

Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies (BCS) 322: Peoples and Cultures of the Circumpolar World, II

Course Outline

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to promote an integrated and multidisciplinary understanding of the circumpolar peoples and their adaptations and contributions to social, economic, political, and environmental changes. This includes an introduction to Aboriginal cultures, a discussion of the Western presence in the Circumpolar regions, and an examination of contemporary northern peoples. Consideration is given to culture/ethnicity, gender issues, media and journalism, national and regional identity, and international connections and co-operation.

The course is divided into twelve modules, including an initial overview of primary/secondary societies, the emergence of tertiary societies, and a description of self-determination, followed by sections on identity & language, media, arts & literature, and education, recreation & family, respective to the three primary Circumpolar regions: North America & Greenland, Siberia & Northern Asia, and Northern Scandinavia & North-west Russia.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of Peoples and Cultures II, students will:

- ◆ Acquire a broad and basic understanding of the histories and experiences of the peoples of the Circumpolar North, and the development of northern cultures;
- ◆ Develop an understanding of the similarities and differences of northern peoples and cultures, their adaptations to change, and their roles as agents of change;
- ◆ Gain an appreciation of the cultural diversity of the Circumpolar North;
- ◆ Develop an understanding of basic research methods and an appreciation of ethical issues confronting contemporary northern researchers;
- ◆ Hone their critical thinking and writing abilities; and
- ◆ Develop the skills necessary to research, write and critically evaluate academic papers.

COURSE FORMAT

This course has been designed for web-based delivery. It consists of at least twelve modules, each comprised of a "lecture" or module text, required and suggested readings, and study questions. Students will discuss the module

text in online fora. Alternatively, the course may be offered consisting of in-class lectures and discussions of readings.

ASSESSMENT

The model of student activities and assessment is as follows:

- Module and reading questions: Each week, integrative questions will accompany the readings (modules and text). Students will select from these questions and write a thoughtful essay answer to three of these over the term. (3 x 10%)
- Student presentation: Students will make a presentation on their research paper. A poster-version may also be considered. (10%)
- Comparative research paper: Each student will research and write an analytical term paper on a topic related to the course. In keeping with course objectives, the paper will involve a comparison of peoples and cultures in various parts of the circumpolar north. (30%)
- Comprehensive final examination: (30%)

COURSE SYLLABUS

Section One: Introduction to Peoples and Cultures II

Peoples and Cultures II: An Introduction

This short introduction provides an overview of the course and a general overview of concepts introduced in *BCS 321: Peoples and Cultures I*. It introduces the term “tertiary societies” as those that arise when a region obtains greater autonomy within a nation state, characterized by the creation of formal institutions and government bodies that signal local control and self-determination.

Module 1: Self-Determination as a Contemporary Characteristic

Expressions of regionalism and nationalism have been important forces shaping social and political change for more than a century. These phenomena have not been unknown in the circumpolar North. In fact, the circumpolar North has given birth to innovative political arrangements to accommodate the aspirations for self-governance of indigenous peoples. It has also given birth to models of devolution to public regional governments seeking greater control over the affairs of their citizens. The circumpolar North has tried to build a circumpolar regional identity that involves and cuts across all of its eight countries. Examples of these are discussed.

This module further helps to familiarize students with important concepts and terms such as regionalism, nationalism, and self-determination, and sets the stage for the evaluation of expressions of self-determination addressed in sections two, three, and four of this course.

Section Two: Expressions of Self-Determination in North America

Module 2: Identity and Language

With the development of northern autonomy comes an increased expression of that autonomy. This is seen in the efforts to revive and preserve indigenous languages and in other expressions of indigenous identity. This module compares and contrasts efforts to maintain circumpolar indigenous languages in Arctic and Subarctic North America. In addition, the module examines evidence for the development of a northern identity among non-indigenous residents.

Module 3: Media, Arts, and Literature

Media, arts, and literature are also avenues for the expression of identity. Formerly defined by “outsiders,” citizens of circumpolar countries begin to define—and redefine—themselves through various literary and art forms. Exclusively northern visual and print-based media also develop, both for the market and for critical social commentary. With a focus on North America, this module examines the emergence of various forms of media, arts, and literature as expressions of northern culture and identity. Consideration will be given to indigenous as well as non-indigenous expressions.

