Rural Sociology 7550
Rural Community Development in Theory and Practice

Spring 2013 … 382 Kottman Hall … Thursdays 5:30-8:25

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Course description
This is a graduate seminar that will focus on
- contemporary community development issues and social change (primarily in the US)
- an overview of classic sociological theories of rural community development
- citizen action strategies to promote community development and address local problems
- demographic, economic, political and environmental issues that differ across space and present both challenges and opportunities for place-based community development

Readings and organization of the course are designed with three goals in mind:
- acquire analytical and theoretical tools for understanding community development and citizen participation in both directed and unanticipated change
- advance understanding of the complexity and diversity of rural life, rural social problems, rural economies and politics, and proposed solutions (development strategies), primarily in the U.S.
- compare some techniques for community development used in the U.S. and in the international policy arena

Some questions we will address include: What are Arurality” and “community”? What is civil society? Social capital? Participatory development? Community development? What forms does it take in the US and internationally? What are some of the major issues confronting rural places today?

This course will be based on a partnership between the instructor and students. Students will assume responsibility for contributing to and directing many class discussions and will propose topics to be explored in several classes.

Grading and Requirements
- participate actively in class discussions, workshops, group presentations, come to class with written “comments” and be prepared to ask questions and to discuss readings - 50%
- prepare 5 short analytical papers (Thought Pieces) based on course materials - 50%

Note: We meet only once a week and only 14 times during the semester; if you must miss class, then you may be asked to meet with the instructor to discuss your understanding of the subject matter that you missed or to propose an alternative way of making up a missed discussion.

Required Readings:
J. Allen & D. Dillman. *Against All Odds*. 1994. (*I have enough copies to lend one to every class member and will hand them out at our first meeting.*) WE WILL DISCUSS THIS BOOK DURING WEEK 2.
Flora, Cornelia Butler and Jan L. Flora. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, 4th or 3rd editions preferred but 2nd edition okay (chapter order will vary across editions and some content has
been updated). Westview, 4th edition is 2012; 3rd edition is 2008 & 2nd edition is 2004 (8 copies of 3rd edition and 3 copies of 2nd edition are on reserve at FAES Library and each can be checked out for 7 days). I have posted Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6 from the 3rd edition to our Carmen “content” page.

“Electronic coursepack” of required readings—some book chapters and a few articles are posted to our Carmen “content” page but most articles can be downloaded through the Library’s online journal service. If you have any difficulty with the site, check with the Library. If that fails to solve the problem, notify me immediately so I can check on the problem.

Note: for those unfamiliar with the three basic perspectives in sociology—functionalism (also known as structural functionalism), conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism—I have posted very short (4 pg.) summary on the Carmen “content” page.

Recommended books: on reserve at FAES Library
L. Reese & R. Rosenfeld. The Civic Culture of Local Economic Development. Sage, 2002. [case studies of leadership and community development strategies in Ohio and Michigan communities, including Coshocton]
Shuman, Michael. Going Local: Creating Self-reliant Communities in a Global Age. Routledge, 2000. [book is directed to planners, elected officials, public employees, and members of citizen groups; prioritizes self reliance over globalization]

“Want to read more?” The readings under this heading are there for students who really do want to explore the day’s topic more or for whom the subject matter is of broader interest. There is NO requirement that you read any of them unless I indicate on the syllabus that you should choose one to read. They represent an opportunity to bolster your participation grade: students may volunteer to abstract and evaluate any article and can post this to Carmen. This will count toward your participation grade in the course; useful if you don’t feel comfortable speaking out in class. Length recommended for abstracting and evaluation an article is 1 – 1½ pp. single spaced. Be sure to put your name on it.

Analytical/position papers, also known as “Thought Pieces”:
There are 5 paper assignments spread out over the semester. Assignments 1-4 are designed to provide you with an opportunity to explore an issue or a set of readings more in depth than was possible during class discussion. For these assignments you will want to focus on an analysis of concepts or issues as presented in course materials and discussions. For example, where do you see strengths and weaknesses? Are there contradictions across materials? Are there ways to fit articles from different weeks together to address an issue that interests you? These are just some ideas for what you can do. You can refer to outside sources as long as 60% or more of the paper focuses on course materials and discussions. The 5th assignment is “open.” You may write about any issue relevant to rural community development issues. In the past, some students have chosen to write about an on-going related research project; others have written about materials used for their student presentation; others have written about assigned or recommended course materials; and some focus on relevant issues and how community development and participation differ outside the US and Canada.

