

Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Course: Ph. D

Course Title: **Arctic Russia: Geostrategic, Economic and Ecological Dimensions**

Course Type: Optional Course

Course Teacher: Dr. Asma Kouser

Credits: Four

Course Code: SE 616

Semester: Monsoon Semester

Course Duration: One Semester

Contact Hour: Three per week

Course Objective

The Arctic landscape depicts shrinking ice caps, fragile ecosystems impacting climate change, rich hydrocarbons and competition in the Northern Sea Route. Resources and location make the Arctic a strategically relevant geographical space in world and regional affairs. The debates and strategic competitions point to the region's significance from different perspectives. The Arctic debate is multidisciplinary and represents diverse stakeholders, such as environmentalists, state actors, military, business interests, scientists, and indigenous groups. The discussion also brings out the sharp differences among various segments.

The eight nations of the Arctic zone, namely Russia, Canada, the USA, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland have their distinct strategies for the region. Non-Arctic states like China, Japan and India are also actively seeking engagement in the Arctic region. In addition, international institutions such as the United Nations, the Arctic Council, and the United Nations Convention on Law of Sea (UNCLOS) have been vital in the Arctic narrative. Thus, studying the Arctic territory from the international relations perspective is essential for understanding world relations and global systems.

The Russian Arctic, also called the Red Arctic, originates from the Soviet period and the Cold War legacy. Significantly, Russia shares 53 per cent of the Arctic Ocean coastline. Recent ideas of the northern sea route, the search for new mineral resources, and the engagement of non-Arctic states such as China and India in Arctic research, have added to the competitive dimensions in the region. The Russian Arctic Zone includes historical, economic, social, environmental, and defence specificities with broader strategic value for the Russian state in international affairs. Considering the strategic importance of the Arctic Zone in the current world system, the course titled *Arctic Russia: Geostrategic, Economic and Ecological Dimensions* aims to understand the Russian Arctic territory from the lens of geopolitics, geoeconomics and ecology.

Learning Outcome

By the end of the course, the students will:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Arctic region and within it the Russian Arctic Zone from a multidimensional perspective of history, geographical landscape, international relations and other related aspects
- Comprehend the strategic vision of the Russian Arctic policy in the context of the strategies of other Arctic and non-Arctic states and institutions
- Evaluate the Russian Arctic Policy through the changing contours of military, economic and ecological systems
- Comprehend the future of the Arctic region based on past foundations and emerging challenges

Evaluation Methods

- End Semester examination (50 per cent)
- Assignments: Term Paper/Book Review (20 per cent)
- Seminar Presentation (20 per cent)
- Class Performance (10 per cent)

Course Content

Unit I: The Arctic in the Russian Imagination

This Unit will develop an understanding of the Arctic region from the lens of history and

geography. It will also highlight the contemporary relevance of the region in Russia's geo-strategic calculus. The unit will cover:

- Historical Memory of the Russian Arctic: Imperial Russia to the Soviet Union: The Arctic Soviet Plan, Red Arctic and Cold War Theatre
- Defining the Arctic Geographic Landscape: Far North (*sever*)-Russian North (*Russkii sever*)- Arctic (*Arktika*)
- Arctic zone as a new geopolitical pivot

Essential Readings

- Lipunov, N., & Devyatkin, P. (2023), "The Arctic in the 2023 Russian foreign policy concept", *The Arctic Institute*, 30.
- Weber, J. (2020), *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, Springer International Publishing, 251-269
- Kaganovsky, L. (2017), "The negative space in the national imagination: Russia and the Arctic", in Körber, LA., MacKenzie, S., Westerståhl Stenport, A. (eds) *Arctic Environmental Modernities*, Palgrave Studies in World Environmental History: Palgrave Macmillan. 169-182.
- Laruelle, M. (2015), *Russia's Arctic strategies and the future of the Far North*, Routledge, ix-xxvi, 24-33
- Staun, J. M. (2015), *Russia's Strategy in the Arctic*, Royal Danish Defence College, 1-39
- Peimani, H. (2013), *Energy security and geopolitics in the Arctic: Challenges and opportunities in the 21st century*, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., Introduction chapter.

