

Economic Development in the Arctic (10 ECTS)

FALL 2025

Lecturers: Brian Beadle and Rikke Østergaard

3rd Semester EØ (bachelor's in business economics)

University of Greenland / Ilisimatusarfik

Course details

Lecturer:

Rikke Østergaard, PhD student. Ilisimatusarfik, E-mail: rios@uni.gl (contact person)

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Course Description

The content focuses on key concepts and debates related to economic development in the context of the Arctic. Theories related to institutional development, green colonialism, human capital formation, gender inequality, social and economic sustainability, and the effects of climate change are highlighted. There is a particular focus on comparisons across countries and regions within the Arctic. The aim of the course is to introduce the students to the main issues of economic development in the Arctic region with special emphasis on Greenland.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Evaluate** key issues in Arctic economic development by making informed judgments based on established criteria and standards.
- **Analyze** different perspectives, drawing on relevant theories and evidence, by breaking complex material into its parts and understanding how these parts relate to each other and to the broader context.
- **Apply** concepts and theories of economic growth and development to critically reflect on local Arctic issues.

Assessment

Before the end of the course, students must choose a topic related to the themes covered in the course. The topic must be approved by the instructor 4 weeks before the end of the course.

Examination form: Type: Free homework assignment between 4000 and 5000 words (excl. cover, table of contents, bibliography and appendix). Censorship: Internal Grade: GGS scale. Hand in the assignment the 15th of December 2025.

Schedule

Lesson	Instructor	Topic	Details and literature (check full list at the end of this syllabus)
Lecture 1: Date: 09/09-2025 Week 37	Brian	Lecture: The Concept of Development and Inequalities <i>Activity: Creating a concept map</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to key concepts and relationships. Exploration of historical growth patterns and global inequality. Mandatory reading: Szirmai (2015), Ch. 1; Chang (2014), Ch. 9.
Lecture 2: Date: 18/09-2025 Week 38	Rikke	Trade off Minerals <i>Activity: Start preparing a literature review</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mandatory readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arnaut & Østergaard (2023) Navigating toward a Sustainable Arctic. Bjørst, Sejersen, Thisted Rethinking Emotions in resource Extraction
Lecture 3: Date: 25/09-2025 Week 39	Rikke	Lecture: Green Colonialism In the Arctic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Green Colonialism? Is there a of Green Colonialism in the Arctic or a Just Transition? <p style="text-align: center;">Mandatory readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amnesty International (2025). Just Transition or Green Colonialism? (find the link in the list below) Kårtveit, B. (2021). Green colonialism: The story of wind power in Sápmi (Find link below)Dobuzinskis (2023), Ch. 2.
Lecture 4: Date: 30/09-2025 Week 40	Rikke	Lecture: Tourism and Development in the Arctic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate over the dual role of tourism in the Arctic How can Greenland create a sustainable tourism industry? <p style="text-align: center;">Mandatory readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James, L., Olsen, L. S., & Karlsdóttir, A. (2020). Sustainability and cruise tourism in the arctic. Tre mulige scenarier kan forme Grønlands turisme https://www.altinget.dk/arktis/artikel/turismeekspert-tre-mulige-scenarier-kan-forme-groenlands-turisme?toke=f1b70f6a9093409bb4cdde4a511b9627 New Tourism law in Greenland: https://nalunaarutit.gl/groenlands-lovgivning/2024/inatsisartutlov-nr-62-af-25-11-2024?sc_lang=da
Lecture 5:	Brian	Lecture: Theoretical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of global data on growth and inequality. Discussion of the Kuznets Curve and critiques.

