



**Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Geography**

University
of Victoria



Geography 388 A01 – Regional Studies

POLAR REGIONS

Fall 2016



Instructor: Dr. Randy Scharien
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Course Description and Objectives

The Polar Regions are no longer considered desolate unknowns of little significance beyond the fascinations of the intrepid. Compared to 60 years ago, there is increased awareness of their scientific importance within a global context, rising demand for their vast and largely undeveloped resources, and more accessibility through tourism. Along with the growth of activities in the Polar Regions are increased environmental and social risks, along with political tensions. In the Arctic, there is pressure to balance activities by largely southern-based residents with the concerns voiced by newly empowered Indigenous communities about the impacts these activities may have on their way of life. This course addresses these topics, and other physical and human dimensions of the Polar Regions, within historical, contemporary, and future contexts. We will place emphasis on Canada's unique position within the myriad of issues facing the Polar Regions, and take time to celebrate a unique region which has excited the imagination for many centuries.

Course Schedule and Location

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 10:30 to 11:20 in COR A229

Readings

Essential readings in the form of scientific and policy reports, journal articles, and book chapters will be posted on the course CourseSpaces site (<http://CourseSpaces.uvic.ca>) or made available through the course reserve in the main library.

Optional Text: *Antarctica: Global Science from a Frozen Continent*, ed. David W.H. Walton. Published by Cambridge University Press. © Cambridge University Press 2013.

If you come to class prepared it will be easier to remain committed to, and engaged with, the course materials throughout the term.

CourseSpaces

You will be required to access the CourseSpaces site for required readings, important announcements, instructor notes, your grades, and additional information (e.g. discussion topics). Please take the time to familiarize yourself with CourseSpaces if you have not already done so.

Learning Outcomes

- A more sophisticated understanding of the physical, historical/cultural, and political geographies of the Polar Regions and the social and environmental challenges faced there.
- Enhanced comprehension of Canada's unique position within the myriad of issue facing the Polar Regions (rapid environmental change, critical knowledge gaps, and unresolved boundary disputes) and awareness of how high latitude issues are treated by residents residing at lower latitudes.
- Enhanced critical thinking skills, i.e. the ability to: make important linkages and connections; recognize and evaluate multiple perspectives and the values and assumptions underlying each (including your own); define questions and problems, evaluate evidence and arguments, and arrive at defensible positions on issues.

Grading Scheme

Term Exams (2 at 20% each)	40%
Exercises (3 at 10% each)	30%
Final Exam	30%
TOTAL	100%

Course Topics

- Topic 1: Regional overview: contrasting the Arctic and Antarctic
- Topic 2: Physical environments
- Topic 3: Biota
- Topic 4: Role of Polar Regions in the global climate system
- Topic 5: Climate change
- Topic 6: Security and Sovereignty: Canada's role in a transforming Arctic
- Topic 7: Historical exploration and establishment of order
- Topic 8: People in the Polar Regions
- Topic 9: Resource development
- Topic 10: Environmental risk
- Topic 11: Tourism and visiting the Polar Regions

There will be two guest lectures, featuring expert perspectives on current topics related to the Polar Regions. These will be announced during class.

Tentative Class Schedule

Week	Tuesday		Wednesday		Friday	
1	Sep 06	NO CLASS	Sep 07	Introduction	Sep 09	Topic 1
2	Sep 13	Topic 1	Sep 14	Topic 2	Sep 16	Topic 2
3	Sep 20	Topic 2	Sep 21	Topic 2	Sep 23	Topic 3
4	Sep 27	Topic 3	Sep 28	Topic 3	Sep 30	Topic 4
5	Oct 04	EXAM 1	Oct 05	Topic 4	Oct 07	Topic 5 and EXERCISE 1 DUE
6	Oct 11	Topic 5	Oct 12	Topic 5	Oct 14	Topic 5
7	Oct 18	Topic 6	Oct 19	Topic 6	Oct 21	Topic 6
8	Oct 25	Topic 7	Oct 26	Topic 7	Oct 28	Topic 7
9	Nov 01	EXAM 2	Nov 02	Topic 8	Nov 04	Topic 8 and EXERCISE 2 DUE
10	Nov 08	Topic 8	Nov 09	No class	Nov 11	No class
11	Nov 15	Topic 9	Nov 16	Topic 9	Nov 18	Guest Speaker 1
12	Nov 22	Topic 10	Nov 23	Topic 10	Nov 25	Guest Speaker 2
13	Nov 29	Topic 11	Nov 30	Topic 11	Dec 02	Exam review and EXERCISE 3 DUE

Grade Scale

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
90- 100%	85- 89%	80- 84%	77- 79%	73- 76%	70- 72%	65- 69%	60- 64%	50- 59%	0- 49%

Course Policies

Collegial Respect: You must be respectful to your colleagues and instructor at all times. Do your part to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning. Avoid arriving late and talking, texting, or surfing the internet during class time. Cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode. Recording of lectures is strictly prohibited.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution: Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student: Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension.

It is your responsibility to understand the University's policy on academic integrity: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html>

Missing Exam / Late Assignment Policy: If you have a legitimate reason to miss an exam (serious medical or compassionate circumstances) you must notify the instructor before the exam time to make alternate arrangements. Failure to do so will result in a zero mark. Late assignments are not permitted except for circumstances involving medical or compassionate reasons. In either case, written verification as proof may be requested at the discretion of the instructor.

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course.

1. What strengths did your **instructor** demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the **instructor** could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this **course** could be improved.

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive & safe learning & working environment for all its members.