

## School of Liberal Arts



INTD 350

Sensing Place:

Ethnography, Art, and Embodied Practices

Spring 2025

3 Credits

### Course Outline

<b>INSTRUCTOR</b>	Maria Michails, PhD	<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>	By appointment
<b>OFFICE</b>	By appointment	<b>CLASSROOM</b>	Main classroom: A2601 Computer Lab: A2702
<b>E-MAIL</b>	mmichails-posidis@yukonu.ca	<b>CLASS TIMES</b>	T 9:00 – 10:20am and R 9:00 – 11:50 am
<b>TELEPHONE</b>		<b>CRN</b>	30033
<b>Office:</b> Ayamdigut Campus A2501, liberalarts@yukonu.ca, 867-668-8770			

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*INTD 350 is a variable-topics course, designed to permit Northern Studies and other students to take advantage of the expertise of visiting scholars or professors, for instructors to pilot relevant courses, or to offer students the opportunity to create their own project or reading course. The course content, work and examinations are gauged for a third-year student. Specific topics may require a student to have named prerequisites. Students will acquire mastery of course content through lectures, seminar discussions, lab or field activities or trips, service learning, student presentations, guided research, term-paper preparation, etc.*

## TOPIC DESCRIPTION, SPRING 2025

In the Yukon, where seasonal rhythms, animal migrations, and weather patterns shape life at every scale, understanding ecological systems calls for methods that engage the whole body. How do we come to know a place—not just through data or description, but through sensation, movement, and attentive presence? How can deeply rooted land-based experiences be encapsulated and communicated?

This interdisciplinary course explores sensorial approaches to fieldwork and ecological understanding, drawing from ethnography, Northern histories, contemporary art, performance, and Indigenous land-based practices. Rather than centering the written word alone, we will experiment with ways of knowing that arise through listening, touching, tasting, moving, and dwelling.

Together, we will investigate how sound, image, texture, and gesture can reveal the complexity of land relations and ecological phenomena. Students will create multisensory projects using audio, video, movement, food, and field journals to engage with both human and other-than-human worlds. Field excursions and invited guests will offer experiential insights into land-based practices, fostering an embodied approach to research and storytelling.

## COURSE GOALS

*The goal of INTD 350 is to:*

- *Offer opportunities to enhance student access to learning in courses, fields, disciplines and areas that are beyond the scope of regular university resources and offerings;*
- *Permit students, faculty, and community members to benefit from the expertise of visiting scholars or experts, and enhance the knowledge base of Liberal Arts offerings; and*
- *Provide an environment in which Yukon University students can develop an understanding of specialized material and can exercise their academic faculties in new and challenging ways.*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisite(s):** ENGL 100 or HIST 140, or permission of the instructor, relevant Chair or Dean.

This course involves outdoor activities and hands-on work experiencing and recording sounds and images, though no previous studio or editing experience is necessary. To support the learning in this course, the following are also requirements of this course:

- Own or have access to a smartphone, video/still camera and/or audio recording device, with ample memory and storage for audio, video and image files (limited audio recording equipment will also be available for borrowing).
- Be comfortable doing fieldwork/being outdoors and have proper footwear for walking in wooded areas and on campus trails.
- Be committed to independent and/or group or collaborative work outside of class times of at least 4–6 hours per week.
- Fully agree to a scent-free class (no cologne, perfume, or scented personal products) because experiencing the land involves all senses, including smell.

## EQUIVALENCY OR TRANSFERABILITY

This course is a unique offering or pilot and, because of this, has not been evaluated for equivalency or transferability. Transferability would need to be assessed by a receiving institution on a case-by-case basis. Further information on the process is available from the School of Liberal Arts.