Date: 09/10-2025 Week 41		Frameworks and Welfare Economics Empirical Perspectives and the Kuznets Hypothesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of neoclassical, endogenous, and heterodox theories of growth. Introduction to welfare economics and equity considerations. <p style="text-align: center;">Mandatory readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dobuzinskis (2023), Ch. 2. Dobuzinskis (2023), Ch. 3; Piketty (2006). Acemoglu and Robinson (2002)
Lecture 6: Date: 15/10-2025 Week 42	Brian	Lecture: Population and Development <i>Activity: Discussion on past and future population growth in Greenland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perspectives and transitions in population growth Socio-economic consequences of population growth Mandatory readings: Szirmai (2015), Ch. 5
Lecture 7: Date: 23/10-2025 Week 43	Brian	Egalitarian and Post-Growth Approaches <i>Activity: Revisiting Greenland policies in the lens of sustainable development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawlsian, Marxist, and post-growth alternatives Inclusive, sustainable, and equitable growth models Key readings: Dobuzinskis (2023) Ch. 4 & 5; OECD (2019)
Lecture 8: Date: 28/10-2025 Week 44	Rikke	Gender and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate over gender inequality in the Arctic and why gender equality is important for development <p style="text-align: center;">Obligatory readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sinevaara-Niskanen, H. (2019). When gender matters: Equality as a source of Arctic sustainability?. In Resources, social and cultural sustainabilities in the Arctic (pp. 131-143). Routledge. Pan Arctic Gender Report 2021: https://arcticgenderequality.network/phase-3/pan-arctic-report
Lecture 9: Date: 04/11-2025	Rikke	Visit a company TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will visit a local company in Nuuk to understand the process of production and the stakeholders involved in the success of the company. Readings to be disclosed.

Week 45			
Lecture 10: Date: 14/11-2025 Week 46	Guest teacher Steven Arnfjord Rikke or Brian	Gentrification in the Arctic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there gentrification in Greenland? • Key readings: Christensen, J., Arnfjord, S., Aastrup, M. L., & Stephenson, E. (2024). Housing Policy, Urbanization, and the Production of Homelessness in Greenland. <i>International Journal on Homelessness</i>, 4(1), 69-86. https://doi.org/10.5206/ijoh.2023.3.14324
Lecture 11: Date: 25/11-2025 Week 48	Rikke and Brian	Review class	

Reading list (alphabetical order)

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2002). The political economy of the Kuznets curve. *Review of development economics*, 6(2), 183-203.

Amnesty International (2025). Just Transition or Green Colonialism?

https://www.amnesty.se/documents/278/Final_Just_transition_or_Green_colonialism.pdf

Arnaut, J. L., & Østergaard, R. (2023). Navigating toward a Sustainable Arctic: Trade-offs and Adaptation in Greenland's Fishing Industry. In *Supply Chain Operations in the Arctic* (pp. 144-167).

Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003218043-7/navigating-toward-sustainable-arctic-javier-arnaut-rikke-%C3%B8stergaard>

Bjørst, L. R., Sejersen, F., & Thisted, K. (2022). Affective Approaches: Rethinking emotions in resource extraction. In *Resource extraction and Arctic Communities: The new extractivist paradigm* (pp. 145-165). Cambridge University Press.

https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/517555479/affective_approaches.pdf

Chang, H. J. (2014). *Economics: the user's guide*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Dobuzinskis, L. (2023). *Economic growth and inequality: the economists' dilemma*. Routledge.

Kårtveit, B. (2021). Green colonialism: The story of wind power in Sápmi. In *Stories of change and sustainability in the Arctic regions* (pp. 157-177). Routledge.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bard-Kartveit-2/publication/354875935_Green_colonialism/links/62fb7240ceb9764f72ffbfed/Green-colonialism.pdf

New Tourism Law in Greenland (2024): https://nalunaarutit.gl/groenlandske-lovgivning/2024/inatsisartutlov-nr-62-af-25_11_2024?sc_lang=da

OECD, G. S. (2019). Beyond Growth: Towards a New Economic Approach-Report of the Secretary General's Advisory Group on a New Growth Narrative.

Piketty, T. (2006). The Kuznets curve: Yesterday and tomorrow. *Understanding poverty*, 63-72.

Sinevaara-Niskanen, H. (2019). When gender matters: Equality as a source of Arctic sustainability?. In Resources, social and cultural sustainabilities in the Arctic (pp. 131-143). Routledge.

Szirmai, A. (2015). *Socio-economic development*. Cambridge University Press.