In the interest of conservation, all papers should be single spaced or space and a half with a font the size of Times Roman 11 or 12. Please keep margins down to 1 inch or less all around. Just put your name and title on it; you don’t need to put my name, the course number, or anything else. No separate page for title. Essays will be approximately 1200-1300 words in length without counting
the references listed. The word count should be included at the end of the paper. These suggested lengths should be sufficient to allow you develop some breadth and depth for your ideas. Equivalent lengths across student papers support fairness in the grading process.

Grading is based on clarity, logic, strength of arguments and analysis, and relevance of the essay to the course materials and/or discussions. Since disciplines of study vary among students so will style of writing, interests, and style of analysis, and I will take this into account in the interest of fairness. It helps if your paper is interesting and thought provoking and “flows” from beginning to end! Give your essay a title that fits its focus. Write in a style relevant to your discipline and use consistent reference formatting for any non-course materials. You need not list the entire reference for course materials used--just put author name and part of the title. Be sure to cite page numbers whenever you are discussing an idea from your sources. Correct grammar and spelling are a must!

**Participation**

Participation includes involvement in class discussion, in-class workshops and panels; leading a class discussion; posting discussion questions or comments on a reading to Carmen; contributing summaries of “want to read more?” readings to Carmen; and sharing relevant news items and announcements by posting on our Carmen site and/or announcing in class.

**NOTE:** I reserve the right to call on students randomly to facilitate fairness in participation opportunities for class discussion.

**Comments:** Each student should bring to class a question or comment on the day’s subject matter. The idea is to come prepared to initiate discussion on an issue in the readings that peaks your interest or that you believe we should discuss as a group in order to clarify. Your comments and questions will help us keep discussion going along smoothly. Please bring and hand in after class your question/comment during Weeks 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 [you will get credit for handing it in] or post it to Carmen 24 hours before class. No more than 100 words; this should be enough to make your ideas clear. I won’t grade them, but I will read them after class. They will help me to understand how each class member is processing the material, what seems to be of greatest interest or problematic, and will help me reflect on the outcomes of the discussion that took place.

**Group presentations:** The last four classes (barring a snow day) are “open.” Class members will nominate and vote on topics to be discussed those days. I will prepare a list of possible topics early in the semester; so far these include conflict over extractive industries (i.e., fracking); participatory management of ecosystems (i.e., watersheds, forests); local food systems and community farming; the “Third World in the First World” (i.e., Appalachia; Native American reservations); climate change; how concepts of community development and participation differ between the US (with its particular political system) and other parts of the world; etc. I will look at suggested topics on your student information sheets and will request nominations of additional topics for us to consider and vote on. Once we have selected 4, then class members will request assignment to specific group topics. Group members will be responsible for selecting readings to share with the class and for organizing the presentation and conducting any interactive activities or showing film clips in class.

Please note that participation is 50% of your grade and attendance is absolutely essential to class dynamics. If you have an emergency, you should contact me immediately. If you need to be away for a conference or have other types of conflict, please discuss this with me so we can work something out.

**Carmen:** You are invited to post to Carmen comments, questions, news items, and anything related to the course subject matter. I will open “discussion sites” for this purpose. To be useful to the class discussion, discussion points and questions or comments that are meant to contribute to a specific class discussion would need to be posted for others to read at least 24 hours before that class begins. Everyone is welcome to post additional comments and ideas after a class discussion (a type of
“have the last word”). Be assured that I will read every posting with great interest. And they count toward class participation.

**Policies:**
All deadlines should be met and no late papers will be accepted unless we have agreed on this beforehand. If an emergency comes up, please notify me immediately.

Any plagiarism on written assignments will result in referral to the proper university authorities--no exceptions. The university’s new policy is to give an F in the course if plagiarism is proven on even just one assignment. So cite carefully.

Any student who has special needs should let me know and may wish to seek the assistance of Disability Services at 150 Pomerene Hall.

**Possible Snow Day:** If any class is cancelled because of weather or other emergency, we will simply move all remaining topics to the following week. We have 4 class meetings to schedule student-led discussions of student-selected topics. If necessary, the first of these would be used to make up for the snow day.