Students are reminded that it is always the receiving institution that determines whether a course is acceptable as an applicable, equivalent or elective course and if it may be transferred to a program for credit. Find further information at: <https://www.yukonu.ca/admissions/transfer-credit>

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will enable students to

- Increase their knowledge of the field, discipline and area of their studies.
- Develop and strengthen academic skills, including reading, writing, critical or logical thinking, extrapolating, explaining, analyzing, summarizing, synthesizing, researching, questioning, answering, evaluating, etc.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES, SPRING 2025

With conscientious application and successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

### *Skills*

- Describe the basic frameworks of interdisciplinary research and of some relevant field methods including sensory and visual ethnography and research-creation.
- Select and apply a variety fieldwork approaches (including Deep-Listening exercises, journaling, visual and audio recording, still and time-lapse photography, among other) for gathering data.
- Record and edit video and audio to produce original media works about embodied experience, ecology, culture, and history.
- Undertake an independent and collaborative project on a relevant topic.

### *Knowledge*

- Analyze and synthesize cultural narratives and Yukon/Northern histories, to develop a deeper awareness of the region's diverse communities and their interactions with the land.
- Work with and respect basic interdisciplinary frameworks that integrate environmental studies, social sciences, and the humanities, to reach a holistic understanding of how land-based experiences intersect with societal structures and cultural identities.
- Interpret and critique ethnographic studies and artistic works that depict the Yukon's natural environment and cultural narratives and identify key themes and perspectives that inform decolonization in academic scholarship.

## COURSE FORMAT

This course will be presented in person on campus. Committed attendance is vital. While Zoom sessions may augment the in-person sessions at the discretion of the instructor and with class agreement, they will not be a substitute for in-person attendance.

The course will combine lecture, in-class and Moodle discussion, technology lab sessions, student presentations, and guest speakers with outdoor activities on Ayamdigut campus trails and spaces. Those activities might include listening, looking, and smelling; sitting, exploring and walking; and image, sound, and video recording.

### **Delivery format**

This course is presented in person in two weekly sessions. One lecture/seminar/movement practice session is held on Tuesdays from 9:00 to 10:20 am. The Thursday 9:00 to 11:50 am session is longer to give more time for computer work, fieldwork, presentations, or guest speakers. Students will undertake about 4 to 6 hours of work weekly on their projects outside of class on their own schedule (i.e., homework).

## Workload

In addition to about 4.5 hours of class meeting time per week, it is expected that this course will require 4 to 6 hours per week of homework and additional reading, writing, recording and file editing. The time required for successful course completion, however, will vary by individual.

## EVALUATION

### Engagement and Participation – 25%

Engaged participation and thoughtful contributions to the class discussions will make this a great course for everyone. Details on this will be provided in class.

### Assignments – 35%

There will be a weekly or biweekly “sensory project” assignment related to the topic at hand and on interdisciplinary scholarship and inquiry. The projects may be in the form of audio recording, movement practice, a short writing of prose, poem, or story, drawing, photo story, or culinary recipe to share with the class.

Fieldwork will include walking, listening, and recording audio and/or video or a series of still images. Regular journaling and weekly reading summaries are expected. These may be assessed and contribute to weekly assignment grades. Details will be provided in class.

### Final Project – 40%

Details on the nature of the final project, which will include results of inquiry will be provided in class. The task of the project is to capture a sensory experience through multi-media, embodied practice, or writing and final oral summation/presentation.

## Summary

Engagement and Participation (Attendance, readings, in class and Moodle contributions to discussion, quality and depth to journal reflection entries, collaborative culinary sharing)	25 %
Assignments (three Individual projects)	35 %
Final Project (integrated project and oral presentation)	40 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## TEXTBOOKS & LEARNING MATERIALS

While there is no specific textbook, readings will be assigned, and a list will be posted on the course site. A syllabus is under development.

Students will be required to purchase/supply their own audio accessory for their cell phone, cabled headphones, a journal (lined or otherwise), and a microSD card for recording audio. Details will be provided in class.

