



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Introduction

Welcome to *Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2*. This three-credit, intermediate-level course, together with *BCS 331: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 1*, is one of the three, six-credit core courses of the University of the Arctic's Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies Program.

Together, these two courses will provide an in-depth understanding of the key issues facing circumpolar societies introduced in *BCS 100: The Circumpolar World*. In *Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 1* you examined some of the most important issues dealing with sustainable communities: natural resource use, ownership, and the environment. In this course, you will deal with questions relating to governance and politics, social issues, and global issues.

These courses will introduce you to the main challenges confronting the peoples and communities of the world's northern regions. As such, they will be beneficial to students attempting to better understand the current questions facing the North as well as to those planning to pursue advanced studies about the region. As one of the courses that comprise the Circumpolar Studies Core of the Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies it reflects the foundation principles of the BCS.

This course has been designed for both web-based (online) and classroom delivery. This *Student Manual* has been designed specifically for students in the web-based delivery mode, however, there is some general information that will be of interest to classroom students as well. *BCS 322* comprises thirteen modules, as outlined in the *Study Guide*. Each module contains a lecture or module text, and most have required and suggested readings and study questions.

Circumpolar Studies Core Courses

These three full (six-credit) courses, each made up of two half courses, comprise the core and ensure that all students share a broad knowledge and understanding of the lands, peoples, and major issues of the Circumpolar World. One, Physical and Natural Environment, explores the exotic landforms, seas, and flora and fauna that define the ecologies of the northern environment, another, Peoples and Cultures, explores the many peoples and diverse cultures that give the Circumpolar World its unique character, and the third, Issues of Sustainability of the Circumpolar World (of which this course is one half), focuses on contemporary issues of sustainability, such as personal and community well-being, political development, security, and economic diversification.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Advanced Emphasis

The third element of the BCS is the advanced emphasis. After completing the introductory course, *BCS 100: The Circumpolar World*, and the three core courses, students will be expected to select at least one advanced emphasis from among the many offered by the University and its partners. Advanced emphases can either focus on systematic, sustained, advanced study of an area or problem of particular relevance to the region and its people or prepare students for employment in a particular profession.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of *BCS 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2*, students will have:

1. Acquired a basic appreciation of the most important contemporary issues relating to globalization, sustainable communities, and natural resource use in the circumpolar regions of the world.
2. Attained an awareness of the relationship between the unique and diverse aspects of Northern societies and the common concerns facing the region.
3. Gained further insight into the complexity and inter-relatedness of human activity and the northern environment.
4. Critically examined various proposed explanations of the key challenges facing the North.
5. Recognized the cultural and gender-related diversity of approaches and ways of approaching the Circumpolar World.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Course Outline

BCS 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2 comprises 13 Modules, as outlined below.

Section One: Governance and Politics

- Module 1 Introduction and Democracy and Citizenship in the North
- Module 2 Indigenous Rights, Governance, and Self-Determination
- Module 3 New Internal Political Structures

Section Two: Education and Knowledge Systems

- Module 4 Traditional Knowledge
- Module 5 Education in the North
- Module 6 Post-Secondary Education

Section Three: Social Issues

- Module 7 Women and Gender Relations
- Module 8 Health and Health Care

Section Four: Global Issues

- Module 9 Environmental Issues
- Module 10 New External Political Structures
- Module 11 Security
- Module 12 The Politics of Monoculture and Diversity in the North
- Module 13 Concluding Observations

The following is a brief summary of each module.

Section One: Governance and Politics

Module 1: Introduction and Democracy and Citizenship in the North

This module examines the issue of political equality in the North focusing on the issues of citizenship, democracy, and regionalism. It then examines three cases in the Circumpolar North and the issues different regions confront in addressing these questions.