**Munchies**
Our class runs from 5:30-8:25. We will take a 7-8 min. break at the halfway point so that we can build our own “bonding capital” (see Flora and Flora book for definition). I will bring hot water and fixings for coffee, tea and cocoa about 15 minutes before class begins so we all can “warm up.” Students can take turns bringing snacks (“munchies”) to eat before class begins and/or during break. Individual students should feel free to bring their own food if you have special nutritional requirements. And munchies should be simple things—cheese and crackers, carrots and celery with dip, cut pieces of fruit and crackers, cookies, etc. Munchies and a hot beverage provide us with an opportunity to refresh and “energize” given the evening class time.

*I don’t mind setting up the beverage service at the start of class, but I do expect you to take turns with clean up!!*

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

@ indicates the reading is on electronic reserve (posted to Carmen “content” page)

### Week 1, Jan 10: What is the significance of rurality?

**Shared readings:**
@ Floras’ Chapters on “Rural landscape and importance of place” and “Cultural capital and legacy” (posted on Carmen)

**Want to read more?**


**Week 2, Jan 17: Allen & Dillman’s Against All Odds: Rural Community in the Information Age**

Don’t forget to bring your comment/question

Munchies______________________________________________________

**Shared reading:** We will discuss the book which is a snapshot of rural life in “Bremer” (real name: St. John, Washington  http://www.stjohnwa.com/)

@ Strongly recommend that you take a look at the Floras’ Chapter on “Social capital and community” (posted to Carmen)

**Week 3, Jan 24: “Community” and “Community development”: some classics**

Don’t forget to bring your comment/question

Munchies______________________________________________________

**Shared readings:**

@Review Floras’ Chapter on “Social capital and community” (assigned Wk. 2)

**COMMUNITY:**

Wilkinson, Kenneth. “In search of community in the changing countryside.” Rural Sociology 51, 1, 1986:1-17. [scan to get a sense of the classic approach]


**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**


**Want to read more?**

Floras’ Chapters on “Political capital” and “Governance/Governments” (on reserve at FAES library)


Copp, James. “Rural sociology and rural development.” Rural Sociology 37, 4, 1972:515-33. [a real classic!]


Shaw, Mae. “Stuck in the middle? Community development, community engagement and the dangerous business of learning for democracy.” Community Development Journal 46, S2, 2011:128-46. [excellent analysis with a focus on the UK; still relevant to US]

Influential readings on social capital:
Coleman, James. “Social capital in the creation of human capital.” American Journal of Sociology 94, 3, 1988:S95-S120. [a classic in the field]
Putnam, Robert D. “Bowling alone: America's declining social capital.” Journal of Democracy 6, 1, 1995: 65-78. [another classic, often used to discuss individualism and declining sense of community in the US]

Week 4, Jan 31: Case studies of economic development strategies
Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 1 DUE TODAY
Comment/question optional, not required for today
Munchies

Shared readings:
Floras’ book: Chapter on “Financial Capital”
Read the set you are assigned:

SET 1

SET 2

Want to read more?


**Week 5, Feb 7: Case studies of “post-modern” approaches to community development**

Don’t forget to bring your comment/question

Munchies

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**Shared readings:**


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**Want to read more?**

Floras’ book: Chapters on “Built Capital” and “Natural Capital”

Brandth, Berit and Marit Haugen. “Farm diversification into tourism—Implications for social identity?” Journal of Rural Studies 27, 2011:35-44. [focuses on European farmer experiences]

Daniels, Tom. “What does ‘smart growth’ mean for community development?” Journal of the Community Development Society 32, 1, 2001:20-34. [about strategy to constrain housing sprawl into rural areas]

Wilson, Lisa. “Riding the resource roller coaster: Understanding socioeconomic differences between mining communities.” Rural Sociology 69, 2, 2004:261-81. [on need to pay close attention to context of mining and type of resource to clarify impacts]

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**Week 6, Feb 14: Case studies that emphasize place/location, spatiality, and regionalism**

HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY! Don’t forget to bring your comment/question

Munchies

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**Shared readings:**


Choose to read Larsen OR Floysand/Jakobsen OR Tauxe below to read for class discussion too

**Want to read more?**

Floras’ book: Chapter on “Natural Capital”

Larsen, Soren. “Place making, grassroots organizing, and rural protest: A case study of Anahim Lake, British Columbia.” Journal of Rural Studies 24, 2, 2008: 172-81. [using sense of place to rally insiders against outside forces and pressures; includes indigenous/native group politics]


Tauxe, Caroline. “Heartland community: Economic restructuring and the management of small town identity in the central U.S.” Identities 5, 3, 1998:335-377. [two similar towns compete with each other as part of their regional identity-building]

