Proposal for the establishment of a new UARCTIC Thematic Network:

ARCH - Arctic Cultures and History

Members

Arctic members:
Leader:
FAROE ISLANDS: Fróðskaparsetur Føroya/University of the Faroe Islands, **Bergur Djurhuus Hansen** (Assoc. Professor of Literature and Dean, Faculty of Faroese Language and Literature), bergurdh@setur.fo - https://pure.fo/en/persons/bergur-djurhuus-hansen

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CANADA: Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), **Daniel Chartier** (Full Professor of Nordic Literature, research centre IMAGINAIRE/NORD)
GREENLAND: Ilisimatusarfik / University of Greenland, **Silke Reeploeg** (Associate Professor, Cultural and Social History)
ICELAND: Háskóli Íslands /University of Iceland, **Sumarliði R Ísleifsson** (Associate Professor, History)
FINLAND: Rovaniemi /ULAP, **Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja** (Full Professor, Art History)
SWEDEN: Umeå University, **Heidi Hansson** (Full Professor, English Literature) and **Peter Sköld** (Full Professor, History)
NORWAY: University of Oslo, **Ulrike Spring** (Full Professor, History)
NORWAY: UiT The Arctic University of Norway, **Svein Aamold** (Full Professor, Art History)

Non-Arctic members:
FRANCE: Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, **Jan Borm** (Full Professor, Literature, UArctic Chair in Arctic Humanities), **Joanna Kodzik** (History), **Alexandre Delangle** (Literature and International Relations)
UNITED KINGDOM: University of Saint-Andrews, **John Burnside** (Writer and Professor of Creative Writing)

Focus area and goals

The thematic network ARCH – "Arctic Cultures and History" – is dedicated to the study of history and culture including literature, travel writing and creative writing, the performative arts, history and the history of art. The association of culture and history is essential in this respect since the members of this network are convinced that there is no efficient way to approach and solve problems in the Arctic or Arctic-related issues without considering the historical and cultural

dimension of any given question. In too many contemporary debates, these essential aspects relating to the notion of identity are neglected or even ignored though they detain the key to harmonious relations based on respect of Arctic societies and their values. This network will therefore be principally dedicated to subjects arising from the field of human science though transdisciplinary cooperation with the social and natural sciences are also sought.

Through centuries contacts between cultures in the Arctic and explorers, missionaries, researchers etc. from the outside world have increased, especially from the late 18th century to the present, leading to a wide range of interpretations in scholarly publications, popular books and artistic expressions. A growing desire for empirical knowledge – at times linked to political or economic ambitions, especially from the late 18th and onwards – and hence to write and publish from journeys and explorations to the Arctic led to descriptions based on both experience and imagination. Working with texts such as historical accounts, political and geographical publications, travel writings, literature from the region and about the region primarily from the 18th century to the present the network will include also other materiel and artistic expressions in developing a "dual gaze", looking at the Arctic from the inside and the outside, in order to understand and be able to explain from a perspective within the humanities current and foreseeable challenges in the region. The concept of cultural sustainability - meaning the ability to retain values, traditions and cultural practices in an ongoing negotiation with a continuous, growing, global interest and influence – will serve as a key concept in the network's research and activities. Sustainability in different conceptualizations, cultural as well as environmental, is a theme frequently expressed in manifold ways and formats in both literature and the visual arts connected to the region.

The cultural, historical approach of the network will add new and important perspectives to the ongoing debates and investigations surrounding the Arctic as a subject in research and politics. By including Indigenous cultural and artistic expressions from the Arctic in both ongoing and planned research on how meetings between communities in the Arctic and visiting travelers have been interpreted, described and evolved into conceptions and influential discourses till now, the activities of the network will contribute to a better understanding of many of the challenges facing the Arctic today and affecting first and foremost the people living there. The network includes a number of institutions that have Arctic/Indigenous Studies programmes and that work in close cooperation with a number of Indigenous organisations and communities: the University of Greenland closely cooperates with the Inuit Circumpolar Council and other Inuit and Indigenous organisations, the University of Lapland at Rovaniemi has a Sámi studies Chair, and the ARCUM centre at the University of Umeå has many close ties with Indigenous communities. UVSQ is the first French university to have welcomed an Ewenki reindeer herder, M. Semen Gabychev, as Associate Researcher; he recently defended his masters in Arctic Studies at UVSQ. UVSQ also has many collaborative projects with Indigenous organisations and communities in Greenland (Ummannaq Polar Institute), Canada (in cooperation with UQAM) and in Lapland, notably with the Sámi Education Institute in Inari, Finland, and the World Reindeer Herders' Association in Kautokeino, Norway. The network will further and actively invite Indigenous institutions and universities with Indigenous Studies programmes to become members of the network and participate in its activities.

