

UNBC GEOGRAPHY

MARCH 2021

-Focus on Faculty-

Dr. Gail Fondahl

Professor of Geography



Research Field:

Environment, First Nations, Geography, Human Rights, Natural Resources, Northern Issues, Sustainability

Areas of Expertise:

Indigenous rights in Russia; Arctic human development; Arctic social indicators

What interested you in your area of specialization?

The ways that people employ laws and regulation, usually written in distance places, to create & recreate space; the ways state legislation can be invoked, interpreted/(mis-interpreted), and implemented, by various parties locally and regionally, to help or hinder indigenous reclaiming of land — and the variegated legal and material landscape these processes continually (re-)produce. Also, in terms of geographical area of specialization, the sheer thrill of traveling to new, cool (literally) places, of learning a lot of different things about life from new acquaintances, and of collaborating with folks from very different environments (social, political, physical) – it's mind- and soul-expanding. Having wonderful colleagues and friends spread across the Circumpolar North is a fantastic benefit of my career. While rarely overheating (I'd melt in the tropics).

What is your favourite sport?

To participate in? Hiking and cross-country skiing. To watch? Highland dancing. Yes, it definitely qualifies as sport, as well as an art form.

What is your favourite food?

Depends on what I'm eating at any given moment. Croissants. Camembert. Caol Ila. Coffee-flavored anything, especially coffee-flavoured chocolate. And that's just a very few of the 'C's. Could not possibly name one favorite food or even a favorite dozen or two. Eating is a favorite past-time, as are cooking and baking.

Favourite binge watch or movie?

Guardian crossword is what I like to binge on. Okay, if I have to choose a binge watch, it's *Midnight Diner*: *Tokyo Stories* – gems of short vignettes, and a haunting theme song. And *Newsroom* – the dialogue is so intelligent and uncannily prescient.

-Welcome from the Chair of Geography-

I hope this message finds you safe and healthy as we near the end of our Winter 2021 online semester. Spring 2021 brings encouraging news from BC's Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry who advised UNBC and all BC public colleges and universities to prepare for a return to on-campus education this September. This past year has not been easy as we started into an uncertain future immediately following our hosting of the WD-CAG conference here on campus last March. I am full of optimism and look forward to returning to campus with many of you. But, for some of us, thinking about a return to campus may lead to some apprehension or hesitation. Please know that UNBC continues to take the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff seriously and will continue to follow all provincial health and safety guidelines. Regular updates are posted at: <https://www2.unbc.ca/coronavirus/updates>



I want to congratulate you all for continuing your online studies with such determination and persistence. In spite of our move online, our UNBC community continues to connect, engage, and support each other. Students, faculty and staff have extended their compassion and support for each other, past the limits of physical distancing, and found innovative new ways to gather as a community. I applaud all for your efforts and know that better days are ahead.

And now for a few announcements:

(1) Our three Spring semester courses are filling up fast. Please consider joining one or more if you would like to spread out your coursework to ease the load in the Fall and Winter semesters;

(2) starting on April 1st, we will be the Department of Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences! Our degree programs remain the same though Geography & Environmental Science faculty are joining forces to collaborate on new and exciting opportunities for our students. We will share more as this change unfolds; and

(3) UNBC Geography is proud to be hosting the 71st Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) this year, which will run virtually from June 7-11, 2021. Our conference theme is *Embracing Connectivity: Coming Together and Moving Forward*. As we look forward to a post-COVID world, geographers are needed now more than ever to lead the way in bringing together scholarship from across the spectrum (humanities, social and natural sciences) that addresses the pressing challenges of our age (e.g. the climate crisis, Indigenous rights and tenure, environmental change, a wide range of justice issues, antiracism). We invite all students, faculty, researchers and academics to come together and share our achievements and learnings and support each other as we move forward together. Conference details, including submission and registration deadlines, are posted at <https://www.cag-acg.ca/cag2021>. Please contact me if you have any conference-related questions: cag2021@unbc.ca. For students interested in volunteering to make this virtual conference shine, please contact Stephanie Powell-Hellyer at: stephanie.hellyer@unbc.ca

For those graduating in June, congratulations! For those of you continuing your studies, we look forward to working with you again this Fall.

Best Wishes,
Dr. Catherine Nolin

JOIN US!

