



PEOPLES AND CULTURES OF THE SUBARCTIC

Instructor: Norman Easton, BA, MA, PhD candidate Classes: Mon & Wens
Office: Interlab Time: 10:30am- Noon
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Subarctic peoples have retained and elaborated traditions that are of great antiquity and define essential qualities of the human condition. This course introduces students to the historic adaptations, traditional cultures, and contemporary peoples of the Subarctic, with an emphasis on northwestern North America. It reviews interpretive perspectives taken by Subarctic peoples about themselves as well as those of writers within the academic tradition. It surveys the features of social organization, religious traditions, arts, narrative styles, ethnicity, and contemporary relations with the State of selected North American Subarctic peoples.

COURSE TRANSFER

| | | | |
|------|---|---------|--------------------------|
| UBC | Anth 2nd yr. (3) | UAF | Anth Elec (3) |
| SFU | SA 1Anth (3) | UAS | Anth Elec (3) |
| UVic | Anth 200-level (1.5) | URegina | Anth 200L (3) |
| TRU | Anth 2xx0 (3) | TRU-OL | Anth 2xx1 (3) |
| UFV | Anth 1xx (3) | VIU | Anth 2 nd (3) |
| UNBC | Fnst 2xx (3), or Anth 2xx (3) or Nors 2xx (3) | | |

For more information about transferability contact the School of Liberal Arts office.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Second year standing in the School of Liberal Arts. It is recommended that students also take Anthropology 100.

COURSE FORMAT (2-1-0)

The course will be conducted as a combination of textual and online readings and a weekly videoconference seminar discussion of assigned topics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

With conscientious application, students will acquire:

1. An understanding of the basic environmental features of the North American subarctic ecozones, their development during the late Pleistocene and through the Holocene, the basic archaeological sequence of human occupation during this period, and the contact distribution of native languages and their genetic relationship with each other;

2. An appreciation for the similarities and differences in the traditional material culture, social organization, and cultural practice of aboriginal subarctic cultures from an ethnological perspective;
3. A developed understanding of the phenomenological theory of aboriginal subarctic culture as it relates to the natural world;
4. An understanding of the effects, changes, challenges, and continuities in aboriginal subarctic cultures as a result of contact with euro-americans and encapsulation by the state;
5. A particular understanding of these topics in the borderlands region of Yukon and Alaska and one other region chosen in consultation with the instructor.

EVALUATION

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and participation in the weekly videoconference and online discussion group is mandatory. A student may be dismissed from a course if more than 10% of the scheduled contact hours are missed in any one course. Dismissal from a course may result in loss of full-time status and loss of sponsorship funding.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation

Value = 50 Marks

Each of us bring unique experiences to our understanding of the readings and the topics. This mark will assess your weekly participation in the course in terms of your contributions of informed comments to the week's topic. A satisfactory performance level will demonstrate that you have read the assigned material and can relate it to the topic. A superior performance level will seek to integrate new knowledge with that already held or recently acquired. *Anthropology* is fundamentally an integrated view of culture and society and *Ethnology* one of comparison between cultures and their societies; demonstration of pursuit of these perspectives is encouraged. Up to 25 of these marks will be awarded based on the student's contributions to the weekly online discussion pages.

Seminar Presentations

Value = 60 Marks

Each week a student will be responsible for the leadership of a seminar discussion of one of the week's assigned readings; this responsibility will rotate throughout the term and generally each student will be responsible for three readings. A satisfactory performance level would include the posting of a short pasesis of the reading and discussion questions prior to class on the course web page, presentation of a critical commentary which relates the material to the week's topic and previous readings, and leading of an informed discussion during the video conference. A superior performance level would be achieved by stimulating further discussion within the class and by relating the readings to new, unassigned readings, or previous or recently acquired knowledge on the subject.

