RENR 491- Land (Use) Planning in Canada's North

In Winter 2026, RENR 491 **Land (Use) Planning in Canada's North** is being offered at Yukon University as part of the Northern Environmental and Conservation Sciences, B.Sc. Program. All students registered in RENR 491 must adhere to the requirements outlined in this course syllabus. University of Alberta students must also be aware of, and adhere to, the University's Code of Student Behaviour, referenced in the outline.

INSTRUCTORS: Kim Lisgo and Aidan Burghardt (TA)

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment Tues & Thurs 12-1pm YukonU and Mon-Fri 1-4pm online

OFFICE LOCATION: N/A

E-MAIL: klisgo@ualberta.ca and sheppard@ualberta.ca

CLASS DAYS & TIMES: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30–11:50 am

CLASS LOCATION: Room A2605 and A2702 Computer Lab

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the capstone course for the Northern Systems Major, providing students with a comprehensive overview of contemporary approaches to conservation and land planning, with focused applications to northern systems in Canada. Building on foundations, the course materials address the integration of social, environmental and economic values, and emphasize maintenance and stewardship of ecosystem integrity through proactive planning and management measures.

COURSE PREREQUISITES AND/OR CO-REQUISITES

Enrolment and 81 credits at the university level in Yukon University/University of Alberta BSc in Environmental and Conservation Sciences degree program, or consent of the Instructor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Capstone courses synthesize knowledge and skills acquired over four years of a program. These courses are integrative and experiential and are generally taken in the final year of a student's program. Objectives for RENR 491 include:

- Integrating and building upon concepts, tools, information and knowledge from the Northern Systems major, and applying these to empirical problems and settings associated with conservation planning and land planning in northern Canada.
- Exposing students to a diversity of perspectives representing a range of disciplines and considerations relevant to conservation and land planning in northern Canada and beyond.
- Experiencing problem solving and project work through simulated planning and teamwork.
- Building knowledge and applying ethical conduct and professionalism in the pursuit of activities associated with conservation and land planning.
- Demonstrating effective oral and written communication skills through classroom and group interactions, assignments, and presentation of a capstone project in a public venue(s).

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to do the following:

- Understand land planning processes, challenges and opportunities in Canada's north.
- Understand the contexts in which planning is undertaken and how this affects processes.
- Think critically about the challenges and opportunities that occur in land planning and contribute solutions in a constructive manner.
- Consider collaborative planning processes from a two-eyed seeing perspective.
- Contribute to the design and implementation of land planning processes in the workplace.
- Bring forward creative approaches for engaging participants in planning processes.
- Know the roles of the many participants, including the role of the planner.
- Know how to create a StoryMap for effective communication of core concepts and consideration of land planning and other processes.

COURSE FORMAT

This course consists of two 80-minute classroom sessions per week—which will include a mix of lectures, guest presentations, practical exercises, discussions, and labs. The course will take advantage of special learning opportunities that may arise during the course (e.g.,

attendance and participation in government and NGO consultations on planning exercises). Students may be expected to attend select events outside regular class time. A combination of lecture-based and participatory approaches will be employed. Discussion of required readings, interaction with guest lecturers, and student presentations will form important components of the class and of student evaluation. The course will be highly participatory, and students are expected to actively engage and contribute to class discussions and term projects.

Delivery format

Delivery will be in person. If unwell, students are encouraged to stay home. When possible, lectures will be recorded.

EVALUATION

Assignments are Mandatory. The course grade will be determined as follows:

	Percent
Assignment #1 - water	10
Assignment #2 - benchmarks	10
Assignment #3 - species	15
Assignment #4 - mining	5
Capstone Project - Presentation	25
Capstone Project - Storymap	35
Total	100%

Attendance and Participation

Attendance at class lectures and labs is highly encouraged. All lectures and labs have been designed to inform the Capstone Project. Assignments may include a penalty for lack of participation e.g., not attending associate lab and/or class.

Discussion and Preparation

Required readings will be assigned for each class and hosted on eclass. Some classes may have prepared questions that will be discussed during class.

Independent and Group Assignments

Written assignments will comprise **40%** of the final grade for this course. Your final capstone project presentation and StoryMap will comprise **60%** of the final grade allocation. Information on the assignments and capstone project will be available on eclass.

All assignments in the course must be completed by each individual student to pass the course.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day after the deadline.

The instructor will provide detailed marking schemes and guidelines for each evaluation component of the course.

Precision and care in writing and presenting planning documents is an important professional standard. Accordingly, the overall quality of written assignments will be graded, on the following basis:

- It contains the title, assignment number, your name, course number, date and page numbers.
- It is well-written with proper grammar and spelling.
- It has a consistent writing and referencing style. Students should be familiar with, and apply a style manual, such as the Harvard or Chicago style manual, to ensure consistent punctuation, capitalization and referencing.
- It is a clean, professional looking document with consistent line spacing, headings, etc.

Use of AI diminishes the learning experience. Use of AI is discouraged other than to assist with editing. All material must be properly referenced. Use of fictional citations will be an automatic deduction of 50%. Oral presentations will also be graded, using the following:

- Quality and clarity of the presentation materials (noting the standards above for written assignments).
- Delivery style.
- Depth of knowledge, as reflected in the student's ability to field questions and elaborate on the topic.

Exams

There are no exams in this course.

