Arctic Geopolitics
Spring 2017
Location: Copenhagen
Credits: 3
Major Disciplines: Environmental Studies, International Relations, Political Science
Instructor: Alexander Hviid
Program Director: Neringa Vendelbo
Program Assistant: Alex Berlin

Thursdays: 14.50-17.45, Vestergade 10-A22

Course description:
The end of the Cold War and global climate change have made a profound impact on the Arctic by opening up new opportunities to Arctic states and societies for cooperation in economic, social and human development areas. At the same time, global warming, i.e. the rapidly melting ice cap, has also posed formidable challenges to both Arctic and global actors. It has not only made untapped Arctic natural resources (i.e. gas, oil and rare minerals, and new trans-Arctic marine routes) more accessible for commercial use, but also raised risks of environmental degradation and political conflicts. The latter could arise from still unresolved territorial claims by the Arctic states, heightened aspirations of indigenous societies for political autonomy, and fledgling regional governance structures. This course offers an introduction to a broad array of political, economic, social and military security issues that make the present day Arctic a focus of global interest.

Learning objectives of the course:
Through this course, students will acquire a thorough, cross-disciplinary understanding of key issues, challenges and developments in Arctic regional security and governance. Upon completion of the course, the students should be able to draw on both historical knowledge, international relations theory and public international law to critically analyze and evaluate current events and future perspectives in the Arctic.

Instructor:
Alexander Hviid, M.Sc. (International Security & Law, University of Southern Denmark, 2016) M.A. (Social Science, University of Copenhagen, 2010). Research interests include Arctic security and Danish-Greenlandic relations as well as public international law, specifically international criminal law and international humanitarian law. Work experience with the Institute for Strategy at the Royal Danish Defence College. With DIS since 2016.

Required texts:
The readings for the course will be posted on DIS Canvas (i.e. intranet) and comprise of book chapters, academic articles, and policy reports. In addition, selected extracts from the following books will be placed on the book reserve for the course:

**Approach to teaching:**
Class sessions will include short lectures by the course instructor, academic discussions, group work, guest lectures, field studies, tests, written assignments and simulation games. As part of the course, the students must participate in a problem-oriented, interdisciplinary and participant-directed group work in project teams as sketched out below.

**Project team formation**
Students will be asked to form project teams (3-4 persons) during the first few weeks of the course. Group formation will take place in conjunction with the selection of a topic/issue/problem that is relevant for the course and in which students may have a shared interest. Project teams will be encouraged to work out a code of conduct of the project team stating their expectations and norms for collaboration on the project.

**Topic selection**
The course instructor will post a list of potential topics, linked with the substantive issues of the course on Blackboard. However, students may choose their own topic upon approval by the course instructor. The selection of the topic will take place in parallel with the project teams’ formation 3-4 weeks into the semester.

**Synopsis**
The project teams must each produce a written synopsis on a chosen topic which is to be handed in on a date TBA. The synopsis must furthermore be presented and defended in an oral presentation on a date TBA. The synopsis must be approximately 7-8 pages and each project team is expected to gather data/literature for their synopsis throughout the course. The team will receive a collective grade for the written synopsis.

**Supervision of project groups**
The course instructor will be available for 2 meetings per group in connection with 2 project workshops.

**Oral examination of project teams**
Each project team will present their synopsis to the rest of the class as well as the examiner. The exam will last for 30 minute per team. The exam will consist of a 15 min. presentation by the team of their synopsis (i.e. problem statement, findings and conclusion) followed by a 15 min. discussion and critical questioning of the project group by the class and examiner. The team members will receive individual grades for the examination.

**Expectations of the students:** It is expected that all students actively participate in class: do the reading for each class; come with notes and questions for the instructor and other students; actively and responsibly participate in their project group.

**Field studies:**
The class will have two field studies. All students are required to participate in field studies.
- **Wednesday, 25 January (8.30 – 12.30):** Visit to Arctic Institute/Foreign Ministry
- **Wednesday, 8 March (13.00 – 17.00):**

**Evaluation:** Performance of students in the class will be evaluated on individual and project team basis.
Grading: To be eligible for a passing grade in this class you must complete all of the assigned work. Grading breakdown by area is as follows:

- Participation and performance:
  - Participation in simulation games (15%)
  - Score on tests throughout the semester (15%)
  - Participation in class discussions (20%)
- Written synopsis:
  - Collective grade for the team (25%)
- Oral examination:
  - Individual grade (25%)

Policies:
Attendance – Students are expected to attend all DIS classes when scheduled. If you miss multiple classes the Director of Teaching and Learning, and the Director of Student Affairs will be notified and they will follow-up with you to make sure that all is well. Absences will jeopardize your grade and your standing at DIS. Allowances will be made in cases of illness, but in the case of multiple absences you will need to provide a doctor’s note.

