

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

German and Scandinavian Studies

Spring 2010

Prof. Sherrill Harbison

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Tu-Th 9:30-10:45

Scandin 391P, Voices from the Top of the World

ULTIMA THULE: POLAR EXPLORATION AND THE HEROIC IMAGINATION

A course inspired by International Polar Year (2007-09).

(Conducted in English)

The quest to reach the North & South Poles a century ago was generated by scientific interest in the planet's last unconquered frontier, and also by a sense of adventure and nationalist competition. We will examine the way early polar expeditions were planned, executed and endured; the lifeways of indigenous populations of the far north such as the Inuit of Greenland and the Saami of Lapland,



and how they have accommodated and/or suffered from the dominant cultures imported from the south. We'll also look at ways artists of the past two centuries have responded to the spectacular and dangerous polar landscapes, and the ways these fragile ecosystems are threatened by global warming, as different countries again compete for dominance in the far north. The course includes

a substantial number of films.

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