Exciting opportunities

UNBC Geography will be hosting the
2021 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers

June 7-11, 2021

Hosted Virtually by UNBC Geography

Embracing connectivity: Coming together and moving forward

For more information: <https://www.cag-acg.ca/cag2021>

Interested in getting involved? Contact Stephanie Hellyer - Stephanie.Hellyer@unbc.ca

#CAG2021

Preliminary Schedule of Events

The preliminary schedule of events (draft and subject to change) is provided below.
All times are in Pacific Daylight Time.

Monday June 7

8:00am - 1:00pm Virtual Field Trips (details to follow)
2:00pm - 5:00pm Reception, Acknowledgement, Opening Remarks,
Keynote Lecture – [Dr. Laura Thomson](#), Department of Geography and Planning at
Queen's University – CRC in Integrated Glacier Monitoring Practices.

Tuesday June 8

8:00am – 3:00pm Paper and poster presentation sessions (details to follow)
3:30pm – 5:00pm Suzanne Mackenzie Lecture – [Dr. Beverley Mullings](#), Department of Geography and
Planning at Queen's University. "Beyond the dark side of resilience: Thinking through
racial capitalism, dispossession and Caribbean radical traditions."

Wednesday June 9

8:00am – 3:00pm Paper and poster presentation sessions (details to follow)
3:30pm – 5:00pm Inaugural CAG Lecture – [Dr. Tristan Pearce](#), University of Northern British Columbia –
CRC in Cumulative Impacts of Environmental Change.

Thursday June 10

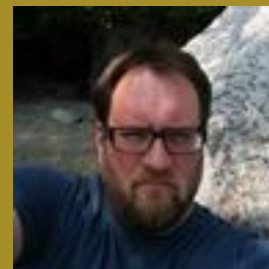
8:00am – 10:00am Paper and poster presentation sessions (details to follow)
10:30am – 12:00pm Past President's Address – [Dr. Sanjay Nepal](#), University of Waterloo
1:30pm – 3:30pm Annual General Meeting

Friday June 11

8:00am – 3:00pm Paper and poster presentation sessions (details to follow)
3:30pm – 4:00pm Closing Address

'Candidate Comments' from PhD NRES (Geography) Candidate

-Written by Glen Thielmann



In December 2017, I sat in on a NRES PhD dissertation defence at UNBC. Up until that day, I had thought of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies as a program about the natural sciences, about research that must be focused on technical matters related to biophysical phenomena that are generally beyond my ken. The particular defence I attended was focused, instead, on social, political, and cultural problems with a connection to place, and I saw an avenue there for my own interests and background as a high school Social Studies and Geography teacher and more recently as a teacher educator. Fast forward through some scheming, conversations, and applications to September 2019, and I was now a student in the NRES program.

The first year of NRES featured coursework on the philosophy of science and frameworks and critical considerations for conducting research (Dr. Bill McGill), interdisciplinarity in research design (Dr. Peter Jackson), and communication of research (Dr. Chris Johnson). Bill would often say “allow me to torment you with this question” when a particularly abstract problem was at hand. For from torment, I found the discussion and coursework to be exhilarating; I was making connections with prior knowledge and experience going back across my entire life, and opening up some new synaptic space that would prepare me for research. I also appreciated the diversity in voice and contribution from our cohort: six women and eight men; myself, a Canadian educator, but the rest from elsewhere, although some have been in Canada for some time. There were four from Iran (engineers), three from Nigeria (engineers), two from South America (geomatics and environmental management), two from the United States (wildlife biologists), and one each from Bangladesh (engineer) and China (hard to classify!). This was unlike any learning environment I had previously encountered, and will be remembered fondly. Dr. Roger Wheate, as the grad chair, was the ringmaster, and made us all feel welcome and dialed in to university life before the short interruption of job action and the lengthy pain in the arse presented by a global pandemic.

The research I plan to do will examine common problems of practice that are faced by place-based or place-responsive educators in British Columbia K-12 schools. Through these educator’s own stories, using a collaborative form of participatory inquiry, we will situate their work in the possibilities of place that exist in the educators themselves and the spaces or environments in which they live and work, and the potential that exists in place theory and notions of place that are activated by teachers.

