

GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

GPY 894: Critical Northern Geographies



Course Instructors	Julia Christensen	
Offices	Mackintosh-Corry Hall D-319	
Contact Time	One three-hour seminar each week	
Format	Graduate seminar	
Class Assessment	Seminar Participation 20% Weekly Reading Reflections 20% Seminar Facilitation 10% Book Review and Presentation 15% Term Paper Peer Review 10% Term Paper 25%	

COURSE OVERVIEW

Geographic research has had a long, and sometimes problematic, history in northern regions. In recent years, however, critical geographic approaches have emerged to offer new insight into the study of social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental change in the region. In this course, students will explore critical geographic approaches in the Canadian and circumpolar Norths in an effort to understand past and present northern geographies related to a range of themes, including a special emphasis on community engagement, ethics and responsibility in northern research.

Questions we seek to examine in this course include: what is the place of "critical geography" in contemporary northern research? How do some of the hallmarks of critical geography (i.e. engagement with political-economic, feminist, postcolonial, anti-racist, and other theories; oppositional and critical engagement with dominant formations; challenging the politics of knowledge production, emphasizing the colonial present, advancing critical methodologies, etc.) help us understand past and present northern geographies? How does critical scholarship intersect with demands from northerners that research be policy-relevant and inclusive, that it attend to their most pressing concerns, and that northerners maintain ownership and control over their knowledges? How might these community engagements both necessitate and inform critical methodologies? Finally, we examine how critical geography itself might be transformed by engagement with northern peoples, places, and concerns.

Students will also have opportunities to focus course content squarely on their own research areas. In-class discussion, seminar leadership and the term paper assignment all permit engagement with students' individual interest areas in the general field of critical northern geographies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding of a range of contemporary approaches to geographic research with northern and Indigenous communities
- Ability to apply core dimensions of critical geography to the northern research context
- Engagement with northern perspectives and Indigenous knowledges through academic and creative materials
- Familiarity with critical ethical dimensions of northern research and their consideration within graduate research project design
- Apply lessons and reflections for students' own research project development to the discussion of critical northern geography
- Development of critical analytical and writing tools

COURSE TOPICS

- critical northern research approaches and methods
- community-led research in northern contexts
- ethics and responsibility in northern and Indigenous research
- countering colonial knowledge production in the North
- northern and Indigenous perspectives and knowledges

COURSE READINGS

Course materials include a range of academic and creative sources in the form of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, research reports, videos, film and fiction, all of which explore northern critical geographies in various ways. Emphasis is placed on prioritizing the perspectives and experiences of northern and Indigenous peoples.