

SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL SOCIETY

SOC 241, Section 001

Spring 2018

M/W 1:30-2:45 pm, Winston, Room 004

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Office: 1911 Building, Office 314
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 pm and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This course examines the changing conditions in rural America, focused on what makes rural areas structurally, culturally, and politically distinct. We pay particular attention to economic conditions and transformations in agriculture. Other topics include biotechnology, extractive industries, environmental issues, and inequality.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the current structure of agriculture and rural society
2. Apply sociological theories and methods to problems facing rural communities
3. Analyze the relationship between rural development and patterns of inequality

This course fulfills 3 credit hours in the Social Sciences General Education Program (GEP). Each course in the Social Sciences category will provide instruction and guidance that help students to:

1. Examine at least one of the following: human behavior, culture, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes
2. Demonstrate how social scientific methods may be applied to the study of human behavior, culture, mental processes, organizational processes, or institutional processes
3. Use theories or concepts of the social sciences to analyze and explain theoretical and/or real-world problems, including the underlying origins of such problems

REQUIRED READINGS

The only required purchase is *Worlds Apart*. All other readings are available online.

1. Brown & Schafft. 2011. *Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation*
2. Carolan. 2016. *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture, 2nd Ed.*
3. Duncan. 2014. *Worlds Apart: Poverty and Politics in Rural America, 2nd Edition.*

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- 1. Attendance & Preparation:** Students ability to succeed in this course depends on attendance, preparedness, and participation. I will take attendance each class period using a sign-in sheet, which you are responsible for signing. Moodle will be used to keep track of your attendance including excused and unexcused absences; students are responsible for

notifying me if there are any mistakes in your attendance on Moodle. Excessive absences will negatively affect your grade and potentially result in failing the course.

Students should expect to spend 2-3 hours outside of class each week on course readings and assignments. This preparation is crucial for productive class discussions and developing a deeper sociological understanding of society.

- 2. Discussions & Classroom Respect:** Discussions will be a large component of this course. Students are expected to engage respectfully with their classmates and instructor. Expressing opposing viewpoints is encouraged and crucial for productive discussion, but disagreements should be conducted in a professional manner.
- 3. Email & Electronic Communication:** If you email me, please allow at least 24 hours for a response. Be sure to check your email and Moodle regularly for class updates, announcements, assignments, etc.

TESTS & ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Attendance (5%):** Each unexcused absence will result in a one-point deduction from your final grade, up to five total points. This means that if you miss five classes, you will not receive any credit for attendance – however, you will not be penalized for additional absences beyond the first five.¹ If you are late to class, you will only receive half credit for the day's attendance grade. Excused absences require documentation, and should be reported to the instructor as soon as possible. Documentation for unanticipated absences must be reported no more than one week after the return to class. University policy on excused absences can be found at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03>.
- 2. Homework & Participation (20%):** Course participation (10%) will be assessed using in-class activities and assignments, including small group activities, informal writing and presentations, and reading quizzes. Participation activities missed due to absences cannot be made up. Homework (10%) will be assigned throughout the semester and will include:
 - *Current Topics in Rural America:* Each week, a student will be responsible for finding an article and leading a discussion (around 10-15 minutes) about a current topic in rural America. See Moodle for more information, including potential online news sources.
- 3. Final Research Project (30%):** The final project for this course will explore a rural community or issue. The format of this project is flexible, and students are encouraged to incorporate original research and employ creative presentation methods. Additional details, including project suggestions, will be posted on Moodle within the first few weeks of class.
- 4. Exams (45%):** There will be three in class exams, consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. Exams are cumulative, but will focus on material covered during the preceding unit. Exams will cover material from the readings, class discussions, and lectures (Note that we may not discuss every reading in class, and lectures may include topics not addressed in the readings).

¹ However, each student may take one unexcused “self-care” day without penalty. No documentation or explanation is required, but I do need to be notified within 48 hours of the missed class that you are using your self-care day.

In the case of excused absences, students may take an exam early. *Make-up exams will not be offered after the exam date.* In the case of unanticipated excused absences, grades from the remaining exams will be averaged.

COURSE EVALUATION & GRADING POLICIES

Assignment	Percent
Attendance	5%
HW & Participation	20%
Final Project	30%
Exams (3)	45%
100%	

Grading Scale									
97-100%	A+	87-89.99%	B+	77-79.99%	C+	67-69.99%	D+	0-59.99%	F
93-96.99%	A	83-86.99%	B	73-76.99%	C	63-66.99%	D		
90-92.99%	A-	80-82.99%	B-	70-72.99%	C-	60-62.99%	D-		

- 1. Late Assignments & Extra Credit Policy:** Late work will not be accepted, except in the case of excused absences or documented emergencies. I must be notified no later than 48 hours after the assignment or exam is missed. No extra credit will be offered in this course.