## COURSE WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Students may officially withdraw from a course or program without academic penalty up until two-thirds of the course contact hours have been completed. Specific withdrawal dates vary, and students should become familiar with the withdrawal dates of their program. See withdrawal information at [www.yukonu.ca/admissions/money-matters](http://www.yukonu.ca/admissions/money-matters)

Refer to the YukonU website for important dates: [www.yukonu.ca/admissions/important-dates](http://www.yukonu.ca/admissions/important-dates)

A refund may be available. See the refund policy and procedures at [www.yukonu.ca/admissions/money-matters](http://www.yukonu.ca/admissions/money-matters)

## 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 (updated bi-annually) for further details about academic standing, and student rights and responsibilities: [www.yukonu.ca/policies/academic-regulations](http://www.yukonu.ca/policies/academic-regulations)

## ACCESSIBILITY AND ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Yukon University is committed to providing a positive, supportive, and barrier-free academic environment for all its students. Students experiencing barriers to full participation due to a visible or hidden disability (including hearing, vision, mobility, learning disability, mental health, chronic or temporary medical condition), should contact Accessibility Services for resources or to arrange academic accommodations: [access@yukonu.ca](mailto:access@yukonu.ca). [Text updated 16 November 2022]

## TOPIC OUTLINE\*

THEME	DATE/WEEK	DESCRIPTION / TOPIC(S)	PREPARATION/READING, ETC.
<b>Introduction</b>	Week 1 Thurs May 1	Introduction to course topics, materials and expectations; introduction to each other.	Setup Moodle, start readings, get necessary supplies and/or equipment needed for course. Intro to Journaling & field notes
<b>Theme 1: Sensory Perception &amp; Cross-disciplinary Perspectives</b>	Week 2 May 5-9	Frameworks & theories on sensory perception	Readings: sensory perception (social sciences, neuroscience, art historical) and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) Journal entry & weekly reflection/discussion entries on Moodle

<b>Theme 2: Engaging the Senses 1 - (Em)bodied Awareness</b>	Week 3 May 12-16	Movement Practices and Land Relations	Intro to movement practice and engagement with land. Guest speaker (Indigenous elder) Readings: tbd  Journal entry & weekly reflection/discussion entries on Moodle  Assignment 1 (complete during class time) – Movement Score
<b>Theme 3: Engaging the Senses 2 - Seeing the Unseen</b>	Week 4 May 19-23	Visual Field Theories & Methods - Fieldwork	Readings: visual ethnography and research-creation  Journal entry & weekly reflection/discussion entries on Moodle
	Week 5 May 27-30	Visual Field Theories & Methods – Lab work	Readings: tools and techniques  Journal entry  Assignment 2 due – Visual media project (uploaded)
<b>Theme 4: Engaging the Senses 3 - Acoustic Ecologies</b>	Week 6 June 2-6	Listening and Sounding Theories & Methods - Fieldwork	Readings: bioacoustics, acoustic ecology, deep listening, hungry listening, sounds of life  Journal entry & weekly reflection/discussion entries on Moodle
	Week 7 June 9-13	Listening and Sounding Theories & Methods – Lab work	Readings: tools and techniques  Journal entry  Assignment 3 due – Soundscape project (uploaded)  Introduction to Final Project

<b>Theme 5: Engaging the Senses 4 - Smell, Taste, Texture</b>	Week 8 June 16-20	Subsistence Practices: Harvesting, Hunting & Culinary Traditions	Readings: tbd  Journal entry & weekly reflection/discussion entries on Moodle Collaborative/shared culinary potluck – with invited guests (tbd)  Continue work on Final projects
	Week 9 June 24-27	Open sessions for lab work	Last week to work on final project  Journal entry
	Week 10 June 30-Jul 3	Tues: open – work on final projects Thurs: Final Projects ready to install Public event/exhibit for final projects Thursday Jul 3, 4-8 pm	Final Projects Public Presentation & Event @Fireweed Community Market  Journal entry (optional)
	Week 11 <b>Mon July 7</b>	Exam week (note different day, class meeting time tbd)	Final (Oral) Individual Presentations 12-15 mins (depending on number of students in course). Summation of term projects and reflections.

\*Schedule is subject to change. Students will be given a minimum of 48 hours advance notice.