Module 2: Indigenous Rights, Governance, and Self-Determination

The module begins with a discussion of rights and considers the different types of arguments used to expand and limit Aboriginal rights, including both legal and moral rights. It then examines how these different Aboriginal rights are realized as polyethnic, special representation, and self-government rights in existing institutional arrangements.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Module 3: New Internal Political Structures

This module examines the growth of new political structures in the Circumpolar North, with an emphasis on the last two decades of the twentieth century and entry into the twenty-first. It begins with a definition of central terms and concepts, such as self-government and new politics. Then we take a tour to seven nation-states of the North, and describe some of the important political changes occurring at sub-national levels.

Section Two: Education and Knowledge Systems

Module 4: Traditional Knowledge

This particular module will help students explore traditional knowledge and understand what it is. As indigenous peoples worldwide struggle for survival and political recognition, they are also working feverishly to avoid losing the wealth of knowledge and experience held by elders and traditional teachers in their communities. Issues to be discussed include indigenous lifestyles and modernity, the problems of preserving and protecting traditional skills, environmental issues and knowledge regimes, and the relationship between scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge.

Module 5: Education in the North

The aim of this module is to promote understanding of education and some of its current key issues in the Circumpolar World. After a short introduction, the key terms of the module will be introduced and explained with the context and the nature and role of the module in mind. The third part of the module discusses the educational and curricular policies particularly in the context of Finland. The fourth part deals with the solutions to the problem of long distances in the Far North, more particularly the use of boarding schools and information technology. The conclusions will be drawn in the fifth and final part of the module.

Module 6: Post-Secondary Education

This module discusses the evolution, nature, and importance of post-secondary education in the Circumpolar North. It introduces the unique challenges and opportunities facing colleges and universities in the region. The first part is a description of the evolution of the post-secondary education after the Second World War. The second part discusses the general patterns in the post-secondary experience of Northern peoples. Following this, the module reviews the development, activities and contributions of colleges and universities in the Circumpolar World. The final section describes the impact and possibilities of post-secondary education in the Circumpolar World.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Section Three: Social Issues

Module 7: Women and Gender Relations

The aim of this module is to promote awareness regarding women's life and some major current issues in the North Circumpolar World. We begin by taking an introductory glance at the Circumpolar World from the perspective of women. Then the key terms and concepts of the module will be introduced and explained keeping the context as well as the nature and role of the module in mind. The students are introduced to the terms and concepts in light of this particular module. The second part of the module consists of the key issues characterizing the life of women in the Circumpolar world. The third and final part presents some conclusions and final remarks.

Module 8: Health and Health Care

This module is designed to provide an understanding of the core issues on the health status, health determinants, and health care of circumpolar populations, with an emphasis on Indigenous peoples. Because of their presence in four countries, the Eskimo/Inuit will be used as a case study. The key concepts, however, can be applied to other populations of more direct personal interest to individual students.

Section Four: Global Issues

Module 9: Environmental Issues

This module introduces the nature and extent of environmental change in the Circumpolar North. It highlights the historical and contemporary threats to the environmental integrity of the region. The first part discusses the vulnerability of the Northern eco-system and the relationship of Indigenous peoples with environmental sustainability. The second part outlines the history of the relationship between capitalism and Euro-American demand for Northern resources. Following this, the module notes the emergence of contemporary critiques of Northern resource developments and highlights contemporary issues and challenges.

Module 10: New External Political Structures

This module gives the basic information on the contemporary international system from the point of view of the North. First, it presents a theoretical framework in which two main contexts of international relations are described and lists briefly the different categories and the main international actors of the Circumpolar North; Second, it gives a brief overview of international co-operation and external political structures of the Cold War period and discusses the rapid change of the international system from the Cold War period into the transition period of the 1990s; Third, the module



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

describes briefly the main external political structures. Fourth, it notes the importance of inter-regional co-operation in the Circumpolar North in general and especially in the European North.

