

# **Alaska Studies**

## **Proposed Course Title:**

Alaska Studies

## **Course Description:**

Alaska Studies is an in-depth exploration of the rich geographic and cultural background of the State and its people from the early Native peoples to the Russian era through Statehood to the present. This course will include examination of the physical geography, Native cultures, the political spectrum, and economic forces that have shaped contemporary Alaska. Alaska's role in the modern world and Pacific Rim will be examined.

## **Course Goals:**

Through this course students will:

1. Understand the physical and cultural geography of Alaska.
2. Identify and locate important physical and cultural features in Alaska.
3. Understand the governmental and political system of Alaska, past and present.
4. Understand the economic forces that guide the Alaskan economy, past and present.
5. Understand and describe the uniqueness of Alaskan Native cultures.
6. Develop an understanding and awareness of the Alaska Native Land Claims settlement.
7. Understand and compare domestic (tribal, economic, political, cultural, etc.) and global pressures on the state.
8. Discuss the issues of subsistence and the use of state resources.
9. Understand the significance of the relationships of Alaska to Pacific Rim nations (economic, educational, political, resources, etc.).

10. Develop an awareness of the locational importance of Alaska to the political and economic security of the United States.

**Course Objectives:**

The student will:

- A. Identify the absolute and relative locations of Alaska and its neighbors and selected locations within the state.
- B. Identify and describe physical and cultural (including political and economic geography) characteristics of Alaska.
- C. Identify and locate major physical (including climate) and cultural locations and regions within Alaska.
- D. Identify and describe examples of human/environment relationships existing within Alaska.
- E. Describe the impact of various forms of communication and transportation technology upon Alaska over time
- F. Describe Alaskan politics and issues that unify/divide the state. (e.g., state versus tribal/ethnic loyalties, rural/urban issues, subsistence issues, resource development, environmental protection, etc.
- G. Identify and describe the economic forces that Alaska depends on for economic survival (e.g. Permanent Fund, natural resources).
- H. Identify and appreciate the cultural diversity of Alaska's population
- I. Explain the differing roles that State and local governments have in servicing Alaska's population.
- J. Describe important historical, political, and economics factors that helped Alaska to become part of the United States.
- K. Explain the history, the politics and the ongoing issues related to the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement.
- L. Describe the role of Alaska on the Pacific Rim (economic, tourism, natural resources, investment, education, geographical-global position, etc.).

- M. Explain the role of global economics and how it affects the Alaskan economy.
- N. Explain the importance of the United States military to Alaska and the security of the United States.
- O. Identify and describe environmental issues that are being debated in Alaska and explain differing viewpoints on these issues (commercial fishing, natural resource development- oil, timber, mining, commercial development, subsistence use of the land, public vs. private ownership of land, whaling, etc.).
- P. Compare and contrast the geography of Alaska as it relates to the geography of the Pacific Rim (physical, cultural, political, climatic).
- N. Identify and describe the treaties, national and state laws that involve Alaska's economic development in relation to the Pacific Rim (1) fishing : IFQ's, Canadian issues, international quotas, methods of catching fish (2) Native subsistence - whaling, hunting (3) environment

**Course Outline:**

- I. Introduction to Alaska Studies
  - A. What is Alaska Studies?
  - B. Physical and cultural geography of Alaska
    - 1. Location
    - 2. Place characteristics (physical and cultural)
    - 3. Human/environment relationships
    - 4. Movement (physical and cultural)
    - 5. Regions (physical and cultural)
- II. Native Americans of Alaska
  - A. Migrations
  - B. Athabascans
  - C. Eskimos
  - D. Aleut
  - E. Tlingit
  - F. Haida
  - G. Tsimpshian
- III. Exploration and Colonization
  - A. Spanish, French, British

- B. Russian
- C. United States

IV. United States period

- A. Whaling
- B. Military Occupation
- C. Prospectors and Explorers
- D. Missions and Schools
- E. Exploration : gold, fur, fish, copper, coal, etc.
- F. Territorial Government
- G. Railroads
- H. Alaska Highway
- I. W.W.II
- J. Post War Period

V. Statehood

- A. Alaska since Statehood
- B. Role of government
  - 1. Role of local government and state government
  - 2. Revenue
  - 3. Military and security of the United States
  - 4. Funding development
- C. Economic issues and arguments
  - 1. Fisheries: International treaties/IFQs/Canadian concerns
  - 2. Oil
  - 3. Mining
  - 4. Forests /timber
  - 5. Environmental
  - 6. Subsistence vs. Urban use of resources
  - 7. Native resource use: Whaling, hunting, fishing
  - 8. Public land disposal and development
  - 9. Tourism
  - 10. Permanent Fund
  - 11. Other
- D. Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement (ANLCS)
  - 1. Revising the settlement
  - 2. Ongoing concerns
- E. Alaska and the Pacific Rim
  - 1. Natural Resources
  - 2. Educational
  - 3. Economic
  - 4. Political
  - 5. Cultural

F. Pressures on the State

1. Domestic
2. Regional
3. Global