



REN R 465 – Winter 2026

NORTHERN EXPOSURES FIELD SCHOOL

In Winter 2026, REN R 465 Northern Exposures Field School is being offered as part of the Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences, B.Sc. Program partnered with Yukon University. All students registered in REN R 465 must adhere to the requirements outlined in this course syllabus, and be aware of, and adhere to, the University's Code of Student Behaviour, referenced in the outline.

INSTRUCTOR(S): **Gabriel Rivest** **Anna Smith**
Instructor, Field Coordinator Co-Instructor
Applied Sciences, Yukon University / Renewable Resources, UAlberta

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

OFFICE LOCATION: Yukon Research Centre, NR 28/30, Yukon University, Whitehorse

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CLASS DAYS & TIMES: February 13 to 27, 2026 (field components), with additional course requirements prior to and after field time.

CLASS LOCATION: Whitehorse and Haines Junction, YT.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Field trip studies with a focus on social, environmental, and conservation biology topics. Course content and offerings vary from year to year. Prerequisite: *9 in biological or ecological topics. Credit may be obtained for only one of REN R 465 or ENCS 465. Requires payment of additional student instructional support fees. Refer to the Fees Payment Guide in the University Regulations and Information for Students section of the Calendar.

The Northern Exposures fall field course will allow students to explore the natural and cultural history of the Yukon and to learn and apply interdisciplinary approaches to environmental, social, and economic challenges in this region. Field experience provides a lens to examine the relationships between northern environments and human societies and identify appropriate research and management approaches for northern systems.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have been exposed to a diversity of perspectives representing a range of disciplines and considerations relevant to the conservation and management of natural and cultural resources in the North. Field schools also help develop teamwork experience and ethics associated with knowledge and application of ethical conduct and professionalism in the pursuit of activities associated with natural and cultural resources in northern Canada. Students will establish effective oral and written communication skills through field and group interactions, assignments, and independent research. Students will also learn hands-on skills related to conducting environmental research, including outdoor skills, proper fishing and fish handling and dissection techniques.

COURSE FORMAT (Field Course):

The course consists of student-centred experiential learning gained while exploring a suite of Yukon natural and cultural sites. Students will be based near Whitehorse for the first two days (February 13-14) and then travel to Silver City (February 15-20), and back to Whitehorse (February 20-22). There will be stops along the way to visit naturally and culturally important sites. Activities (e.g., walks, hikes, guided visits) and discussions will vary according to the different locales, seasons, and current topics relevant to northern communities. Topics covered will include ecosystems, geology and paleo-history of the Yukon, wildlife (fish and game) management, Yukon First Nations history and self-governance, economic and natural resource development, the significance of the Klondike Gold Rush and colonial policy in the Yukon, and research approaches in the natural and social sciences.

The course will examine the history and importance of different animal species, for Yukon ecosystems and communities. An important aspect of the course is considering the intersection of different academic disciplines and knowledge systems and the ways they relate to salmon in the Yukon. We will discuss about the field sampling techniques, including respectful handling and processes to sample different animal species for contaminants, genetics, aging, and food web analysis, and students will be asked to consider the social and environmental ethics involved in fish and wildlife research.

The days will be long and full participation is expected of all students. Course requirements include completion of assigned readings and associated questions in advance, completion of YFN 001 – Yukon First Nations 101 (online), and the submission of extended responses to daily questions as a follow-up final assignment to the field program.

COURSE PREREQUISITES AND/OR CO-REQUISITES:

Students will normally have third year or higher standing in a university-level program, and *9 in biological or ecological topics.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS:

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings drawn from a variety of sources will be provided in advance of the field component of the course. These readings provide the context and basic understanding needed to complete the course and to address assignments. Readings will be provided to students in digital format.

COURSE WEBSITE

This course does not use a website or online system. However, students are required to retrieve their YukonU login information and use the YukonU Moodle system to register for and complete “YFN 001 – Yukon First Nations 101.”

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Academic Integrity

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. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Code of Student Behaviour

All students at the University of Alberta are subject to the Code of Student Behaviour, as outlined at:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/governance/resources/policies-standards-and-codes-of-conduct/code-of-student-behaviour>. Please familiarize yourself with it and ensure that you do not participate in any inappropriate behavior 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.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CLASSROOM RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Students are expected to participate fully in all activities during the field course. Students are expected to be punctual, engaged and courteous to peers, instructors, staff and hosts. Please do not use cellular phones during class or discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION:

Assignments, Attendance and Participation

Evaluation for the course is based on assignments and participation. There are no exams. You are required to complete "YFN 001 – Yukon First Nations 101," a self-paced course offered online through the YukonU Moodle system (5%; due February 12, 2026). Assignment #1 is a series of answers to questions based on the required readings. This assignment provides background information and a basis for some of the broad themes of the course and will be completed in advance of the field component of the course (25%; due February 12, 2026). Participation during the field course, based on teamwork, engagement in all activities and discussions, and professionalism is an important and significant component of the course. Participation during the field trip will comprise 30% of the final grade based on three criteria: teamwork and general tasks, engagement in all activities and discussions, and general attitude. Assignment #2 will be comprised of extended responses to questions generated from the field course (40%; due date March 27, 2026).

Due Dates and Late Assignments

Due dates for assignments are included in the above section. A penalty of -5% per day will be applied to late assignments. Extensions must be requested at least five days prior to the due date of the assignment.

Evaluation

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Assignment	Due Date	Percent
YFN 001 – Yukon First Nations 101	Feb 12, 2026	5
Assignment #1: Required Readings	Feb 12, 2026	25
Assignment #2: Field Course Questions	Mar 27, 2026	40
Participation, engagement and professionalism		30
Total		100

Assignment of Grades

The total numerical score will be converted to a final letter grade. The following table outlines how numerical course scorers will be converted into course grades, consistent with the University of Alberta Assessment Policy and Grading Procedure. Grades reflect judgements of student achievement made by the instructor and may be based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class.

Descriptor	Numerical Grade	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	95-100	A+	4.0
	90-94	A	4.0
	85-89	A-	3.7
Good	79-84	B+	3.3
	75-78	B	3.0
	71-74	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	67-70	C+	2.3
	64-66	C	2.0
	60-63	C-	1.7
Poor	55-59	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	50-54	D	1.0
Failure	0-49	F	0.0

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED, PENDING CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF THE FIELD TRIP)

Date	Location and Topic
February 13	Alberta students arrive in Whitehorse.
February 14	Course introduction and overview. Visit Whitehorse locations (e.g., Wildlife Preserve, fish ladder).
February 15-20	Travel to Haines Junction with stops at cultural and ecological areas. Hiking near Haines Junction and Kluane National Park. Group discussions at field camp location Guest talks by various people involved in fish and wildlife issues, Parks Canada, and others.
February 20	Travel to Whitehorse, with stops along the way
February 21	Course wrap-up.
February 22	Flight back to Edmonton.