password: north

Select the appropriate readings and download and print them.

**Please go to following page for guidelines for Reading Responses  
Guidelines for Formal Reading Responses in NORS 293**

*Three* times during the semester you are required to respond formally to the book (or other readings) you're assigned to read that week. You must submit one response per unit; so you'll respond to one book or other reading on North America, one on Scandinavia, and one on Russia. Your response must be 3-4 pages in length.

You are to choose three (3) themes in the book (or other readings) and analyze them, using examples from the text. For instance, if you choose to respond to Sidney Huntington's life story, you might want to write about 1) how amazingly resourceful he was; even from a very young age, he was always figuring out solutions to problems or getting out of crises; 2) how much he appreciated both the western education he received and the traditional education he received; and 3) what a great role model he is. You could choose a theme that's not directly about him, but which the book addresses, such as Athabaskan hunting practices. There are many possible themes in the books (and other readings) that you could develop. You should choose what you find most interesting, useful or otherwise noteworthy.

Once you've chosen your themes, write an introductory paragraph that presents the book (or article) and the three themes you will address. Then develop each of the themes you've named, in order, using examples from the text to back up your points. Complete the paper with a concluding paragraph that sums up your points and concludes your discussion.

**Form and length:** Your paper should 3-4 (5 is o.k., too) pages type-written, double-spaced, using size 12 font. (This format is standard for all college paper work.)

**Plagiarism:** Copying someone else's work without citing properly is plagiarism. Plagiarizing all or part of a paper will result in a zero on that assignment. You may use a few quotations to illustrate your points. Be sure to cite them.

**Other tips:**

- Use formal writing language, not the casual language we use for speaking.
- Never use harsh or profane language.



- Avoid slang or colloquial language.

- 1) Watch your verb tenses. Don't alternate between past and present.
- 2) Make sure you have agreement between subject and verb (both singular or both plural).
  - Ex. Everyone had to do his or her (not their) part. (Everyone is singular.)
  - They all had to do their part.
- 3) Do not use the first person (I, me, my) or the indefinite "you" ("if you were a slave, life was tough").
  - Note: this means you will not start the paper by saying "The three themes that I have chosen (or that I will discuss) . . . ."
  - After identifying the reading that you're analyzing, you should say something like: "A prominent theme in the book is \_\_\_\_\_. A second strong theme is \_\_\_\_\_. A third striking aspect of the book is \_\_\_\_\_. And then write an overarching statement about the book or reading.
  - I will understand what you think about the book, and the points you make will sound stronger if you don't make statements like "in my opinion" or "I believe," or "to me . . . ". Such statements weaken the points you are making.
- 4) Use quotations and / or paraphrase incidents to illustrate your points, and cite these passages.
  - a. Use parentheticals (Stowe, 132) or footnotes to cite.
    - Even when you are not quoting a passage, you must cite the pages to which you are referring.
    - For instance, let's say that you describe an incident that occurs at school, but you use no quotations. After you've related the incident, you'll write (Huntington, 29-31) or whatever the pages were. You must not cite more than 3 pages at a time. So in relating one incident you may need to cite two or three times.
  - b. If you are quoting, use quotation marks.
- 5) Choose words that are as specific as possible, so that you will make your points clearly. Avoid words like "things." Say what things you mean (subjects, tasks, topics, challenges; the list is limitless).

### **Grading Criteria for Reading Responses:**

#### **A grade of A (135 – 150 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is at least the required length, has a clear thesis and demonstrates serious analysis of themes and topics addressed in the readings and some application of the topics to reality in the north.
- Uses clear and exacting word choice

- Demonstrates entirely appropriate use of standard writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax).