Due Dates and Late Assignments

Written assignments are to be submitted in MS Word format, as an email attachment, unless otherwise instructed. They are due before midnight on the day indicated for each assignment and are considered late if not received by this time. After this time, late assignments will be deducted 10% per day.

- Deadlines for assignments are as follows:
    - Assignment 1: Monday January 26, 2026
    - Assignment 2: Monday February 9, 2026
    - Assignment 3: Monday February 23, 2026
    - Assignment 4: Monday March 9, 2026

- Deadlines for the Capstone Project are as follows:
    - Practice presentations on April 9, 2026
    - Presentations on Thursday April 16, 2026
    - StoryMap due Tuesday April 28, 2026

Assignment of grades

The total numerical score will be converted to a grade on the following letter grading system:

Letter grade	Percentage
A+	95-100
A	90-94
A-	85-89
B+	79-84
B	75-78
B-	71-74
C+	67-70
C	64-66
C-	60-63
D+	55-59
D	50-54
F	0-49

COURSE WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Students should refer to the UAlberta calendar for important dates (calendar.ualberta.ca).

TEXTBOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS

There is no required textbook for this course. Please see the course outline for lists of learning materials required to be reviewed before specific classes.

COURSE WEBSITE

A course website will be used to share lectures, assignments, readings and reference materials, gradings, and announcements about the course. It will be available via Yukon University's Moodle.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Yukon University Academic Standards and Regulations

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 YukonU Academic Regulations & Procedures for further details about academic standing and student rights and responsibilities.

University of Alberta 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. 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.

All students at the University of Alberta are subject to the Code of Student Behaviour, as outlined at: http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx 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 attend all lectures and labs, be engaged and courteous in all course activities, and to be on time for class. Please do not use cellular phones during class. Laptops are permitted for note taking and in-class work; however, please do not use laptops in class for non-class-related activities. While in computer labs, students are expected to refrain from using the computers to engage in non-class-related activities (e.g. Facebook, etc.).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

See 'professionalism' above.

RECORDING OF LECTURES, LABS, ETC.

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Please note that some classes in the B.Sc. Northern ENCS Program may be recorded using web conferencing software, and links to recordings may be posted on the class website.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodations are available for students requiring 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.

TOPIC OUTLINE

- See table below.
- Lecture topics and Guest Speakers may be subject to change.
- Due dates for assignments 1-4 may be adjusted once student computer and GIS skills are assessed in Lab 1.

#	Date	Topic
1	Tues Jan 6	**Introduction to Course & Capstone Project** (Kim Lisgo)
2	Thurs Jan 8	**What is a land "use" plan?** (Kim Lisgo) •
3	Tues Jan 13	**Lab 1 – Room A2702** • Exploring the flow of water in the Capstone planning region • **Assignment #1:** Water
4	Thurs Jan 15	**Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Land Planning** (Jared Gonet)
5	Tues Jan 20	**Yukon Land Use Planning Council** (Sam Skinner, YLUPC Senior Planner and Kirsten Reid, Senior Planner for Dawson Land Use Plan)
6	Thurs Jan 22	**Yukon Land Use Planning Council** (Tim Sellers, YLUPC Director and Micheal Jim, YLUPC Land Relationship Planner)
Due Date	**Mon Jan 26**	**Assignment #1 Due**
7	Tues Jan 27	**Monitoring and Land & Water Planning** (Kim Lisgo and Aidan Burghardt) • ADM and ecological benchmarks • TH monitoring plan
8	Thurs Jan 29	**Lab 2 – Room A2702** • **Assignment #2 Part I:** Identify ecological benchmarks
9	Tues Feb 3	**Lab 3 – Room A2702** • **Assignment #2 Part II:** Rank ecological benchmark options e.g., representation, upstream areas, climate change, species, mining claims, etc.
10	Thurs Feb 5	**Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Land Planning** (Jared Gonet)

Due Date	**Mon Feb 9**	**Assignment #2 Due**
11	Tues Feb 10	**Lab 3 – Room A2702** • **Assignment #3:** Species
12	Thurs Feb 12	**Land and Peoples Relationship Model (TBD)**
13	Tues Feb 17	**How We Walk with the Land and Water (TDB)**
14	Thurs Feb 19	**Guest speaker re: mining (TBD)**
Due Date	**Mon Feb 23**	**Assignment #3 Due**
15	Tues Feb 24	**Lab 4 –** Room A2702 • **Assignment #4:** Mining
16	Thurs Feb 26	**Guest Speaker**
17	Tues Mar 3	Lab - Capstone Project
18	Thurs Mar 5	Lab - Capstone Project
Due Date	**Mon Mar 9**	**Assignment #4 Due**
na	Tues Mar 10	Reading Week
na	Thurs Mar 12	Reading Week

19	Tues Mar 17	Lab - Capstone Project
20	Thurs Mar 19	Lab - Capstone Project
21	Tues Mar 24	Lab - Capstone Project
22	Thurs Mar 26	Lab - Capstone Project
23	Tues Mar 31	Lab - Capstone Project
24	Thurs Apr 2	Lab - Capstone Project
25	Tues Apr 7	Lab - Capstone Project
26	Thurs Apr 9	Lab - Capstone Project
27	**Tues Apr 14**	**Dry run of Capstone Presentations**
Due Date	**Thurs Apr 16**	**Capstone Presentations**
Due Date	**Tues Apr 28**	**Capstone Storymap Due**