Late arrival to class: All students are expected to come to class on time. Repeated late arrivals will result in a meeting with the instructor.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and Violating the Rules of an Assignment. DIS expects that students abide by the highest standards of intellectual honesty in all academic work. DIS assumes that all students do their own work and credit all work or thought taken from others. Academic dishonesty will result in a final course grade of “F” and can result in dismissal. The students’ home universities will be notified. DIS reserves the right to request that written student assignments be turned in electronic form for submission to plagiarism detection software. See the Academic Handbook for more information, or ask your instructor if you have questions.

Policy on late hand-in of synopses: Synopses handed in late will not be accepted.

Use of laptops or phones in class: The use of laptops is allowed only for taking notes. The use of mobile phones in class is not allowed.

Disability and resource statement: Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Academic Support (acadsupp@dis.dk) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.
Introduction + Core Concepts and Theoretical Perspectives

Class 1 & 2 – Thursday, 19 January:

1. Introduction to the course - defining the Arctic

Study questions:
   a. How can the Arctic be defined?
   b. How are different definitions of the Arctic linked to specific perspectives (e.g. political and human geography, regional security, environmental science)?
   c. Why is the Arctic attracting so much political and academic interest?

Class readings:

2. Geopolitics and its relation to theories of international relations

Study questions:
   a. What is geopolitics? Why does geopolitics still have currency in media and academia?
   b. What are the main perspectives within the traditional core of International Relations (IR) theory? How does geopolitics fit into IR theoretical framework?
   c. How can IR theoretical perspectives and geopolitics be relevant for understanding the Arctic?

Class readings:

Historical Overview & the Impacts of Climate Change

Class 3 & 4 – Thursday, 26 January:

3. The Geopolitics of the Arctic in a Historical Perspective

Study questions:
   a. What are the main dimensions of history of the Arctic?
   b. What were the main developments in the past two centuries of the Arctic history?
   c. What role have military and non-military aspects of Arctic geopolitics played in Arctic history?
**Class readings:**

4. The effects of climate change in the Arctic.

**Study questions:**
- a. What challenges does climate change present to human, social, economic and political systems in the Arctic?
- b. What are the risks of failing to deal with those challenges? Who are the most vulnerable to those risks?
- c. What approaches and responses could be used to counter those challenges? What are their limitations? How successful have these approaches and responses been to date?

**Class readings:**

---

**Natural Resources and Shipping Routes in the Arctic**

**Class 5 & 6 – Thursday, 2 February:**

5. Natural resources in the Arctic

**Study questions:**
- a. Why has the discussion of natural resource exploration and development in the Arctic come to the fore of the agenda for Arctic states in the recent time?
- b. What are the challenges for resource extraction in the Arctic?
- c. How competitive are the Arctic resources on the global energy markets?

**Class readings:**
6. Arctic shipping routes

Study questions:

a. What are the major drivers of Arctic marine shipping?
b. What are the major challenges of Arctic marine shipping?
c. How are shipping routes related to security?

Class readings:

**Topic and problem statement for synopses have been defined. There will be an opportunity for consultations with supervisor on project group request.**

Project groups have been formed.

**Short Study Tour and Core Course Week: 6-11 February**

**Arctic Governance and Legal Regimes**

**Class 7 & 8 – Thursday, 16 February:**

7. The legal-political regime in the Arctic – Laws and boundaries

Study questions:

a. What major political developments have taken place in the Arctic since the WW2?
b. What legal frameworks define borders among Arctic states?
c. How do territorial disputes among Arctic states affect their diplomatic relations?

Class readings:

8. The Arctic Council

Study questions:

1. What governance structures exist in the Arctic?
2. What institutional capacity and legitimacy does the Arctic Council hold?
3. How do major theories within International Relations (e.g. (neo)realism, (neo)liberalism and critical approaches) view the roles of international institutions/organizations?
4. Have international affairs in the Arctic throughout the 1990s-2000s been characterized by anarchy and conflict among Arctic states or cooperation and dialogue?