Unit II: Geopolitics of Arctic Russia

This unit will discuss Russia's Arctic security policy in the context of its broader Arctic Zone Policy. The plight and the rights of Indigenous people living in the Arctic region will also be discussed. The unit will cover:

- Geopolitics of the 'North Pole' and its strategic value for Russia
- Russia's Arctic Doctrine
- Russia's Arctic security strategies: Defence-military complex, Northfleet Expansion

- Indigenous People in the Russian Arctic

Essential Readings

- Elizabeth Buchanan. Rowman & Littlefield (2023), *Red Arctic: Russian Strategy Under Putin*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press
- Weber, J. (2020), *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, Springer International Publishing, 251-269
- Lagutina M L (2019), *Russia's Arctic Policy in the Twenty-First Century National and International Dimensions*, Rowman & Littlefield
- Tennberg, M. (2017), *Arctic environmental cooperation: A study in governmentality*, Routledge, 51-160
- Conley, H. A., & Rohloff, C. (2015), *The New Ice Curtain: Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, Rowman & Littlefield, 14-117, 261-327
- Laruelle, M. (2015), *Russia's Arctic strategies and the future of the Far North*, Routledge, 4-23, 33-39, 113-130
- Peimani, H. (2013), *Energy security and geopolitics in the Arctic: Challenges and opportunities in the 21st century*, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 93-126
- Zysk, K. (2011), "Military aspects of Russia's Arctic policy. Arctic security in an age of climate change", *Cambridge.org*, 85-107.

Unit III: Arctic States and External Actors

This Unit will explore the emerging dynamics between the Arctic and non-Arctic state actors and institutions in the context of the internationalisation of the Arctic region. The unit will broadly cover:

- State policies and strategies: economic and environmental rationale of A7 States
- Internationalisation of the Arctic theatre: US threat perception, EU (NATO)-Russia dynamics
- China's 'near-Arctic state' Policy
- India's Arctic Policy

Essential Readings

- Staun, J., & Sørensen, C. T. N. (2023), “Incompatible Strategic Cultures Limit Russian-Chinese Strategic Cooperation in the Arctic”, *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 6(1): 24–39
- Bisen, A. (2023), “India's Arctic Endeavours: Capacity Building and Capability Enhancement”, *MP-IDS Policy Brief, Arctic*, 1-12
- Government of India (2022), *India's Arctic Policy*, Ministry of Earth Sciences, New Delhi.
- Hønneland, G. (2020), *Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 43-70
- Weber, J. (2020), *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, Springer International Publishing, 77-156
- Sørensen, C. T. N. (2019), “China as (Near-) Arctic Great Power Drivers and Perspectives”, *Think China. dk Policy Brief*, 1-6
- Brady, A. M. (2019), “Facing up to China's military interests in the Arctic”, *China Brief*, 19(21): 1-10.
- The Peoples's Republic of China (2018), *China's Arctic Policy*, The State Council, Beijing.
- Laruelle, M. (2015), *Russia's Arctic strategies and the future of the Far North*, Routledge, 94-112, 147-151.

Unit IV: International Relations and the Russian Arctic

This Unit will explore the trajectory of Russia's international relations in the context of securitising the Arctic region. Russia's bilateral relations with other Arctic players and the functioning of the International Arctic Governance mechanisms will also be explored.

- Securitizing Arctic Russia: geopolitical conflicts and its implications
- Arctic Security and Diplomacy: Russian bilateral relations in the Arctic
- International Arctic Governance: The Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC); the Eastern Economic Forum; Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on Law of Sea)
- Scientific missions and collaborations

