Rural Sociology 7550
Rural Community Development in Theory and Practice

Spring 2018 … 333C Kottman Hall … Tuesdays 5:30-8:25

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Course description
This is a graduate seminar that will focus on
- rural community development issues and processes of social change (primarily in the US)
- an overview of some classic sociological theories of & strategies for rural community development
- citizen actions to defend/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
- how diverse social, economic and political factors are tied to communities, identities and livelihoods

Readings and organization of the course have been designed with these goals in mind:
- to acquire analytical and theoretical tools for understanding community development, community resilience and citizen participation for both intentional and unanticipated changes
- to advance understanding of the complexity and diversity of rural life, rural economies and politics, rural social problems and proposed solutions, primarily in the U.S.

Some questions we will address include: What are “rurality” and “community”? What is civil society? What aspects of community capitals (social, natural, financial, etc.) are implicated in specific processes of change and community resilience? What are some of the challenges confronting different social groups in rural places today?

This course will be based on a partnership between the instructor and students. Students will assume responsibility for contributing to and co-directing class discussions.

Grading and Requirements
- actively participate in and occasionally lead class discussions of course materials - 44%
- prepare 3 short analytical papers (Thought Pieces) based on course materials - 36%
- submit a final paper on a research topic of your choice – 20%

Note 1: “leading” a discussion involves coming in with key points to discuss and some questions to pose to class members for discussion

Note 2: We meet only once a week (only 14 times) during the semester; each class day represents 7.2% of the course. If you must miss class, notify me as soon as possible. We will figure out a way for you to make up for the missed discussion on that day’s subject matter (typically an essay discussing the day’s readings).

Required Readings
J. Allen & D. Dillman. Against All Odds. 1994. WE WILL DISCUSS THIS BOOK DURING WEEKS 2 & 3. There are 10 copies on reserve at the FAES Library and 3 copies on reserve at the Thompson (Main) Library. Each can be checked out for 3 days and can be rechecked upon return. You can check on the availability of books at the Thompson Library by going to this link http://guides.osu.edu/c.php?g=773385

Flora, Cornelia Butler and Jan L. Flora. Rural Communities: Legacy and Change. Westview. There are 9 copies of the 3rd Edition (2008) and 1 copy of the 4th edition (2012) on reserve at the FAES Library and 3 copies of the 3rd edition are on reserve at the Thompson Library. All can be checked out for 3 days at a time and can be rechecked upon return. You can check on the availability of books at the Thompson Library by going to this link http://guides.osu.edu/c.php?g=773385
We will read specific chapters in Flora and Flora to have a shared understanding of specific “community capitals” — i.e., social, human, political, financial, natural, etc. If you have a personal copy that is a later edition, that is okay. There is overlap. Just note that some chapter titles have changed a little and chapter numbers may have changed.

Note: THERE ARE ENOUGH COPIES OF THE BOOKS ON RESERVE FOR ALL CLASS MEMBERS. 3 COPIES OF EACH ARE AT THE THOMPSON LIBRARY & 10 COPIES OF EACH ARE AT THE FAES LIBRARY.

A few readings are book chapters. These will be posted to our Carmen Canvas page at the Module for the week that they are assigned. There are links on the syllabus for some items.

Most readings are journal articles that can be downloaded through the Library’s online journal service. If you have any difficulty with the site, check with the Library.

Note: for those unfamiliar with the three basic conceptual/theoretical approaches in sociology — functionalism (also known as structural functionalism), conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism — you can find information about each on the internet. Almost all of our course materials will reflect one or more of these approaches so you will find basic knowledge to be useful. Here are two sources:

https://laulima.hawaii.edu/access/content/user/kfrench/sociology/the%20three%20main%20sociological%20perspectives.pdf
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paA61KfOeEc

Optional resource book: on reserve at FAES Library (for those interested in rural town governance & planning strategies)
L. Reese & R. Rosenfeld. The Civic Culture of Local Economic Development. Sage, 2002. [case studies of leadership and community development strategies in selected Ohio and Michigan communities, including Coshocton] 1 copy; can be checked out for 3 days

“Want to read more?” The readings under this heading are there for students who want to read more on the day’s topic. There is NO requirement that you read any of them.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
There are 2 types of written assignments:

1. There are 3 Analytical/Position/Thought Piece Papers assigned. These will provide you with an opportunity to analyze course materials and prepare for class discussion.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 1
   Due in class Week 5, Feb 6
   Write an analytical essay on any topic of your choice from Weeks 3 to 5.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2
   Due in class Week 9, Mar 6
   On any topic of your choice from Weeks 6 to 9.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3
   Due in class Week 13, Apr 3
   On any topic of your choice from Weeks 11 to 13.

