



School of Science  
**NOST 201**  
**Natural History of the North**  
Fall 2021  
3 Credits

---

## Course Outline

---

**INSTRUCTOR:** Larry Gray  
**E-MAIL:** [lgray@yukonu.ca](mailto:lgray@yukonu.ca)  
**OFFICE:** A2303  
**CELL/TEXT:** 336-0370  
**CLASSROOM:** A2601

---

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students taking this course will gain a broad introductory overview of the natural history of the circumpolar northern regions. The course emphasizes field skills in enjoying the natural world. We begin by learning the processes of identification, methods of study and strategies of survival (particularly for winter) for the spectrum of species living in the north. We also introduce the forces which shape and have shaped the northern landscape including climatic, geomorphic and soil forming processes. The course is circumpolar in context, but local Yukon examples will be emphasized.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Admission to the second year of the Northern Studies program, or admission to the Renewable Resources Management program, or permission of the instructor. Students must be willing to engage in field activities with the usual weather, insect and terrain inconveniences.

### EQUIVALENCY OR TRANSFERABILITY

Receiving institutions determine course transferability. Find further information at:  
<https://www.yukonu.ca/admissions/transfer-credit>

### YUKON FIRST NATIONS CORE COMPETENCY

Students who successfully complete this course will have achieved core competency in knowledge of Yukon First Nations. By the end of this course, students will have greater understanding and awareness of Yukon First Nations history, culture and journey towards self-determination. For details, please see [www.yukonu.ca/yfnccr](http://www.yukonu.ca/yfnccr)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion students will be able to use standard field manuals to identify naturally occurring species including birds, mammals, plants, fish and some invertebrates. A basic list of northern species will be identified. The adaptations and strategies northern species exhibit to deal with winter will be known. Students will know the use of various outdoor study aids, binoculars, spotting scopes, manuals, cameras, and collection apparatus. Students will know basic ethical behaviours for the safe enjoyment of natural history. Students will be able to express in writing their personal field observations of species and phenomenon.

## COURSE FORMAT

Lectures, readings, videos, practical exercises, and class discussions three hours per week. There will be a few field trips on campus during classroom time. Outside of formal class time, students are required to keep a journal of natural history field observations, complete 2 photo essays, 2 collections and participate in an online forum. There will be at least 2 extended field trips (day trips)

### Delivery format

This course will be delivered in a face-to-face format, both indoors in the classroom and outdoors (field trips). If necessary and depending on any further COVID restrictions, the course will be switched to a blended format (some F2F classes + some online classes) or even completely online with some self-directed field trips.

## EVALUATION

Collections	25%
Natural History Journal	25%
Participation in Online Forum	25%
2 Photo Essays/Stories	25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## COURSE WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Refer to the YukonU website for important dates.

## TEXTBOOKS & LEARNING MATERIALS

Readings and other resources (mostly online) will be provided. A reading list will be provided as well, but there is **no** textbook.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to contribute toward a positive and supportive environment and are required to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Academic misconduct includes all forms of academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, deceit, using the work of others without their permission, aiding other students in committing academic offences, misrepresenting academic assignments prepared by others as one's own, or any other forms of academic dishonesty including falsification of any information on any Yukon University document.

Please refer to Academic Regulations & Procedures for further details about academic standing and student rights and responsibilities.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students requiring an academic accommodation to fully participate in this class. These accommodations are available for students with a documented disability, chronic condition or any other grounds specified in section 8.0 of the Yukon University Academic Regulations (available on the Yukon University website). It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations by contacting the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC): [LearningAssistanceCentre@yukonu.ca](mailto:LearningAssistanceCentre@yukonu.ca).

## TOPIC OUTLINE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC
1	September 8	Course Introduction What is Natural History? Naturalist or Scientist?
2	September 13, 15	Field equipment, basics of identification Field trip planning, note taking, journal keeping and Natural History writing. Natural History apps Introduction to Collections
3	September 20, 22	Trees and Plants
4	September 27, 29	The Physical North: Glaciation and Landforms
5	October 4, 6	The Biological and Ecological North: Northern Biomes
6	October 13	<b>SELF STUDY – Collections and Photo Essays</b>
7	October 18, 20	Northern Birds
8	October 25, 27	Northern Mammals
9	November 1, 3	Fish
10	November 8, 10	Amphibians
11	November 15, 17	Invertebrates
12	November 22, 24	Life strategies and adaptations to cold
13	November 29, December 2	Life strategies and adaptations to cold
14	December 6	Life strategies and adaptations to cold