



Blue Box Seminar Series

Department of Geography

PRESENTS:

**Thursday, November 10th, 2022
3-4pm SN2025**

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Storms, Seas, Sensitivity, Sustainability: Coastal Newfoundland 2022

'Fiona' is the most recent of numerous tropical, extratropical, and mid-latitude cyclones to impact the coast of insular Newfoundland since 1775. Coastal hazards, including erosion involving removal of material, high waves and storm surges, and relative sea level rise, vary in significance and severity with location. Assessment of exposure, sensitivity, and vulnerability of Newfoundland communities requires consideration of each of these components separately. Emphasis on relative sea level rise, which is less important for Newfoundland, can obscure local and regional issues involving both incremental progressive erosion and individual storm surge events.

Adaptation intended to reduce sensitivity and increase sustainability has been an issue for community leaders since the story of Knut, ca. 1000 years ago. People may believe that hazards are unknowable, unpredictable, capricious events, but may simultaneously believe that "responsible" humans (including academics) should be more capable of controlling both occurrences and consequences. In this environment, undue emphasis on criticism and twillick-labelling is not productive. Along Newfoundland shores, successful adaptation requires assessment of coastal processes, recognition of changes in human utilization of the shore, a sense of place, and respect for both communities and ocean. Keep looking seaward!