Module 11: Security

This module introduces different concepts of security and gives an overview of military presence, especially that of the nuclear weapons systems in the Circumpolar North in the beginning of the twenty-first century. First, the module defines security, discusses the different concepts of security, and describes nuclear involvement. Second, it describes and explains both the current state of security and the military-political situation of the Circumpolar North and the change that has taken place since the early 1990s. Third, the module describes and recognizes the so-called “forces of continuity” and those of change from the point of view of the different concepts of security. Fourth, it describes the relationship between the military and the environment in the North and lists the elements of the nuclear problem via the Barents Sea region. Fifth, the module lists and describes the main challenges to security in the North.

Module 12: The Politics of Monoculture and Diversity in the North

This module promotes understanding of the global processes of monoculture and the importance of ethnocultural, gender, and ecological diversity from the northern perspective. The module elaborates on minority-majority relations. First, the module introduces the specific ethnocultural issues that create the tensions of monoculture and diversity in the North. It then takes a more thorough look at the key concepts that allow one to identify undemocratic processes based on asymmetrical power relations. The module concludes with a discussion about the value of biological, cultural, and gendered diversity from the point of view of the subsistence perspective and of the gift economy.

Module 13: Concluding Observations

The concluding module will be a review of the main points of the course as they were first introduced in *BCS 331*. These points will be used to review the main points of the modules in *BCS 332* in preparation for the final exam.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Course Materials

The course materials for *BCS 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2* are listed below. If you find any items missing from your course package, contact your site coordinator as soon as possible.

University of the Arctic-produced material

Student Manual: This *Student Manual* contains essential information about the course, the course materials, and the procedures you should follow to complete the course successfully. Please read it through carefully before beginning your studies. The *Student Manual* also provides the assignments you must complete for credit in this course and instructions for writing the final examination.

Study Guide: The *Study Guide* comprises 13 modules. Each module identifies learning objectives to be achieved, lists reading assignments from the *Reading File*, and provides a list of key terms and concepts that you should understand before you proceed to the next unit. Each unit also provides review questions to help you to assess your understanding of the material and prepare for your assignments.

The lecture given in each module is the equivalent of the classroom instruction that you would receive in a conventional university or college setting. It identifies the issues, elaborates on them, and usually exposes you to some other sources of information for the topic. For each module, you are advised to read the lecture before the other assigned readings, and again after you have finished them. Then, answer the review questions.

Reading File: The *Reading File* contains selected articles from various sources that are required reading for this course. The *Study Guide* will direct you to them at the appropriate times. Because the pages are not numbered sequentially, but retain the page numbering of the articles and book chapters presented, you will find it helpful to bookmark your *Reading File* as you proceed through it.

Web Site: *BCS 332* is delivered online using WebCT technology and an online instructor. The site is at: <http://webct3.athabascau.ca:8900/>

Online Map: One of our partners, GRID Arendal (the United Nations Environmental Programme at Arendal, Norway) has designed an online interactive map for the University of the Arctic that will be used throughout the course. See it at <http://maps.grida.no/uarctic/>



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Home Institutions

Students enrol in University of the Arctic courses and programs through registration in member institutions. Any credits you may receive from completing this course will be granted by your university or college (your home institution) according to their regular practices and procedures. If you have any questions about credits, credit transferability, transcripts, courses, or other matters relating to your program, please contact the registrar's office at your home institution. Your university or college will extend the same privileges, rights and services to you as to other students, and you are subject to all the rules, policies, procedures, and practices of that institution.

Your Community

Throughout this course, you will be asked to do activities relating to your community, such as give examples from your community, or explain how this issue affects your community, and so on. For those students living in the North, this is not a problem, but students living outside the Circumpolar region will have to adopt a northern community to use in these activities.

In the introductory course, *BCS 100: The Circumpolar World*, it was suggested that students who did not live in the North choose a community for their "home base" by following a longitudinal line on a map from their home, straight north through the North Pole and straight on to a landfall somewhere on the opposite side of the world. Choose a community on the map in that area. Thus, a student living in Toronto, Canada, would adopt a community somewhere on the Taymyr Peninsula in north-central Siberia; a Japanese student might end up in Greenland or Iceland; and a European student would have a home base somewhere in Alaska or the far east of Russia. Or you may simply choose a community at random, or because you like the name of it.