Class readings:

Interests and Strategies of the Arctic States

Class 9 & 10 – Thursday, 23 February:

9. Arctic strategies of the US and Canada

Study questions:
1. What challenges and opportunities does the Arctic meltdown entail for the US and Canada?
2. How do the US and Canada address these challenges and opportunities in their Arctic strategies?
3. What are the major geopolitical priorities for US and Canada in their Arctic policies?

Class readings:

10. The Russian Federation and the Arctic

Study questions:
1. What challenges and opportunities does the Arctic meltdown pose to Russia?
2. How does Russia address these challenges and opportunities in its Arctic strategy?
3. What are the major geopolitical priorities for Russia in its Arctic policy?

Study questions:
1. What challenges and opportunities does the Arctic meltdown entail for the Russian Federation?
2. How does the Russian Federation address these challenges and opportunities in its Arctic strategy?
3. What are the major geopolitical priorities for the Russian Federation in its Arctic policy?
Class readings:

**Long Study Tour 1/Travel Break: 25 Feb – 5 March**

Class 11 & 12 – Thursday, 9 March:

11. Denmark and Norway in the Arctic

Study questions:
1. What challenges and opportunities does the Arctic meltdown entail for Denmark and Norway?
2. How do Denmark and Norway address these challenges and opportunities in their Arctic strategies?
3. What are the major geopolitical priorities for Denmark and Norway in their Arctic policies?

Class readings:

12. Group work on synopses with possibility of consulting supervisor

Greenland – Denmark’s Link to the Arctic

Class 13 & 14 - Thursday, 16 March:

13. Historical relations of the US, Greenland and Denmark I

Screening of the “The Idealist” (2015) – Danish political thriller about the diplomatic incident in 1968 when an American bomber carrying four hydrogen bombs crashed at Thule Air Base in Northern Greenland.

Class readings:
14. Historical relations of the US, Greenland and Denmark II

Finish screening.

Class readings:


Study questions:

1. Why did the Thule incident become so controversial?
2. How did the incident affect Danish-American relations?
3. How the incident affect Danish-Greenlandic relations?

Long Study Tour 2/Travel Break: 18 March – 26 March

Class 15 & 16 – Thursday, 30 March

15. Greenland at the Crossroads

Study questions:

1. Which route to self-determination has Greenland been following until now?
2. What is the current status of Greenland’s sovereignty? Which aspects of sovereignty have been acquired by Greenland? And which aspects are still missing?
3. Is Greenland’s full independence likely in the near future? What are its facilitating and inhibiting factors?

Class readings:


16. Guest Lecture

Visit from Nils Westergaard, Commander in the Royal Danish Navy. He has done multiple tours in Greenlandic and Arctic waters with the Royal Danish Navy, and he will provide us with a first-hand account of the trials and tribulations of operating in the Arctic environment.
Arctic Outsiders

Class 17 & 18 – Thursday, 6 April:

17. China’s Arctic Strategy

Study questions:
1. What are the motives that underlie Asian powers Arctic activities?
2. What strategies are Asian powers likely to use to gain access to Arctic resources?
3. What political and security consequences may Asian powers’ involvement have on the future development of the Arctic region?

Readings:

18. The European Union’s Arctic Strategy

Study questions:
1. What incentive does the EU have to become involved in Arctic affairs?
2. How have the EU’s Arctic aspirations evolved?
3. Why is the EU’s bid for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council continuously deferred?

Class readings:

Optional Travel Break: 12 April – 17 April

Simulation Game

Class 19 & 20 – Thursday, 20 April:

19. Arctic Simulation Game – round I

A role-play mimicking negotiations in the Arctic Council involving various actors and stakeholders with widely different resources and preferences. The simulation game will be divided into two rounds in which students will be assigned roles that they must research and play out in presentations and negotiations. Each round contains one scenario. The first scenario will involve emergency meetings and negotiations and thus focuses on short term interests. The second scenario is more long-term and will force players to dig deeper in order to find out what they actually can get/want in the Arctic in a larger time frame.
20. Arctic Simulation Game – round II

Continued.

Exams

Class 21 & 22 – Thursday, 27 April:

Exam - Presentations of synopses by student groups.

Class 23 – May, 4 May:

Exam - Presentations of synopses by student groups.

Schedule is subject to change if necessary with as much notice as possible.