Content of today's lecture

1st half: • Introduction to Arctic history
  - Arctic colonization: Why are we here?
  - A brief overview of Svalbard’s history

2nd half: • Presentation of the course
  - What is history?
  - Learning goals
  - Lecture plan
  - Teaching and learning methods
  • Administrative matters

Why are we here anyway?

Should there be people on Svalbard at all?

Decide Yes Continue lecture
No Go home
People vs. Nature

- Svalbard is an Arctic archipelago, 500 km from the nearest mainland.
- The physical living conditions are extreme.
- The resource basis creates limitations for human subsistence.
- No indigenous/aboriginal population or "colony"; meagre basis for local production and/or finishing.
- Particular legal and political status.

Arctic colonization

- Expansion from Central Asia during Pleistocene.
- First crossing to America > 13,000 years ago (?).
- Colonization in waves during Holocene.
- Thule People of Arctic Canada settled in Greenland from AD 1000.

Svalbard's history – overview

- Barentsz 1596.
- Whaling.
- Pomor hunters.
- Norwegian hunters.
- Scientific research.
- Coal mining.
- Communities.
- Tourism.
- 9 Feb 1920.
- 14 Aug 1925.
What is history?

• The subject of history: human communities and activities in the past
• History – a human and social science
  – Actors and actions
  – Society and structures
  – Material and spiritual culture
  – The natural environment
• Chronology: the "post hoc fallacy"
• Stories vs. history: (re-) constructing the past, with an ambition to explain what, why, how...

Historical practice

The past → Remnants/sources → The historian

Method:
  • Asking questions, raising problems
  • Choice of material, sources
  • Systematical criticism of sources
    – Reliability, relevance and representativity
    – Exploiting sources as remnants or accounts/narratives
    – Descriptive and normative sources, bias
Sources aren't always sources…

What do you expect? Here's what you get

- An overview of Svalbard’s history from 1596 until the present
- Economic and political history, social and cultural development
- Introduction to historical thinking
- An online exercise; > 66 % in order to be approved for exam
- Reading, ca. 250 pages
- Written exam + exercise + 80 % attendance = 6 credits (ECTS)

Lecture plan 2017, 1st week

1. 23 Jan  Introduction. Arctic colonization and main lines in the history of Svalbard
2. 24 Jan  The early exploration of the Arctic and the discovery of Svalbard
3. 25 Jan  Whaling and sealing in the 17th and 18th centuries
4. 26 Jan  Hunting and trapping. Russian and Norwegian trappers
5. 27 Jan  The scientific exploration of Svalbard and modern polar research
Lecture plan 2015, 2nd week

6. 30 Jan The great (and not so great) polar expeditions from Svalbard
7. 31 Jan The industrialization of Svalbard: Exploration and mining from Søren Zakariassen to Svea Nord
8. 1 Feb The development of governance and environmental protection
9. 2 Feb Svalbard in national and international politics: problems of sovereignty and strategy
10. 3 Feb Permanent settlement and the local history of Longyearbyen

Exercise deadline

Exam! Monday 6 February 13.45–17.00

Teaching and learning

- Purpose and function of lectures
- Course curriculum: recommended reading (see website)
- Visit to Svalbard Museum and Cultural Heritage Depository (check website)
- Online exercise must be approved to take exam
- Evaluation: written exam (3 hours)

Information
http://www.unis.no/history-svalbard-course-page-2017/
Administrative matters

- Registering (web, or contact Anne)
- Check attendance list every evening
- Register for exam (80% attendance)
- Course evaluation

The course homepage:
- Go to UNIS home page, click Studies
- Click General Courses
- Click Course overview: SH-201...

or go directly to
http://www.unis.no/history-svalbard-course-page-2017/

End of 1st lecture