Regarding cooperation, the network will conduct research and arrange activities that are related to and easily established in cooperation with other UArctic thematic networks, of which these are obvious and relevant :

- Thematic Network on Northern and Arctic Island Studies Research (one participating institution of the network is a member)

- Arctic Indigenous Film
- Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design
- Circumpolar Archives, Folklore and Ethnography (three participating institutions of the network are members)
- Critical Arctic Studies (one participating institution of the network is a member)
- Læra Institute for Circumpolar Education
- Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education (three participating institutions of the network are members)

The initiators of this proposed network organized a conference in the Faroe Islands in 2022 under the heading "Cross-cultural perspectives" with the participation of different fields within the humanities as well as creative arts. Contributions and discussions at the conference serve as experience and background in the establishment of the network.

Actions to be implemented

- An annual conference that brings together academics and practitioners of the fields covered by the network and members of Arctic societies including Indigenous organizations and groups
- Co-authored, peer-reviewed articles and publications – members of the network are associated with the publication Arctic Humanities (Brill) https://brill.com/page/2562?language=en
- Dissemination events for the general public
- Investigations into the establishment of a joint Arctic Master's program

Quality control

The participating institutions have their own internal procedures for quality enhancement and quality control and will seek to share knowledge and experiences in order to develop good practice and secure a high quality outcome of all the network's activities. Specifically - and in accordance with the Bologna Process regarding the European members – the institutions follow clear policies and procedures for assuring and enhancing the quality of all research projects and teaching programmes. Furthermore, the Research and Enterprise Unit, operating within the administration of the university of the leader of the network, will support the network's activities.

The ambition is also that the cooperation across borders will help strengthen the capacities of the participating institutions, here represented by the members of the network, to process and quality enhance interdisciplinary networking projects.

The members of the network will base their contributions on relevant research experience and will conduct new research as well as develop and contextualize previous research as part of the new perspectives provided by the goals and activities of the network.

An internal steering committee will oversee and discuss the network's direction and activities in relation to the goals described in the proposal (see below).

Internal steering committee
The leader of the network will be joined by an internal steering committee consisting of Sumarliði Ísleifsson (University of Iceland), Ulrike Spring (University of Oslo) and Jan Borm (Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines). The committee will support the leader in the implementation of planned activities, help resolve any issues or doubts by making suggestions and giving advice, and otherwise together with the leader oversee the activities of the network in relation to its focus and goals and discuss these at meetings from time to time.

Tórshavn 31.03.2023

Bergur Djurhuus Hansen,
Associate Professor of Literature and Dean

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Letter of Support

As the only university in the Faroe Islands and a member of the *UArctic*, the University of the Faroe Islands, *Fróðskaparsetur Føroya*, has been committed to research in the Nordic and Arctic region for many years. We therefore welcome networking initiatives across disciplines focusing on the challenges in the Arctic, and I am delighted as the Rector of the University to support the application for the establishment of a new thematic network ***ARCH - Arctic Cultures and History*** led by one of our Deans, Bergur Djurhuus Hansen, Associate Professor of Literature.

I am confident that although Bergur Djurhuus Hansen has many responsibilities as a Dean, he will manage to find both time and recourses to lead the network in good cooperation with fellow network-members and partners.

The University will do its best to support the activities described in the attached proposal by covering e.g. usual travel expenses connected to Bergur Djurhuus Hansen's role as network-leader.

Best wishes for a productive and successful thematic network.

Sincerely

Martin Zachariasen
Rector, Fróðskaparsetur Føroya
Professor of Computer Science, Ph.D., Dr. Scient.