

ENGLISH 261

NORTHERN EXPOSURES



Summer Session II, Rhode Island College
Dr. Russell A. Potter

<http://eng261.blogspot.com>

There are few places left on earth where simply going there seems extraordinary – but but a trip north of the Arctic Circle still seems to signify the experience of something astonishing. This course takes up the history of human exploration interaction in the Arctic, from the early days of the nineteenth century to the present, with a focus on contact between European and American explorers and the Eskimo, or Inuit as they are more properly known today. We read first-hand accounts and view documentaries that recount these histories, both from the Western and the Inuit side of the story.

Each week, we'll have new readings both in our books and online, and a response to one of that week's blog posts is due. There will also be a final paper of 4-6 pages on a topic of the student's choosing relative to our course subjects.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK I. Introduction: The history of Arctic exploration. Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition of 1845. The Search for Franklin. In-class viewing: "Arctic Passage: Prisoners of the Ice" (2005). Online readings: Barrow, Ross, and Twain on the NW Passage; Franklin Daguerreotypes, Conrad's "Geography and Some Explorers," Franklin relics.

WEEK II: Inuit accounts of encounters with Franklin's men. Rae and Dickens: The cannibalism controversy. The continuing search, and the issue of Canadian sovereignty. Readings: Selections from Eber, *Encounters on the Passage*: "Introduction" and chapters 3 ("The Franklin Era") and 4 ("The Death Marches"), available free as .pdf files online and handed out in class. Online texts: Dickens, 'The Noble Savage'; "Dr. Rae and Mr. Dickens."

WEEK III: Part one: Inuit culture and belief. Reading: Millman, *A Kayak Full of Ghosts*. Part two: Inuit and human zoos. Online Readings: Eskimos on Display: Abraham Ulrikab, Prince Pomiuk, Nancy Columbia, Rosie Midway Spoon.

WEEK IV: Documenting Inuit culture. In-class viewings: Excerpts from *Nanook of the North* and *The Wedding of Palo*. Reading: Flaherty, "How I Filmed *Nanook of the North*"; Gant, "Good and Bad Eskimos."

Week V: Inuit issues in the twentieth century. Reading: Maurice, *The Last Gentleman Adventurer*. Online readings/viewings: Nunavut Episode 2 – Avaja; Excerpt from "The Long Exile," High Arctic Exiles, Territorial Claims on the Arctic.

Week VI: Inuit today. Readings: Alootook Ipellie, "Damn Those Invaders," "When God Sings the Blues"; Rachel Qitsualik "Living with Change"; selections from the *Nunatsiaq News*.