Research Project

Value = 50 Marks

Each student will contribute to an independent or joint research project on a subject chosen in consultation with the instructor. Generally this will take one of three forms:

- an original independent research paper (recommended for strong Anthropology Majors)
- an independent research contribution to an ongoing research project (recommended for average participants)

- development of curriculum suited to the students teaching level(s) (recommended for participants seeking their Yukon Teaching Certificate)

The discussion, selection, and agreed-upon goals of the project must be completed by week three. The project itself is due at the end of term.

More information on the research project will be presented in class.

EXAMINATIONS

Mid-term Test

Value = 50 Marks

A short test on language distribution, material culture, and social organization will be written in the 7th week. It will consist of correctly identifying the natural and indigenous language areas of the subarctic on a map, and answering a set of multiple choice and short answer questions relating to material culture and social organization.

Final Examination

Value = 90 Marks

A comprehensive final examination will be written during the designated college examination period. The exam will consist of a set of short answer questions related to assigned readings, true-false and multiple choice questions related to general comparative aspects of Subarctic Cultures, and a choice of short essay topics.

EVALUATION:

Your final grade will be based on the percentile equivalent of marks achieved as allocated in the following categories:

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Marks</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Participation | 50 |
| Seminar Presentations | 60 |
| Research Project | 50 |
| Mid-term Test | 50 |
| Final Examination | 90 |

Note: Assignments are due at class time of the due date. A penalty will be levied against assignments submitted past the due date and time, (ie: the scheduled start of class) **at a rate of 20% of the total value of the assignment per working day, unless extension is legitimately warranted and discussed with the instructor.**

REQUIRED TEXTS

- McKennan, Robert. 1959. The Upper Tanana Indians. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nelson, Richard. 1983. Make Prayers to the Raven: A Koyukon View of the Northern Forest. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nadasdy, Paul. 2003. Hunters and Bureaucrats. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Easton, N. A. (ed.) 1999. Subarctic Ethnology, Course Reader.
- Course Web Page

The webpage for this course is found at:
<http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/anth220/>

and is an integral part of this course. All students will be expected to have read the material presented there and to contribute to the online postings each week.

WRITING CENTRE

All students are encouraged to make the Writing Centre a regular part of the writing process for coursework. Located in the College Library, the Writing Centre offers writing coaching sessions to students of all writing abilities. For further information or to book an appointment, visit the Centre's website: dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/writingcentre

At the instructor's discretion, students may be required to attend Writing Centre coaching sessions during the composition process of their paper(s) as a condition of assignment completion. The number of sessions required per assignment will be specified on the assignment sheet, and the Writing Centre will issue written confirmation of attendance, which should be attached to the written work being submitted for evaluation.

Students with Disabilities or Chronic Conditions

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability or chronic condition. It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations. If a student has a disability or chronic condition and may need accommodation to fully participate in this class, he/she should contact the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC) at (867) 668-8785 or lassist@yukoncollege.yk.ca.

CLASS SYLLABUS

| WEEK | TOPIC |
|------|---|
| 1 | Subarctic Ecology; History of Ethnology |
| 2 | Subarctic Archaeology and Prehistory |
| 3 | Subarctic Linguistics: Language, Naming, Memory, Culture |
| 4 | Foraging Culture: Technology, Knowledge, Material Culture |
| 5 | Hunting as Sacrament: Relations between People, Animals, and Natural Forces |
| 6 | Hunting as Sociality: Band Organization, Kinship, Reciprocity |
| 7 | Hunting as Medicine: Shamanic Traditions and a Healthy World |
| 8 | Styles of Discourse: Music, Myth, Oral History, Stories, Games |
| 9 | The Fur Trade Economy and Indigenous Subarctic Culture |
| 10 | Foragers and the Nation State |
| 11 | Contemporary Identity and First Nation's Ethnicity |
| 12 | Modes of Production and Contemporary Political Economy |
| 13 | The Future of Foragers (and Anthropology) in the Subarctic |