In any case, type the name of the community or region into an Internet search engine and see what you can learn about it. You will return to your adopted community each time you're asked to do an exercise or activity relating to "your community."



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Course Contract

BCS 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2 is a three-credit course, and is equivalent to a one-semester course at a conventional university. It is offered through either online or classroom delivery. The online version of the course will be offered by the University of the Arctic whenever there is sufficient student interest among member institutions. Classroom delivery will be undertaken by individual member institutions as interest and numbers warrant within that university or college.

Online Delivery Mode

The online version of *Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332* follows the timelines decided on by your instructor. Although it is offered by the University of the Arctic, students are subject to the rules, policies, and regulations of their home institutions. The online version is coordinated directly by the University of the Arctic and is delivered by an instructor based at one of the UArctic member institutions. Admission is open to students who are registered at any member institution.

Classroom Delivery Mode

Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332 will be offered by some member institutions as a regular course, at their discretion. Students will register at their home institutions as they would for any other course. Likewise, the costs, prerequisites, delivery methods, timelines, student assessment, and other like matters will be determined by the institution offering the course.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

The Arctic Learning Environment, the student portal to the University of the Arctic, is housed at Athabasca University in the Province of Alberta, Canada. Therefore, the personal information and records collected and maintained by the University of the Arctic as a result of a student's registration in this course, such as completed assignments and examinations, electronic communications, and correspondence, are subject to Athabasca University policies and the privacy and access provisions of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. You may refer to the above Act at: <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/acts/F25.cfm>.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Course Instructor

An important feature of an online University of the Arctic course is the course instructor. The course instructor is responsible to help you complete the course successfully. He or she is the equivalent of a classroom instructor in a conventional course. Your instructor's name and contact information will be given to you shortly after you register in the course.

Your instructor is an expert in the field of circumpolar studies, has excellent academic qualifications, and is committed to helping you learn at a distance. In addition to instructing you and your fellow students, your instructor is available to answer your questions about course content or how to approach assignments, and can direct you to the correct department in your home institution to help you with other problems that may be hindering your progress in your course or program. In addition, your instructor will be responsible for marking your assignments.

Site Coordinator

A site coordinator has been assigned to each participating home institution and will be introduced to you at the beginning of the course. Your site coordinator will assist you with admission and registration, help you become familiar with WebCT, make sure you have the required course materials, provide local computer and technical support, and otherwise assist in the day-to-day delivery of the course.

Student ID Number

In contacts with your instructor, on assignments, or in any correspondence or other contact with the university, you may be asked to provide your student ID number. Record this number in the space provided below. Your student ID number will assist in processing requests, grades, and administrative matters more quickly. It will be assigned at the beginning of the course.

Student ID number: _____



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Study Schedule

Students enrolled in the online version of *Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332* follow the schedule laid out by their instructor. It is very important that you keep up with the weekly study schedule outlined by your instructor. If you find yourself falling behind, for whatever reason, contact your instructor. He or she may be able to offer useful suggestions that will help you catch up. There will be no extensions to grouped-study versions of this course.

As you complete each activity, check it off so you will know it is done and you can actually see the progress you are making in the course. If you have difficulty with the material or if you are unable to adhere to the work schedule, discuss the problem with your site coordinator or contact your instructor. If you find yourself falling behind in your course work, contact your instructor immediately. She or he will be able to advise you as to what options are available to you.