From the start, I am so glad to have connected with Dr. Catherine Nolin as my supervisor. Catherine’s expertise in critical and community-based research methodologies, land-based knowledge systems, and advocacy for marginalized people in Guatemala and elsewhere show a commitment to transformative Geography education inside and outside of post-secondary; this is inspirational work for my learning and research.

My supervisory committee also includes three other people: Geography’s Dr. Gail Fondahl from UNBC Geography, Dr. Tina Fraser from UNBC Education, and Dr. Hilary Leighton from the Royal Roads University School of Environment and Sustainability. I have huge respect for the work being done by all four on social and ecological justice, their experience with grad students, their leadership roles within their various departments and fields, their deep understanding of how standpoint and narrative are used to build and test geographies in local and global contexts and generate powerful community narratives, and that in their own way they are each interested to see how place-responsive teaching and Geography education at all levels can help heal relationships between people, place, and land.

For students in Master's programs or other readers of this newsletter that do not already have a magic PhD ring, I would encourage you to take a closer look at the NRES PhD program and talk with Roger or others about how it all works. They take their mandate to foster interdisciplinary scholarship seriously, and the result is an inclusive space for diverse inquiry and connections with other curious minds, centered more or less around the reciprocal relationship between humans and their natural environment.

-MNRES (Geography) Student Annie Pumphrey-

Supervisor: Dr. Zoë Meletis

What was your undergraduate degree?

Bachelor of Arts in Political Sciences at the University of Alberta in 2015.

What brought you to your interest in grad work?

After my undergraduate degree, I knew that political sciences was not something I was passionate about. I had taken a course in Environmental Interpretation in my last year (for fun) and loved it so much that I applied for a job as an interpreter with Alberta Parks in Kananaskis Country, which solidified my interest in parks and protected areas. After over six years of working in Kananaskis, I became aware of a challenge in the park that needed addressing: human-wildlife conflict. Passionate about the park and the community, I decided to apply to graduate school to seek methods of improving human-wildlife management in the park.



Describe the focus of your research.

For my Master's project, I am researching “bear jams” in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park (Alberta). “Bear jams” are vehicle traffic jams resulting from when drivers stop or slow down on a road to engage in bear viewing. Some challenges associated with bear jams include potential vehicular collisions, habituation of bears, costs in terms of park resources required to address the jams, and the need for effective education and outreach to park visitors. I am investigating the human element of bear jams, looking at the perceptions of bear-viewing and related risks through expert interviews and an online survey. My project will add visitor data and expert perspectives, as well as patterns within and between these to inform a more balanced approach to bear jam management. The findings associated with this project will inform Park management, with the goal of reducing negative impacts of bear jams in the park.

What are some of your future 'hopes and dreams'?

I am interested in continuing my interests in parks and protected areas and environmental communication. Further exploring the field of human-wildlife conflict—either through academia or working with non-profit organizations or government—is a path I'd love to take. I hope to play a role in encouraging and inspiring people to become stewards of the land.

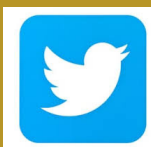
Advice for your undergraduate self? Future graduate students?

Follow your interests! If you see a course that you feel genuinely excited about taking—take it—even if it may not count for credit towards your degree or may not ‘fit’ into your program. My undergraduate degree was longer than usual, as I took quite a few courses that did not quite fit my degree, but in doing so realized what I was passionate about. Be curious, and don't be afraid to switch directions.

What you are looking forward to most in a post-COVID world?

I am looking forward to engaging with the community once more! I miss attending festivals, lectures, and community events. As someone who is new to Northern BC, I would love to be able to network and meet more people in the community, which is challenging in a COVID world.

Follow UNBC Geography:



Follow UNBC Geography Club:



UNBC UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA
Geography

-WDCAG 2020 (held at UNBC) Student Presentation Awards-

Congratulations to the following UNBC students who received awards at last year's WDCAG conference:

Oral Presentations:

Master's (co-winners) Megan Gordon "Achieving a just transition for forestry workers, families, and communities in northern British Columbia."

Aaron Larsen (co-winner) "Discovering old worlds: Conceptualizing space and place in the witch trials of Zug, Switzerland through archival source mapping."

PhD Winner- Kristen Kieta- "Determining sources of sediment in response to land cover change in the Nechako River Basin."

