



RENr 465 – Summer Field School: A River Runs Through It Summer 2025

August 17-29, Yukon Territory

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Class Website: eClass (<https://eclass.srv.ualberta.ca/>)

Course Description: The Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences summer field school provides students from northern and southern locations opportunities to explore the natural and cultural history of the Yukon through experiential learning that incorporates interdisciplinary approaches to environmental, social and economic challenges in this region. The course is field-based, built around a river trip in central Yukon. In addition to the academic curriculum, students will gain substantial backcountry travel and teamwork experience. This three-credit course is suitable for senior-level university students in natural and social science programs.

Prerequisites: Third-year standing or higher in a university-level program.

Format: Field exercises emphasize student-centred experiential learning while benefitting from the wealth of local knowledge in the Yukon. Students will be based near Whitehorse for the first two days (August 18-19), where they will take part in a two-day canoe course. The 20th will be a travel day to the start location, with stops along the way. The following six days (August 21-26) will be spent on the (Nacho Nyäk Gé (Stewart River) and Tagé Cho / Chuu k'onn (Yukon River), with excursions to adjacent environments. While along the river, hands-on exercises and discussions will take place as appropriate to different locales and course themes. The group will arrive in Dawson City on August 26th and spend a half day exploring the role of this town in broader Yukon history. On August 27th, students will visit the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Centre in Dawson before heading to Tombstone Territorial Park. Travel back to Whitehorse on August 28th, with the return to Edmonton for southern students on August 29th. The days will be long and full participation is expected by all students. Course requirements include completion of assigned readings and associated questions in advance,

maintaining a journal during the field school in which daily observations and questions are recorded, active participation in group discussions, and submission of extended responses to questions as a follow-up exercise to the field program.

Required Readings: Required readings drawn from a variety of sources will be provided in advance of the field trip. These readings provide context and the basic understanding needed to complete the course and assignments. Readings will be provided to students in digital format through the class website. There will also be a list of additional readings that provide helpful context to the Yukon and the topics addressed throughout the course. These readings are not required but we recommend you complete them in advance.

Course Objectives, Learning Outcomes and Competencies

Field schools allow students to gain knowledge and practical skills outside the classroom. These courses are integrative and experiential and are generally taken close to the end of a student's program. Objectives for RENR 465 include:

- Exposing students to diverse perspectives representing a range of disciplines and considerations relevant to the conservation and management of natural and cultural resources in northern Canada.
- Improving the students' professional profile by preparing them to conduct real-world, hands-on activities in remote, northern locations.

Field schools help develop teamwork experience and ethics, associated with which are the following learning outcomes and competencies:

- Knowledge and application of ethical conduct and professionalism in the pursuit of activities associated with the conservation and management of natural and cultural resources in northern Canada.
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills through field and group interactions, assignments, and independent research.

Course Requirements, Marking and Grading

There are no exams in this course. The first assignment associated with required readings will comprise 25% of the final grade for this course and will be completed in advance of the field component of the course (due date: August 17). Completion of YFN 001 – Yukon First Nations 101 online in advance of the course will comprise 5% of the final grade (due date: August 17). Participation during the field trip will comprise 30% of the final grade based on three criteria: teamwork and camp tasks, engagement in all activities and discussions, and general attitude. The remaining 40% will comprise the final assignment involving extended responses to questions provided during the field component of the course, due on September 30, 2025.

Policies on Conduct: Students are expected to complete required readings, actively participate in discussions and group activities, and turn in required assignments on time.

Academic Integrity and Code of Student Behaviour

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All University of Alberta students are subject to the Code of Student Behaviour, as outlined at <http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec30.html>. Please familiarize yourself with it and ensure that you do not participate in any inappropriate behaviour as defined by the Code. Key components of the code include the following statements.

30.3.2(1) No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) c. No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work."

Please speak with the instructors if you have any questions or concerns about the Code, particularly as it pertains to group assignments, internet research, appropriate referencing of source material, using the same work as part of assignments in more than one course, and the definition of plagiarism.

COURSE SCHEDULE (details to be confirmed, pending conditions at the time of the field trip)

Date	Topic
August 16	Assignment #1 (responses to required readings) due Assignment #2 (YFN 001 – Yukon First Nations 101) due
August 17	Alberta students arrive in Whitehorse
August 18-19	Course Introduction and Overview Canoe Course around Whitehorse (locations to be determined)
August 20	Travel to Stewart River with stops at significant cultural and ecological areas
August 20-26	Paddle along the Stewart and Yukon Rivers Topics that will be covered during the trip include: ecology, geology and hydrology of the region, natural disturbances and their role in northern ecosystems, socio-cultural history (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and its contemporary relevance in the Yukon (modern treaties, self-governance and co-management); northern resource management and conservation issues; field research methodologies, wildlife and environmental monitoring, preparing a back-country trip, fieldwork in remote locations.
August 26	Arrival at Dawson City Interpretive tour of Dawson City; the significance of the Klondike Region
August 27	Visit Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Cultural Centre Visit Tombstone Territorial Park
August 28	Drive back to Whitehorse, unpack and organize trip gear
August 29	Alberta students depart Whitehorse
September 30	Final Assignment due (responses to questions provided after the course)