Weekly Study Schedule

Week	Module Title	Reading Assignments
1	Orientation Module 1: Introduction and Democracy and Citizenship in the North	Read the <i>Student Manual</i> From the <i>Reading File</i> Reading 1: The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. 2000. Report no. 34 to the Storting (2000–2001) Regarding Rural and Regional Policy Reading 2: Daniel R. Kempton, The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): The Evolution of Centre-Periphery Relations in the Russian Federation Reading 3: Geoffrey R. Weller, Should British Columbia Create a Ministry of Northern Affairs?
2	Module 2: Indigenous Rights, Governance, and Self-Determination	From the <i>Reading File</i> Reading 4: Fae Korsmo, Claiming Territory: The Saami Assemblies as Ethno-Political Institutions Reading 5: Fae Korsmo, Native Sovereignty: An Insoluble Issue? Reading 6: Gail Fondahl, Olga Lazebnik, Greg Poelzer, and Vasily Robbek, Native ‘Land Claims’ Russian Style



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

3	Module 3: New Internal Political Structures	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 7: Oran R. Young and John Dryzek, Internal Colonialism or Self-Sufficiency? Problems and Prospects in the Circumpolar North</p> <p>Reading 8: Aileen Espiritu, “Aboriginal Nations”: Natives in Northwest Siberia and Northern Alberta</p> <p>Reading 9: Monica Tennberg, Discourse on Sovereignty</p>
4	Module 4: Contemporary Education and Traditional Knowledge	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 10: Frances Abele, Traditional Knowledge in Practice</p> <p>Reading 11: Fikret Berkes, Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Perspective</p> <p>Reading 12: Marc Stevenson, Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Assessment</p>
5	Module 5: Education in the North	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 13: Leon Tikly, Globalisation and Education in the Postcolonial World: Towards a Conceptual Framework</p> <p>Reading 14: Frank Darnell and Anton Hoëm, Historical Development in Schooling</p>
6	Module 6: Post-Secondary Education	<p>From the Web</p> <p>Reading 15: University of the Arctic (reading will be assigned by your instructor)</p> <p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 16: James Ryan, Native Education: Obstacles and Pathways to Cultural Integrity</p> <p>Reading 17: Thomas Dunk, Taking the Locals Seriously: The Social Determinants of “Useful” Knowledge and their Implications for Northern Development</p> <p>Reading 18: Per Langgaard, To Be a Very Small University in a Very Small Society</p>
7	Module 7: Women and Gender Relations	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 19: Shelagh Day, The Indivisibility of Women’s Human Rights</p> <p>Reading 20: Lori Heise, Violence, Sexuality, and Women’s Lives</p> <p>Reading 21: Rauna Kuokkanen, Towards an “Indigenous Paradigm” from a Sami Perspective</p> <p>Reading 22: Vandana Shiva, Economic Globalization, Ecological Feminism, and Sustainable Development</p>



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

8	Module 8: Health Care	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 23: Robert Fortune, The Health of the Eskimos as Portrayed in the Earliest Written Accounts</p> <p>Reading 24: Otto Schaefer, Medical Observations and Problems in the Canadian Arctic</p> <p>Reading 25: Peter Bjerregaard and T. Kue Young, Major Themes in Inuit Health</p>
9	Module 9: Environmental Issues	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 26: Gail Osherenko and Oran R. Young. Arctic Ecosystems: Environmental Interests</p> <p>Reading 27: William O. Pruitt Jr. The Northern Environmental Imperative</p>
10	Module 10: New External Political Structures	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 28: Arctic Council, Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council</p> <p>Reading 29: Lassi Heininen, Olli-Pekka Jalonen, and Jyrki Käkönen, The Arctic in International Society: The Current State</p> <p>Reading 30: The Rovaniemi Declaration: Declaration on the Protection of the Arctic Environment</p>
11	Module 11: Security	<p>From the <i>Reading File</i></p> <p>Reading 31: Tony Samstag, Security and Defence Issues Relating to the Arctic Region: A Norwegian Perspective</p> <p>Reading 32: Lassi Heininen, The Military and the Environment: An Arctic Case</p> <p>Reading 33: Alexander A. Sergounin, Russian Policy towards the BEAR: from 'Hard' to 'Soft' Security</p>
12	Module 12: Cultural Diversity and Homogeneity	<p>From Internet sources</p> <p>Reading 34: Kaarina Kailo, 2002. Violence vs. Women, Nature and Democracy: Alternatives to the Politics of "Arctic Othering." Available at http://www.arctic-council.org/files/pdf/takingwing_eng.pdf</p> <p>Reading 35: <i>Taking Wing Conference Report</i>, 2002. Select articles relevant to the topic (e.g., Chapter III, Gender in the Self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, pp. 126–186). Available at http://www.arctic-council.org/files/pdf/takingwing_eng.pdf</p>



