

Resources: Getting to know Greenland

The following books, websites and videos are included to help you decide if this seminar is for you. There are no required readings.

“Collapse How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed” by Jared Diamond. This award winning book looks at how human resilience, ignorance and climate affect a society’s ability to survive. Chapters 6-8 (about 100 pages) explore the social and environmental forces that allowed the Inuit to survive in Greenland while, after 500 years of colonization, the Vikings did not.

<https://visitgreenland.com/> This official website of the Greenland National Tourism Board has many links to topics of interest and excellent videos and articles.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/what-its-like-to-live-in-greenland> A recent (Feb 2025) article from National Geographic Traveler magazine of Great Britain on what it’s like to live in Greenland.

<https://denmark.dk/people-and-culture/greenland> Greenland 101 from the Danish perspective. A quick read.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/25/world/europe/greenland-us-space-base.html> The history and strategic value of the US military presence.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/pialauritzen/2025/04/06/what-greenland-wants-and-why-trump-cant-afford-to-buy-it/>

An article/opinion piece about **Greenland’s past, present, and future**, specifically what it takes for Greenland to succeed as an independent country.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/as-greenlands-ice-sheet-melts-an-island-town-rises-180985514/> How glacier melt lowers the sea level around Greenland and how that affects the coast and impacts life due to effects on marine life and the people.

<https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/greenlanders-unite-fend-us-trump-seeks-control-arctic-island> A brief recent article about Greenlander reaction to Trumps stated intentions with regard to Greenland.

<https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/greenlands-rare-earths-attract-european-and-us-interest-signaling-potential-mining-boom> A brief article looking at short term needs for rare earth minerals and the long term prospects for getting them from Greenland.

Greenland: Topic Suggetions

Greenland, the sparsely populated, mostly frozen autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark has been inhabited for the last 4500 years by bands of Inuits, Icelandic Vikings, and subsequent European colonists. What were they looking for? How have Greenland's natural history and human history come together to shape this land and its people? What might the future look like?

To help us answer these questions, here is a list of categories and possible topics you might want to explore. It is not exhaustive and some topics may overlap. The ones we explore are up to you. Feel free to propose others that reflect your interests.

Geography and natural history - the ecosystem; natural resources; flora and fauna; mineral deposits; ice in its many forms

Archaeology

Explorers

The Greenland Ice Core Project and what we have learned

Colonization - the early Inuit; the Vikings; Norway and Denmark

Cultural traditions - livelihoods, music, art, textiles, language, the sled dog

Threats to cultural traditions - past, present, future. The legacy of "cultural cleansing" and forced relocation

Hunting traditions, weapons and prey

How Greenlanders utilize their prey for food, shelter, clothing, and art

Diet and threats to the food supply

Urban versus rural life

Social welfare system - income, health, education

Social problems - unemployment, homelessness, addictions, suicide

Coping with extreme climate, isolation, mosquitoes

Infrastructure challenges: roads, airports, waste management, communications; energy supply; housing.

The impact of global warming - past, present, future

Economy: Fishing industry; agriculture and farming; tourism

Political movements and changing relationship with Denmark

Military significance - past, present and future

The competition for Greenland and what are the stakes?

Greenland as the 51st state - can you picture it?