

ENGLISH 261

ARCTIC ENCOUNTERS



Tuesday/Thursday 4-6:50
Forman 130

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 and 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 dramatic films and 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 related to our course subjects.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK I. Tuesday: Introduction to class. Thursday: “Why go there?” In-class film, *Into the Wild*; reading: Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*, chapters 1-10.

WEEK II. Tuesday: The Fate of Franklin. Reading: Krakauer, *Into the Wild*, chapters 11-18 and Epilogue; Potter, “The Man Who Ate His Boots” (web link). Thursday: in-class film, *NOVA: Arctic Passage: Prisoners of the Ice*.

WEEK III. The Inuit Knew It. Reading: Eber, *Encounters on the Passage*, Introduction and chapters 3 and 4 (available via web link). Film: John Walker’s *Passage*.

WEEK IV. Tuesday and Thursday: Inuit traditional tales and legends. Reading: Millman: *Kayak Full of Ghosts*.

WEEK V. Representing the Native. Tuesday: In-class film, *Nanook of the North*. Reading: “How I Filmed Nanook of the North,” “Nanook and Me” (blog links). Thursday: In-class film, *The Necessities of Life*.

WEEK VI. Tuesday: Arctic Sovereignty and the Future of the Inuit. Readings: *Nunatsiaq News*, other contemporary texts (blog links), Alooook Ipellie, “A Frobisher Bay Childhood,” “Damn Those Invaders.” Thursday: Wrap-up and review. Final paper due.