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

13	Module 13: Concluding Observations	
14	Review the entire course and write the Final Examination Complete the course evaluation	



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Assignments for Credit

Weekly Discussion Contributions

Weeks 1 to 13 of the Study Schedule

Weight: 40 per cent of final grade

Each week you will be expected to respond to a question or discussion topic posted on the discussion forum of the course web site. You will respond with a written, 100- to 150-word response. Some weeks the question or discussion topic will be replaced with a short quiz relating to the module or some other activity. The responses will be marked after week six (20% of the course mark) and at the end of the course (20% of the course mark).

Research Paper

Due week 13 of the Study Schedule

Weight: 30 per cent of final grade

Instructions: Using the assigned and suggested readings, library and internet resources, and other relevant material, write a research paper of 1200 to 1600 words (10 to 15 pages) on one of the assigned topics. The topics will be assigned after Week 5. This research paper is worth 30 per cent of your final grade for the course. Please read the section of this *Student Manual* titled "Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct" before writing your essay. There is also a section titled "Tips on Writing Research Essays" that you may find helpful.

Final Examination

Week 14 of the Study Schedule

Weight: 30 per cent of final grade

The final examination is worth 30 per cent of the final grade for the course. The examination is a three-hour, online test and is to be completed in one sitting without books, notes or other resources. It will be written at a specified time and place, and be supervised by your site coordinator. The final examination will include both multiple choice questions and questions that require written answers. The passing grade is 50 per cent.

Before you write the final examination for *BCS 332*, be certain that you have completed all other assignments for the course and that you have received feedback on them. Your examination will not be graded until all other



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

course assignments have been completed. The section of this *Student Manual* titled “Taking Examinations” may be helpful.

To receive credit for the course, you must submit all the course assignments and complete them to the satisfaction of your instructor. You must also obtain a grade of 50 per cent or better on the final examination and an overall course grade of at least 50 per cent. Students who obtain less than the required grade on the final examination may write a supplemental examination. The passing grade for supplemental examinations is 50 per cent. Contact your Course Instructor for details.

Student Assessment

Weekly discussion	40%
Research Paper	30%
Final Examination	30%
Total	100%



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Students enrolled in University of the Arctic courses, such as *Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2*, are considered to be responsible scholars, and are therefore expected to adhere rigorously to principles of intellectual integrity.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual dishonesty in which another's work is presented as one's own. Students sometimes commit plagiarism inadvertently. To avoid doing so, be certain that you acknowledge all your sources—both primary and secondary—in a full and consistent manner.

All direct quotes (quotations of any number of words from the original work) and indirect quotes (paraphrases of ideas presented in the original work) must be acknowledged. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and, as is the case with any form of academic misconduct, will be penalized. Depending on the circumstances, penalties may include rejection of the submitted work; expulsion from the examination, the course, or the program; or legal action.

Dutiful citation of quotes and paraphrased material does not mean you can write an essay assignment by stringing together a series of quotes. You should always try to summarize or describe someone else's ideas in your own words. If you present your own ideas or opinions in a paper, provide evidence or arguments to substantiate your position.

All assignments must be original work for this course. The use of assignments from previous courses or from other students is considered a form of cheating and will be subject to discipline for academic misconduct.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Tips on Writing Research Essays

If you experience difficulty in writing research essays—as many students do—you may find the following tips helpful. Most people find writing difficult, even those who have been doing it for years and who do it for a living. If you follow the tips given here, you should find the task of writing a research essay a bit easier to accomplish.

