Summary

This course is an exercise in problem-based learning, whose basic design is for one intensive week of study and classroom preparation followed by three weeks of fieldwork abroad. During this time, students will attend specialists’ briefings and interview diplomatic, business, NGO and scientific experts to gain deeper knowledge of the complex issues surrounding climate change and international relations in the Arctic. Toward the end of the course, students will form teams and jointly draft a detailed policy memorandum with specific recommendations for addressing a range of problems associated with climate change, and the “regional and global governance” of environmental-security issues in the Arctic.

Issues  The Arctic icecap is receding. Though climatologists have warned of melting ice and rising seas for two decades, many only began paying attention after the dramatic shrinkage of polar ice in the summer-fall of 2007. That same year, a submarine planted the Russian flag on the seabed under the North Pole, setting off alarm at the myriad unresolved territorial claims in the Arctic. These unsettled borders did not seem to matter 20 years ago, but with receding ice and warming weather came renewed focus on two longstanding dreams: a viable maritime passage between Europe and Asia, and a bonanza of oil and gas beneath the Arctic seas. Yet both commercial shipping and petroleum extraction raise the specter of enormous environmental damage which none of the main Arctic powers—Canada, Russia, Norway, Denmark and Finland—are equipped to handle. And both also raise complex territorial and resource claims whose resolution requires a legal framework that exists only in rudimentary, ad hoc form. The littoral states have established an Arctic Council, and both the UN and various NGOs have begun working to create such a framework. It is these emerging structures of “global governance” whose efforts we will be analyzing, including several specific problems (an energy project, a territorial dispute, an environmental agreement) upon which our policy memoranda will focus.

Expectations  This PWP course will be both intellectually and physically demanding. The first week of classroom study is particularly intensive, and students not fully committed—to active engagement in four-six hours of lecture-discussion per day, to careful reading of several books and numerous articles, and then to vigorous participation in a busy schedule of lectures, interviews and excursions in three different countries (Iceland, Norway and Finland)—will not succeed. This program also requires teamwork, both in the activities noted above as well as in dedication to the brainstorming, writing, and presentation of the final policy memoranda. The rewards are also great, including insight into some of the world’s most vital issues—and consultation with world-class experts—in the very regions most directly concerned. If fully committed, you will learn a great deal about one of this young century’s most important global challenges—managing the complex environmental, energy, territorial and security challenges of the Arctic.

Students will read two books during the first, classroom week of the course: Charles Emmerson, The Future History of the Arctic (Public Affairs, 2010) and Alun Anderson, After the Ice: Life, Death, and Geopolitics in the New Arctic (Harper, 2009). Other assignments include various articles and
scientific reports that will be posted on Blackboard. Students are encouraged to bring a laptop computer for continued reading and “field research” abroad, as well as to use in drafting the policy memoranda that constitutes our main, final assignment (because most of this work will be collaborative, possession of a laptop is not mandatory and there will be a great deal of sharing). Course grades are calculated as follows: 33% based on quality of preparation/participation during Week I at USC; 33% based on engagement and contributions in seminars and interviews abroad; 33% based on contribution to/quality of final written and oral presentations.

Course Schedule:

**Week 1: USC, Intensive Preparation for Travel-Fieldwork**

**May 16** 9:00-1:00  Course introduction, overview; The Arctic from the four policy networks perspective

**May 17** 9:00-1:00  Climate Change and climate science

**May 18** 9:00-1:00  The effects of climate change

**May 19** 9:00-1:00  Who owns the Arctic and Security issues

**May 20** 9:00-1:00  Arctic Council, Northern Forum; cooperation over conflict?

**Weeks 2-5: Travel, Dates TBD**

**Iceland** – Reykjavik and Akureyri

**Norway** – Oslo and Tromsø

**Finland** – Inari, Rovaniemi, and Helsinki

Rovaniemi is also home to Santa Claus and his elves.

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxrMRG-zAyo&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxrMRG-zAyo&feature=related))

**Readings and Assignments**


BBC, *The Frozen Planet*


Alun Anderson, *After the Ice. Life, Death and Geopolitics in the New Arctic*

Simon Dalby, *Security and Environmental Change* (2009)

James Kraska (editor), *Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Change* (2011)


Various documents from the Arctic Circle conferences and the Arctic Yearbook
http://www.arcticyearbook.com

This is a classic problem-based learning course so the assignments focus on a series of problem-based exercises.

Identification of the Problems: 10 points

Research Plan and Questions for Each Site: 10 points

Europe sessions essays and research: 10 points

Final Problem Strategies Presentation in Lapland 50 points

Assessments at each site (4) based on student presentations 20 points

**USC Statement on Disabilities:**
Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me-NOT the TA as early as possible. DSP is in STU 301, call 213-740-0776.
1. Reykjavik, Iceland
2. Akureyri, Iceland
3. Oslo, Norway
4. Tromsø, Norway

5. Inari, Finland
6. Rovaniemi, Finland
7. Helsinki, Finland