Essential Readings

- Gresh, G. F. (2020), *To Rule Eurasia's Waves: The New Great Power Competition at Sea*, Yale University Press, 245-287
- Weber, J. (2020), *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, Springer International Publishing, 171-203
- Berkman, P. A., Vylegzhanin, A. N., & Young, O. R. (2019), *Baseline of Russian Arctic Laws*, Springer International Publishing, Vol. 438: Case study wise
- Berkman, P. A., Kullerud, L., Pope, A., Vylegzhanin, A. N., & Young, O. R. (2017), “The Arctic Science Agreement propels science diplomacy”, *Science*, 358(6363):596-598.
- Conley, H. A., & Rohloff, C. (2015), *The New Ice Curtain: Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, Rowman & Littlefield, 370-401
- Laruelle, M. (2015), *Russia's Arctic strategies and the future of the Far North*, Routledge, 15-23, 113-134
- Murray, R. W., & Nuttall, A. D. (Eds.). (2014). *International relations and the Arctic: Understanding policy and governance*, Cambria Press.
- Peimani, H. (2013), *Energy security and geopolitics in the Arctic: Challenges and opportunities in the 21st century*, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 167-189, 191-220, 221-248.

Unit V: Russian Arctic eco-system: Geo-economic and ecological dimensions

This Unit will explore Russia’s Arctic eco-system in the context of the geo-economic and ecological aspects of the ‘Ecological and Anthropocene debate’ and its significance for the future of the Russian Arctic ecosystem. The unit will cover:

- Geo-economic significance of Arctic Russia: region and city-specific
- Economic development policy: hydrocarbons, fishing, trade and capital movements; Northern Sea Route (NSR)
- *Warming Arctic* and positive externalities: innovative technologies, Arctic tourism
- Sustainable Arctic Economic Development; New Climate Doctrine

Essential Readings

- Bisen, A. (2023), “India’s G20 Presidency: Opportunity to Resume Engagement in the Arctic”, *MP-IDS Policy Brief*, 1-12

- Conley, H. A. (2021), *Russia's Climate Gamble: The Pursuit and Contradiction of Its Arctic Ambitions*, USA: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 1-38
- Hønneland, G. (2020), *Russia and the Arctic: Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 103-126.
- Tennberg, M. (2017), *Arctic environmental cooperation: A study in governmentality*, Routledge, 165-177
- Conley, H. A., & Rohloff, C. (2015), *The New Ice Curtain: Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, Rowman & Littlefield, 118-260, 328-369
- Laruelle, M. (2015), *Russia's Arctic strategies and the future of the Far North*, Routledge, 68-88, 94-109, 135-212
- Cross, J. N., Mordy, C. W., Tabisola, H. M., Meinig, C., Cokelet, E. D., & Stabeno, P. J. (2015), "Innovative technology development for Arctic Exploration", *In OCEANS 2015-MTS/IEEE Washington IEEE*, 1-8.
- The Russian Government (2023), *New Climate Doctrine 2023*, Moscow.
- Peimani, H. (2013), *Energy security and geopolitics in the Arctic: Challenges and opportunities in the 21st century*, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 59-92, 249-260.

General Readings

- Coffler, J., Denton, B. B., Fesko Santos, C., Kesinger, K., Mendoza, E. M., Moore, A., ... & Wang, A. (2024), "Indigenous and International Relations in a Warming Arctic", *Arctic and International Relations Series*, Canadian Studies Center, USA.
- Götz, E., & Staun, J. (2022), "Why Russia attacked Ukraine: Strategic culture and radicalized narratives", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 43(3): 482-497
- Bott, C. (2021). "Responding to Russia's Northern Fleet. The United States and NATO Must Prepare to Face a Revitalized Fleet Capable of Effective Offensive Operations". *In Proceedings*, Vol. 147.
- Gresh, G. F. (2020), *To Rule Eurasia's Waves: The New Great Power Competition at Sea*, Yale University Press.
- Tynkkynen, V. P., Tabata, S., Gritsenko, D., & Goto, M. (Eds.). (2018), *Russia's Far North: The contested energy frontier*, Routledge, 252.
- Burilkov, A., & Geise, T. (2013), "Maritime Strategies of Rising Powers: developments in China and Russia", *Third World Quarterly*, 34(6): 1037-1053.

- Tremin, D. (2012), *True Partners?: How Russia and China See Each Other*, Centre for European Reform (CER), 1-47