THE RACE TO THE SOUTH POLE
COURSE OUTLINE

- Wk 1 – Introduction
  - Course Outline
  - Suggested Reading
  - Antarctica and the South Pole – A quick introduction
  - Setting the Stage – Antarctica before the Race
COURSE OUTLINE

- Wk 1 – Introduction
- Wk 2 – Belgica
  Roald Amundsen’s Antarctic Apprenticeship
COURSE OUTLINE

- Wk 1 – Introduction
- Wk 2 – Belgica
- Wk 3 – Discovery

Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Shackleton, enter the Scene
COURSE OUTLINE

- Wk 1 – Introduction
- Wk 2 – Belgica
- Wk 3 – Discovery
- Wk 4 – Nimrod

Shackleton returns and finds the way; almost takes the prize
Wks 5-7 – *Fram*, Terra Nova

Scott and Amundsen return; the race is on, then won and lost
COURSE OUTLINE

- Wks 5-7 – Fram, Terra Nova
- Wk 8 – Endurance

Shackleton again. The prize of the pole gone, he attempts the “Last Great Journey”
SUGGESTED READING

- BIOGRAPHIES
- EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS
  - Secondary
  - Primary
- MULTI-EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS
ANTARCTICA – WHERE?

At the “bottom” of the map
ANTARCTICA – WHERE?

At the “bottom” of the globe
ANTARCTICA – WHERE?

At the center of the Southern Hemisphere
ANTARCTICA – WHERE?

Surrounded by water

. . . and almost entirely within the Antarctic Circle
ANTARCTICA – HOW BIG?

The sixth largest continent -- Larger than Australia, smaller than the rest
THE SOUTH POLE: Where?

- 90 degrees south
- 9300’ elevation
- 800 Miles from nearest open water
THE SOUTH POLE: What’s it like?

Nearest visible land: Several hundred miles away
THE SOUTH POLE: What’s it like?

Nearest visible land: Several hundred miles away

At pole, sastrugi dot the landscape
THE SOUTH POLE: What's it like?

No natural flora, fauna

Minimal precipitation
THE SOUTH POLE: What’s it like?

The ultimate long day and night:

Sun rises once a year: ~ Sept 21

Sun sets once a year: ~ Mar 21
THE SOUTH POLE: What’s it like?

IT’S COLD!

Jan (summer)
ave high = -15

June (winter)
ave high = -72

Annual
ave = -58
SETTING THE STAGE

Antarctic Exploration
Before the Race
A massive, purely theoretical, continent extends northward from the far south.
James Cook Seeks the Truth

1772-1775

The first serious search for the Southern Continent
Cook’s Voyage

Circumnavigation track
Cook’s Summation

“That there may be a Continent or large tract of land near the Pole, I will not deny... Lands doomed by nature to everlasting frigidness and never once to feel the warmth of the Sun's rays, whose horrible and savage aspect I have no words to describe...”
Feb 1819, William Smith discovers the South Shetland Islands
So close to the tip of the Peninsula that on a clear day, one can see the Antarctic continent
THE CONTINENT SEEN

Explorers follow, the first since Cook

The British -- Bransfield to the South Shetlands
THE CONTINENT SEEN

And the Russians – Bellingshausen following in the wake of Cook
THE FIRST SIGHTING
JAN 27, 1820

Bellingshausen’s Track

Coast of East Antarctica
And the sealers come, eager to claim the fur seals on the South Shetland beaches Smith had discovered.
INCIDENTAL DISCOVERIES

The Sealers, too, make discoveries. And land on the Antarctic Peninsula, the first men to set foot on the continent.
A NEW FARTHEST SOUTH

1823
James Weddell pushes southward in the Weddell Sea to a new record south
Closing in on the Possible Extent of a Southern Continent

-- As of 1823

Southernmost reach of Cook, Bellingshausen, and the sealers
“I gave the land the name of the Antarctic Continent. . .”
James Clark Ross – 1840-43
Ross Heads South

“. . . Impressed with the feeling that England had ever led the way of discovery in the southern as well as in the northern regions . . .”
Into the Pack Ice . . .
Into a New Sea . . .
A New Land
Victoria Land Named, Claimed
Penguins – Adelies and Emperors
Southward, Exploring
A Smoking Volcano . . .
“an obstruction of such a character . . . we might with equal chance of success try to sail through the Cliffs of Dover, as penetrate such a mass”
... and a New Wonder
Eastward, Exploring
LOCATE OF THE RACE TO THE POLE FOUND AND NAMED BY/FOR ROSS
By 1894 – The Continent closely Encircled
By 1894 – The Continent closely Encircled

But the interior still unknown
Jan 25, 1895, A Historic Landing

Cape Adare
“. . . the exploration of the Antarctic Regions is the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken. . . . the Congress recommends that the scientific societies throughout the world should urge, in whatever way seems to them most effective, that this work should be undertaken before the close of the century.”
NEXT WEEK

Roald Amundsen
The First on the Scene

His Polar Apprenticeship
The Looming Iceberg: The Size of Delaware