The four stages to writing an essay are:

collecting information

planning the essay

writing the rough draft

re-reading, sorting out, and writing the final essay

Collect Information

Collecting information may include notes from library materials, internet sites, the *Study Guide*, the *Reading File*, or other materials suggested by your instructor.

Collecting the information and answering the questions as you go along can be fun. There is always one more book or article to read or one more source to consult. At some stage, however, you must decide that you have enough information and begin organizing the information you do have.

Plan the Essay

This stage takes time. Don't be tempted to skip it and start writing. A good plan will reveal itself in the final essay. Planning your essay will help to structure your arguments clearly and keep your information organized.

Jot down the different ideas you have for different sections. Use headings to organize your thoughts. Consider the different sides of the arguments presented, and assemble the evidence to support the different ideas. Spread out your information and identify which points go where. Not all of the information you have collected will fit into the essay.

Don't assume that the reader of your paper has any background on the subject of your essay—provide sufficient information to allow a reader to identify the issues in question.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Write the Rough Draft

Ideally, you will sit down with all your notes organized into sections and write the first draft in one session. If you cannot do this, try to write a number of paragraphs in one sitting. Do not worry about spelling or alterations at this stage. Just try to get a rough draft of the whole essay.

For a 2,000 word essay, you will need to write eight to ten double-spaced pages. This includes an introduction and a conclusion (one paragraph each) and the body of your essay.

The introduction should be brief—usually no more than a few sentences. It should state concisely what your essay seeks to examine, and should explain the approach you intend to take. You may be able to reword the assignment question into a statement that becomes the topic of your essay.

The body of the essay is the main section in which you must present and develop your ideas. Your essay must be solidly based on the topic in question. General statements should be supported with specific examples. Choose only information that has direct relevance to your discussion, and explain what relationship exists between the concepts you are presenting and the topic of the essay. In other words, link the individual points and paragraphs back to the essay topic. Transitions between paragraphs should be smooth, and the presentation of ideas should flow evenly from one paragraph to another. Sometimes the connections are established through similarities in content, sometimes through contrasts; sometimes the development is chronological, sometimes logical. You must choose whichever approach is most appropriate to your topic.

The conclusion of your essay, like the introduction, should be brief. It should summarize your ideas and present any conclusions that have emerged from your discussion. Your concluding statements should add strength and credibility to the ideas presented in your introduction. If they do, and you have supported your argument throughout, then you will have succeeded in writing a good essay.

If you find the introduction difficult to start with, try to write another section. Do anything to get started. When you have a rough draft of your essay, you may want to leave it alone for a day or two. When you return to it, you should be able to take a fresh view of what you have written, which may help you recognize errors and omissions in the content, or awkwardness in style.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Reread, Sort Out, and Write the Final Essay

Reread your draft, sort out any muddled ideas, and rewrite any awkward sections.

Copy it out. Spread it out on the page. Use subheadings if you like. Clear, simple sentences and paragraphs will help the reader understand your meaning.

If you feel your essay is a hopeless mess at this stage, don't give up or struggle on your own. Try talking to your instructor, or ask someone else to read it over.

Don't forget to give credit for all sources of quotations and ideas. This practice not only indicates intellectual courtesy and honesty, but also enables the reader to pursue any reference that seems particularly interesting. Re-read the section of this *Student Manual* titled "Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct."

For the convenience of your instructor, fairly large margins would be appreciated. This format facilitates the insertion of corrections and comments, and will make your essay easier to read (a decided psychological advantage). The ideal margins are approximately 4 cm at the left and 2.5 cm at the top, bottom, and right-hand side. Before submitting your essay, take the time to proofread it carefully to catch any spelling mistakes, typing errors, and the like.