Honourable Mention (Master's):

Christopher Morgan
Georgia Betkus

Honourable Mention (Undergraduate):

Alysha Edwards, C.
Jordan Barrett

 A big congratulations to Dr. Gail Fondahl who received 
The William C. Wonders Award for Scholarly Distinction
in recognition of outstanding scholarly accomplishment in Geography.

**Congratulations to UNBC Students & Faculty who participated in
*WDCAG 2021 - Beyond 2020: Geographical Research During Crises***

Best Master's Paper Presentation:

Annie Pumphrey, and Zoë A. Meletis, "Who bears the brunt? An examination of 'bear jams' in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, Alberta"

UNBC student presenters include:

Paper Sessions:

Patrick Robinson, Che Elkin, and Scott Green, "High resolution wildfire fuel mapping using Aerial Laser Scanning (ALS) data"

Sylviana Peterson and Zoë A. Meletis, "Parking Colonialism: Considering adaptive co-management & sustainable tourism for Jasper National Park"

Richard Darko, "Economic restructuring in resource-dependent communities in the aftermath of mill/mine closure"

Erin Nevison, "Barriers to the electrification of passenger vehicles: A case study on the City of Kamloops"

Jessica E. Froese and Zoë A. Meletis, "Living the sweet life: Exploring the political economy of Canadian maple syrup"

Benjamin Hagerty and Zoe A Meletis, "A wallaby, four turtles, and a superhero: How children of the 1990s learned about recycling"

Poster Sessions:

Liam D'Aurizio, "Indigenous conflicts surrounding British Columbian fish farming" Watch Poster Presentation:
<https://youtu.be/KNxWHVfMsZs>

Amy Abdel-Malak and Zoë A. Meletis, "Whale of a challenge: Aiming for sustainability while dealing with COVID-19 impacts on tourism" <https://youtu.be/aX9-Wl2vcXE>

Spring 2021

GEOG 101-A1
Planet Earth



Mondays and Wednesdays 9:00am-9:50am
Online
Hybrid of asynchronous & synchronous
Instructor: Stephanie Powell-Hellyer
Email: Stephanie.Hellyer@unbc.ca



Spring 2021

GEOG 203- A1
Canada: Places, Cultures & Identities



Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00am-9:50am
Online
Hybrid of asynchronous & synchronous
Instructor: Stephanie Powell-Hellyer
Email: Stephanie.Hellyer@unbc.ca



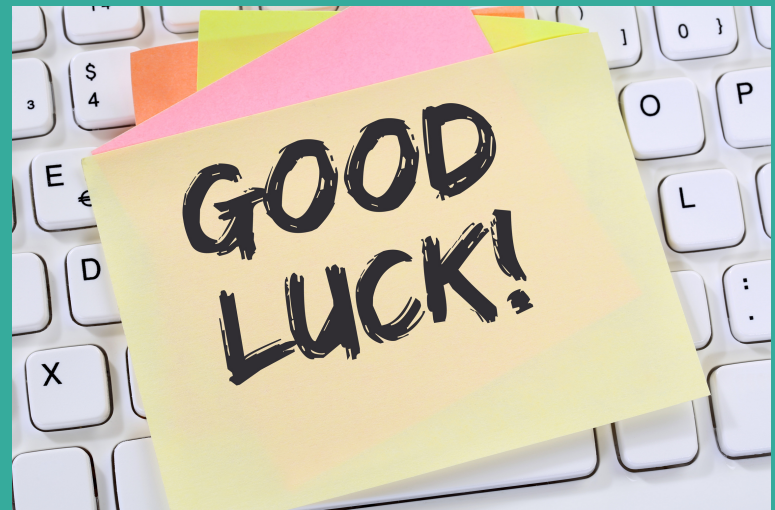
Spring 2021

GEOG 220-A1
World Regions: Latin America & the Caribbean



Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00pm -3:50pm
Online/synchronous

Instructor: Dr. Nathan Einbinder
Email: Nathan.Einbinder@unbc.ca



Good luck on final exams!

-Important Dates-

Last day of classes

19 April 2021

Exams

22 -30 April 2021

First Day of Spring Semester

10 May 2021

CAG Annual Meeting

7 - 11 June 2021

UNBC Geography will host the annual meeting & conference for the Canadian Association of Geographers. Registration for students who are members of CAG is \$25 (student non-CAG members \$75) and includes access to paper and poster presentations, special lectures and virtual field trips. [Register here.](#)