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**Week 7, Feb 21: Case studies that reveal diversity, class/racial/gender stratification, and tensions**

Don’t forget to bring your comment/question

Munchies

Video: Hawa’s Dinner Party

**Shared readings:**


**Want to read more?**

Floras’ book: Chapter on “Cultural Capital and Legacy” [stratification and conflict in rural areas]
@Duncan, Cynthia. “Social capital in America’s poor rural communities.” Chapter 3 (pp. 60-86 in S. Saegert et al, eds. Social Capital and Poor Communities. Russell Sage Foundation, 2001. [from a study of 3 impoverished rural regions in US]

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**Week 8, Feb 28: Big box stores in rural places: what’s all the fuss about?**

**Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2 DUE TODAY**
Comment/question optional, not required today

Munchies

Film: Store Wars: When Walmart Comes to Town

**Shared readings:**

Floras’ book: Chapter on “Consumption in Rural America”


Want to read more?


Week 9, Mar 7: Success and failure of collaborations in CD: case studies

Today we will finalize group topics and assignments

Don’t forget to bring your comment/question

Munchies

Shared readings:


Want to read more?

Zimmerman, Julie. “Mediated knowledge: Reexamining six classic community studies from a woman’s point of view.” Rural Sociology 76, 2, 2011:141-66. [excellent review of how stereotypes and bias influenced findings of a large-scale study of community stability/instability; did you know that rural communities could be classified as unstable if women held leadership roles instead of being homemakers?]

Margerum, Richard. “Overcoming locally based collaboration constraints.” Society and Natural Resources 20:135-152. [overcoming 5 constraints for locally based collaboration, localism, and case study of collaboration in Oregon’s Rogue River Basin]


Van der Plaat, Madine and Gene Barrett. “Building community capacity in governance and decision making” Community Development Journal 41, 1, 2006:25-36. [Canada, health promotion programs for children]

Week 10, Mar 14: SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.
Week 11, Mar 21: Community development: theory and practice, critiques

Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3 DUE TODAY

Comment/question optional, not required today

Munchies__________________________

Shared readings:

Read one of the following from below: Floras OR Sites/Chaskin/Parks OR Eversole OR Cerf OR Kenny OR Walker

Want to read more?
Floras’ book: Chapter on “Generating Community Change” (3rd or 4th ed.) or “Mobilizing Community Capitals for Social Change” (2nd ed.)
Eversole, Robyn. “Remaking participation: Challenges for community development practice.” Community Development Journal 47, 1, 2012:29-41. [how assumptions about “expert knowledge” and “formal institutions” present challenges for participation]
Week 14, Apr 11:
Munchies

Week 15, Apr 18:
LAST CLASS
Munchies

Final Essay/Thought piece due next Tuesday

Paper assignments

Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 1
Due in class Week 4, Jan 31 (Friday if emailed)
Write an analytical essay on any topic of your choice from Weeks 1-3. You may refer to or evaluate ideas from materials we have covered, including optional readings. But the essay also should reflect your own critical thinking about the issue. Be sure to state your main argument at the beginning and to build your case throughout. Be sure to indicate clearly which materials/authors influenced your thinking and in what way. Clearly identify your own original ideas; don’t be afraid to say “I” now and then. Give page numbers for quotes or ideas drawn directly from a reading. Give it a title!

Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2
Due in class Week 8, Feb 28 (Friday if emailed)
On any topic of your choice from Weeks 4 to 7. Be sure to state your main argument at the beginning and to build your case throughout. Be sure to indicate clearly which materials/authors influence your thinking and in what way. Clearly identify your own original ideas; don’t be afraid to say “I” now and then. Give page numbers for quotes or ideas drawn directly from a reading. Give it a title!

Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3
Due in class Week 11, Mar 21 (Friday if emailed)
On any topic of your choice from Weeks 8 to 11. Be sure to state your main argument at the beginning and to build your case throughout. Be sure to indicate clearly which materials/authors influence your thinking and in what way. Clearly identify your own original ideas; don’t be afraid to say “I” now and then. Give page numbers for quotes or ideas drawn directly from a reading. Give it a title!

Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 4
Due Tuesday, April 23 (Email it to me)
On any topic of your choice that is relevant to this course. [If in doubt, check with me.] Be sure to state your main argument at the beginning and to build your case throughout. Be sure to indicate clearly which materials/authors influence your thinking and in what way. Clearly identify your own original ideas; don’t be afraid to say “I” now and then. Give page numbers for quotes or ideas drawn directly from a reading. Give it a title!