Keep a copy of your paper.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Taking Examinations

The following tips may help you prepare for and write your examination successfully.

Complete all the scheduled assignments before writing the examination.

Remember that the examination is based on all the material covered in the course. Be sure to review these materials thoroughly in preparation for the examination. If you are able to answer all the study questions, you should not have any trouble with the examination.

To ensure that your answers are cohesive and coherent, take time to write short outlines for the essay questions

Approach the examination with a positive attitude. Express yourself clearly and concisely.

Allow three weeks for your grade to be sent to you.

Library Services

Your university or college library contains many books and journals that are relevant to this course, and full library services are available to you as a student. Most libraries have an online catalogue which you may search by author, title, or topic.

You may also use your local public library or a local community college or university library that extends borrowing privileges to the public. Libraries are the foundation of academic research and you are well-advised to take full advantage of them.

Services to Students

Your university or college offers a wide range of services to students. You may write examinations, order materials from the library, and take care of various administrative matters such as course registration and course materials pick-up. Other services include advice on program planning and course selection, on developing a successful approach to studying, on improving study habits and skills, and on career and educational goal setting.

In addition, information on student awards and financial aid may be obtained. If you need assistance in any of these areas, feel free to call a student counsellor.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Credit Transferability

If you wish to transfer credit to another institution, contact the Office of the Registrar at your university or college. Remember, though, that the receiving institution determines transfer of credit. Generally, University of the Arctic member institutions will accept transfer of Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies credits. If you plan to transfer *Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2* to another institution, we suggest you get an agreement, in writing, from that institution.

Course Evaluation

We would like you to assist the course team in improving and revising *Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332: Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2*. We would appreciate it if you would take the time to tell us what you thought of the course by completing the following course evaluation questionnaire.

Once you have completed your studies, please answer all the questions as fully and as accurately as possible. It is the course we are evaluating, not you, so don't be reluctant to let us know what you think. You are not required to write your name on the questionnaire or otherwise identify yourself. Please send the completed questionnaire to your site coordinator.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

Course Evaluation Questionnaire

Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies 332

Contemporary Issues in the Circumpolar World 2

Date: _____

The *Student Manual*

1. What features of the *Student Manual* did you find most helpful?

2. Is there any additional information you would have liked included in the *Student Manual*?

- yes
- no

If so, please indicate what that information would be.

3. Did you follow the study schedule provided in the *Student Manual*?
- yes
 - I made up my own schedule
 - I did not follow a schedule

Assigned Reading

1. How useful did you find the assigned readings from the *Reading File*? Did they provide you with adequate information on the topics covered in the course?



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

2. Please list any assigned readings from the *Reading File* that you found particularly difficult or inappropriate.

3. Did you use any other sources of information for this course? If so, please list your sources and indicate whether you found them useful.

Written Assignments and Final Examination

1. Did you find the course assignments interesting and useful?

- yes
- somewhat
- no

Comments

2. Were you helped by your instructor's comments on your written assignments?

- yes
- somewhat
- no



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

3. Did you find that there was enough information available to enable you to do the written assignments?

- yes
 no
 undecided

Please specify any topics for which you could have used more information.

4. Approximately how much time on average did you spend completing each of the weekly assignments? _____ hours

the research essay: _____ hours

5. Please indicate what changes, if any, you might like to see in the assignment structure.

6. What comments can you make to improve the final examination?

Instructor Support

1. Were you reasonably satisfied with the support you received from your instructor?

- yes
 no
 undecided

If not, please explain.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

2. Do you have any suggestions about how your instructor might have been more helpful?

General

1. Have you experienced any difficulty in registration, contacting your instructor, receiving your course materials, sending in and receiving assignments, or arranging for and completing the examination?

2. How would you rate your overall experience in this course?

- positive
- adequate
- negative

Comments

3. Would you enrol in another course of this type at the University of the Arctic?

- yes
- no

If yes, please indicate what you would want the course to be like. If not, please explain.