

ARTSSCI 4MN1 / A Celebration of Winter as Place

COURSE INSTRUCTORS: Dr. Bob Henderson and Zachary de Jong

DATES: Saturday, February 15th - Tuesday, February 18th, 2020

Course Description and Objectives

Winter is the misunderstood season. We will explore winter as a fundamental expression of Canadian identity through the lenses of history, geography, and literature. While travelling by snowshoes and skis, and of course sitting around the fire, we will examine key stories and characters in our Canadian understanding of winter, including Franklin, wendigos, Sam Magee, and Grey Owl. This exploration will also include the 'idea of North' and the Norwegian 'friluftsliv' approach to winter outdoor life. The central goal is to embrace the winter season as a "place" in our personal psyche and Canadian consciousness.

To do this we must be active in a thriving winter place where we are engaged in winter chores of chopping wood for our fires, drawing water from our ice hole and clearing roofs of joyously burdensome snow. Depending on conditions and schedule, we will learn the key winter activities of snow shoeing, building a snow shelter (Quinzee), cross country skiing, and setting up a wall tent wood stove camp.

Readings:

Required coursepack provided at pre-trip meeting to be scheduled in early January.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Aside from your active and engaged participation, there are two assignments in this module (see below for detailed description). All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Tentative Itinerary (subject to change):

Saturday February 15th:

- Depart McMaster, Saturday, February 15th for Smoke Lake, Algonquin Park.
- Welcoming ceremony on the lake, discussion of winter living, evening moving in chores.

Sunday February 16th:

- Snowshoe hike
- Winter stories and interpretation shared
- Late afternoon solos
- Evening sauna
- Discussion on winter as place, readings shared from coursepack.

Monday February 17th:

- Half day of cross country skiing at Blue Spruce Trails (no experience necessary!)
- Lunch on the trail
- Possible guest in the evening (local historian or field naturalist)

Tuesday February 18th:

- Clean up
- Lunch
- Depart cottage following lunch and aim to be back at McMaster before 5:00pm.

Trip Cost

The total trip cost is \$200 which includes transportation, accommodations, food and all necessary equipment.

Assignments and Evaluation (details)

Assignment 1: Storytelling

With a partner, tell a short Northern story to the group.

Stories should include a brief biographical introduction to help create historical context followed by a telling of the tale.

Potential topics include:

Algonquin

Grey Owl

Tom Thomson

Ester Keyser

David Thompson

Winter

John Prichard and Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière – a snow shoe epic around the Great Lakes.

Lost patrol – dog sledding tragedy in the Yukon

To build a fire / Jack London – a classic northern short story

The Creation of Sam Magee / Robert Service – northern poetry

Qitdlarssuaq - Baffin Island to Greenland native migration

Classics

Samuel Hearne

Big Joe Mufferaw

Hubbard and Wallace Labrador, 1902

Mina Hubbard and Wallace – 1904

Jimmy McQuat - Hermit of White Otter Lake

First Franklin land expedition – 1818 – 1821

We will go over this assignment in more detail during our pre-trip meeting and help students to find stories and partners.

We are open to your ideas as well. For inspiration, check out '*Every Trail Has a Story: Heritage Travel in Canada*' (by Bob Henderson - a shameless plug). For timing, it is best to double up on story-telling presentations. The goal is to share Canadian Northern stories in a fun, informal and creative way. Bob can provide extra context to most stories. The thinking here is that we learn best through stories and certainly stories fit so well around the winter wood stove and have for centuries.

Assignment 2: Journal Reflection

A 1200 word journal entry describing memorable experience(s) from the trip and making connections to the readings and discussions

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Zachary (dejongzachary@gmail.com) or Bob at (bhender@mcmaster.ca)