**A grade of B (120 – 134 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is at least the required length, has a focus and demonstrates some analysis while responding to themes and topics addressed in the readings
- Is not as concise as it could be, but is entirely comprehensible
- Demonstrates good use of standard writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax)

**A grade of C (105 – 119 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is the required length and addresses themes and topics in the readings
- Has some passages that are somewhat ambiguous or difficult to follow
- Demonstrates fairly good use of standard writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax)

**A grade of D (90 – 104 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is at least 2/3 as long as the required length and discusses the readings at hand
- May wander off topic somewhat or not have clear
- Has quite a few mistakes in writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax)

**A grade of F (less than 90 points will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is less than 2/3 of the required length and does not address the readings in a meaningful way
- Is entirely unfocused
- Shows very poor use of writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax)

Note: Within reason, I will make allowances for students whose first language is not English.

### **Guidelines for the Northern Identity Paper**

You are to analyze the concept of identity as it applies to inhabitants of the north with respect to their residence in the north and sense of place. That is, you will consider the books and articles we have read, as well as our discussions online, and you will analyze how living in the north shapes the individual (and collective, if you choose) identities of those who live here/there.

- You should consider what characteristics are attributed to the north, such as: its being a frontier (what does that imply?); its climate and living conditions being harsh; long periods of darkness;

distance from population centers / isolation; the supposed greater freedoms; the supposed greater emphasis on individualism; exceptionalism (the theory that northerners are a cut above people who live in other places)

- Then consider whether you think that people of the north actually identify with these characteristics and values that often are ascribed to the north.
  - That is, how does living in the north influence the way we think about ourselves?
  - Do the harsh conditions in the north make people feel that they are exceptional, that they are harder, more resourceful, more independent than people who live elsewhere?

#### Essay Format:

- Write an introductory paragraph making a thesis statement about how living in the north affects people's identities (how they view themselves).
  - Lay out the main points you will be addressing.
  - I suggest that you focus on no more than 3 or 4 aspects of identity that are shaped by northern conditions.
  - State clearly what these are.
  - Make a final statement (in your introductory paragraph) that declares whether and how people's identities are shaped by where they live.
- Then . . .
  - Develop your themes, identifying specific conditions, identifying their impact on identity, referring to books and/or articles we have read.
  - For each characteristic of northern identity you address, you should refer to three or four readings.
    - For instance you might note that heroes Juha (in Juha) and Isak (in Growth of the Soil) clearly illustrate the resourcefulness and hardiness that is necessary for thriving in the north.
    - Not only are these qualities identified with northern living, they are especially admired in the north.
- Then, after you have developed your themes (aspects of northern identity), write a paragraph that summarizes the points that you have made.
  - Conclude with a final statement that reiterates the emphasis of your paper (your central point).

Your paper must be (at least) 10 full pages long.

#### **Grading Criteria for final paper on Northern Identity:**

**A grade of A (324-360 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is at least the required length, has a clear thesis, and complies with the other guidelines;
- Is easy to read and understand.
- Includes serious analysis of themes and topics addressed in the readings and some application of the topics to reality in the north.
- Uses clear and exacting word choice
- Demonstrates entirely appropriate use of standard writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax).

**A grade of B (288-323 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is at least the required length, has a focus and complies with most of the other guidelines;
- Is easy to read, but not as focused as it could be;
- Includes some analysis of themes and topics addressed in the readings and applies them to reality in the north
- Is not as concise as it could be, but is entirely comprehensible
- Demonstrates good use of standard writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax)

**A grade of C (252-288 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is the required length and complies with most of the other paper guidelines
- Addresses some themes and topics in the readings and their application in the north
- Has some passages that are somewhat ambiguous or difficult to follow
- Demonstrates fairly good use of standard writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax)

**A grade of D (216-251 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is at least 2/3 as long as the required length and makes some effort to follow the paper guidelines;
- Discusses some of the themes in the readings;
- Tends not to be very focused;
- Has quite a few mistakes in writing conventions (proper grammar, spelling, syntax).

**A grade of F (less than 216 points) will be assigned to a paper that:**

- Is less than 2/3 of the required length and does not address the readings in a meaningful way or follow the paper guidelines at all well;
- Is entirely unfocused and not easy to read or understand;
- Shows poor use of writing conventions with numerous mistakes (proper grammar, spelling, syntax).

**Note: Within reason, I will make allowances for students whose first language is not English.**