Module 4: Education, Recreation, and Family

With the development of tertiary societies, northern institutions develop to transmit and reflect circumpolar culture. With a focus on North America, this module focuses on the “northernization” of the institutions of education, sport/recreation, and the family, and the ways in which these institutions reflect and transmit northern values, beliefs, and priorities. Case studies will be used as illustration.

Section Three: Expressions of Self-Determination in Northwest Russia, Siberia, and Northern Asia

Module 5: Identity and Language

With the development of northern autonomy comes an increased expression of that autonomy. This is seen in the efforts to revive and preserve indigenous languages and in other expressions of indigenous identity. This module shows the similarities and differences between efforts to maintain circumpolar indigenous languages in northwest Russia, Siberia, and Northern Asia.

Module 6: Media, Arts, and Literature

Media, arts, and literature are also avenues for the expression of identity. Formerly defined by “outsiders,” citizens of circumpolar countries begin to define—and redefine—themselves through various literary and art forms. Exclusively northern visual and print-based media also develop, both for the market and for critical social commentary. With a focus on northwest Russia, Siberia, and Northern Asia, this module examines the emergence of various

forms of media, arts, and literature as expressions of northern culture and identity. Consideration will be given to indigenous as well as non-indigenous expressions.

Module 7: Education, Recreation, and Family

With the development of tertiary societies, northern institutions develop to transmit and reflect circumpolar culture. With a focus on northwest Russia, Siberia, and Northern Asia, this module focuses on the “northernization” of the institutions of education, sport/recreation, and the family, and the ways in which these institutions reflect and transmit northern values, beliefs, and priorities. Case studies will be used as illustration.

Section Four: Expressions of Self-Determination in Greenland, the North Atlantic, and Northern Scandinavia

Module 8: Identity and Language

With the development of northern autonomy comes an increased expression of that autonomy. This is seen in the efforts to revive and preserve indigenous languages, and in other expressions of indigenous identity. This module compares and contrasts efforts to maintain circumpolar indigenous languages in Greenland, the North Atlantic, and Northern Scandinavia.

Module 9: Media, Arts, and Literature

Media, arts, and literature are also avenues for the expression of identity. Formerly defined by “outsiders,” citizens of circumpolar countries begin to define—and redefine—themselves through various literary and art forms. Exclusively northern visual and print-based media also develop, both for the market and for critical social commentary. With a focus on Greenland, the North Atlantic and Northern Scandinavia, this module examines the emergence of various forms of media, arts, and literature as expressions of northern culture and identity. Consideration will be given to indigenous as well as non-indigenous expressions.

Module 10: Education, Recreation, and Family

With the development of tertiary societies, northern institutions develop to transmit and reflect circumpolar culture. With a focus on Greenland, the North Atlantic and Northern Scandinavia, this module focuses on the “northernization” of the institutions of education, sport/recreation, and the family, and the ways in which these institutions reflect and transmit northern values, beliefs, and priorities. Case studies will be used as illustration.

Section Five: Conclusion

Module 11: Research in the North: Emerging Issues and Practices

Research also becomes a reflection of circumpolar autonomy. Frustration with being seen as a “ready-made laboratory” for southern research leads to an emphasis with conducting research in ways that directly and indirectly benefit northern residents. This is accompanied by the development of

northern scholarly capacity, and the development of research ethics specifically for the North (e.g., ACUNS, *Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North*). There is also an increased emphasis on respect for and inclusion of indigenous traditional knowledge.

This module outlines the various issues leading to the development of northern research capacity and to the emerging research practices (e.g., community-based research, oral histories, participatory action research). Using a number of case studies and examples to illustrate, consideration will be given to similarities and differences across the circumpolar North.

Conclusion: A Circumpolar Culture? Past, Present, and Future

This module summarizes the course and reviews the development of primary, secondary, and tertiary societies. Students will be asked to consider the future of the circumpolar North.