OTHER POLICIES

1. **Academic Integrity:** By submitting assignments, you are agreeing to abide by the University's Academic Integrity policy. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, fabrication or falsification of information, and assisting others to commit academic misconduct. The minimum penalty for a student found guilty of academic misconduct will be a zero on the assignment and the incident may be reported to Student Conduct for academic dishonesty. For more information, please see the [Code of Student Conduct policy \(NCSU POL11.35.1\)](#).
2. **Students with Other Needs:** Please notify me immediately if you have a disability so that we can plan accordingly. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with the Disability Services Office at Suite 2221, Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the [Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation \(REG02.20.01\)](#).
3. **Religious Holidays:** Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me to discuss appropriate accommodations.
4. **Electronic Course Component:** [Moodle](#) will be used as learning management system for this course, including course communication, discussions, readings, and grades. See [Online Course Material Host Requirements \(NCSU REG08.00.01\)](#)

Students may be required to disclose personally identifiable information to other students in the course, via electronic tools like email or web-postings, where relevant to the course. Examples include online discussions of class topics, and posting of student coursework. All students are expected to respect the privacy of each other by not sharing or using such information outside the course.
5. **N.C. State Policies, Regulations, and Rules (PRR):** Students are responsible for reviewing the NC State University PRR's which pertains to their course rights and responsibilities:
 - Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy Statement: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-04-25-05%20> with additional references at <https://oied.ncsu.edu/equity/policies/>
 - Code of Student Conduct: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>
 - Grades and Grade Point Average: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-50-03>
 - Credit-Only Courses: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-15>
 - Audits: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-04>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Course schedule is subject to change with appropriate notification to students. Please read material in the listed order and pay attention to page numbers. [T] refers to the textbook *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture* (Carolan 2016). All other readings can be found on Moodle. *Readings should be completed before class on the day they are listed on the syllabus.*

Date	Topic, Assignments & Readings
WEEK 1	
Introduction to Course & Rural Sociology	
Monday, January 8	<i>Course Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus
Wednesday, January 10	<i>Thinking about Rural Places</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown & Schafft. 2011. Ch. 1: “Rurality in Metropolitan Society” Brown & Schafft. 2011. Ch. 2: “Urbanization and Population Redistribution”
WEEK 2	
Community in Rural Society	
Monday, January 15	**HOLIDAY: MLK Day**
Wednesday, January 17	<i>Theorizing Community</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown & Schafft. 2011. Ch. 3: “Understanding Community in Rural Society”
WEEK 3	
The Structure of Agriculture & Power in the Food System	
Monday, January 22	<i>The Changing Structure of Agriculture</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carolan. 2016. Ch. 1: “The Changing Structure of Agriculture”
Wednesday, January 24	<i>Economic Concentration and Power in the Food System</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hendrickson, Howard, and Constance. 2017. “Power, Food and Agriculture,” Pp. 1-31
WEEK 4	
Agricultural Technology & Labor	
Monday, January 29	<i>Science & Agricultural Technology</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pechlaner. 2010. “Biotech on the Farm”
Wednesday, January 31	<i>Community & Labor</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carolan. 2016. Ch. 5: “Community, Labor, and Peasantries,” Pp. 105–123
WEEK 5	
The World According to Monsanto	
Monday, February 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class Video: <i>Food Chains</i> (2014)

Wednesday, March 28	<p><i>Working in Rural Communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown & Schafft. 2011. Ch. 8: “Making a Living in Rural Communities”
WEEK 13 Rural Poverty	
Monday, April 2	<p><i>Worlds Apart: Rural Poverty in Three Communities</i></p> <p>Note: You are only responsible for reading <i>one</i> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan. 2014. Ch. 1: “Blackwell” • Duncan. 2014. Ch. 2: “Dahlia”
Wednesday, April 4	<p><i>Worlds Apart: Rural Poverty in Three Communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan. 2014. Ch. 3: “Gray Mountain” • Duncan. 2014. Ch. 4: “Social Change and Social Policy”
WEEK 14 Race & Ethnicity	
Monday, April 9	<p><i>Rural Minority Communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown & Schafft. 2011. Ch. 7: “Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Rural Areas”
Wednesday, April 11	<p><i>New Immigrant Destinations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marrow. 2009. “New Immigrant Destinations and the American Colour Line”
WEEK 15 Gender & Family	
Monday, April 16	<p><i>Men & Women in Rural Society</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struthers. 2014. “Gender and the Status of Rural Women” • Sherman. 2009. “Bending to Avoid Breaking”
Wednesday, April 18	<p><i>Masculinity & Transgender Men</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abelson. 2016. ““You Aren't from around Here””
WEEK 16 Politics in Rural America	
Monday, April 23	<i>Project Presentations</i>
Wednesday, April 25	<i>Project Presentations</i>
WEEK 17 Finals Week	
Monday, April 30 1:00 – 4:00 pm	Final Exam