These paper assignments provide an opportunity for you to explore ideas/theories/cases/concepts etc. in more in depth than what took place during class discussion. For example, you may choose to analyze ideas/approaches/positions taken by different authors in order to think more deeply or more broadly on an issue. These are just a few ideas for what you can do. Analytical/Thought Pieces must be based primarily on the content of course materials. (You my refer to class discussions if relevant) Suggested length: about 1200-1400 words each, not counting references. Note: since you will be using course materials, you do not have to write out complete references.
Just provide author name(s) and week assigned. Although you need not include any non-course materials in your Thought Piece, if you do please provide full references for any non-course materials used.

2. The final Paper is a longer paper based on research on a topic of your choice that is relevant to the subject matter of this course. [If in doubt, check with me.] Be sure to indicate which materials/authors influence your thinking and clearly identify your own ideas. (You can use “I”) Give page numbers for quotes and ideas drawn directly from sources. Give the paper a descriptive title and state your objectives/arguments at the beginning (they will serve as a “road map”)! For your “research paper” you should not rely exclusively or mainly on course readings. The paper should be based primarily (at least 75%) on materials not assigned for the course. Suggested length: about 3000 words, not counting references. This paper is DUE ON APRIL 20. E-mail it to me by that date (or by April 17 if you are graduating this semester).

Note: Visually, I prefer papers with 11 pt. font (i.e., Times New Roman), single-spaced with 1 inch margins all around. (Easier to read) You may use whatever discipline-approved style you wish for references and citations. Just be consistent throughout and make sure that you include all references that are sources of your ideas.

Grading of papers is based on clarity, logic, strength of arguments and analysis, and relevance of the content to the course subject matter. Since disciplines of study vary among students, so may style of writing, interests, and style of analysis. I will take this into account in the interest of fairness. (We also can negotiate research paper topic based on disciplinary preferences.) It helps if your paper is interesting and thought-provoking and “flows” from beginning to end! Give your paper a descriptive title that fits its focus. Use consistent reference formatting style for source materials. Be sure to include page numbers whenever you are discussing an idea from your sources. Correct grammar and spelling are important. You may use Word spelling, punctuation, and grammar functions if you like.

**WEEKS 14 & 15:**
The last 2 weeks of class do not have topics assigned. For Week 14, we will discuss and vote in class to select 1 or 2 topics for Week 14. Class members will suggest reading assignments (and possibly video clips) and I can help with that as well. For Week 15 we will tie up “loose ends” and discuss the research that each of you will be working on (or will have completed) for your final papers.

**Policies:**
All deadlines should be met and, in principle, no late papers will be accepted unless you and I have agreed on this beforehand. But life happens. So if an emergency comes up, please notify me immediately. I will work with you to resolve any conflicts.

I am required to notify you that any plagiarism on written assignments will result in referral to the proper university authorities--no exceptions. The university’s policy is to give an F in the course if plagiarism is proven on even just one assignment. So cite your sources 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 another university-mandated emergency, we will discuss together whether to skip that topic or to find a way to make up for it (i.e., doubling up topics on a single day ...)

**Munchies**
Our class runs from 5:30-8:25. I will bring hot water and fixings for coffee, tea and cocoa before class begins so we all can “warm up” before starting our discussions. I also will bring “munchies” the first day of class. Students will sign up to take turns bringing munchies for other class meetings. Sharing a hot beverage...
and snack helps build our own “bonding capital” (see Flora and Flora book for definition). We also will take a short break (10-12 min.) at the halfway point so that we can re-energize.

Class members will asked to volunteer to take turns bringing snacks (“munchies”) each week to share with the group. (Individual students also are free to bring their own food and can opt out of sharing snacks.) Munchies should be simple and inexpensive—for example, cheese and crackers; carrots and celery with dip; cut pieces of fruit and crackers; cookies, etc. Nothing expensive!

**Note:** 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 at the end!!

### COURSE SCHEDULE

| Week 1, Jan 9: Intro to the course & foundational concepts and questions. |
| What is the significance of “rurality” as a concept? Of “rural” as an identity, place, economy, lifestyle or “reality”? What are some challenges to rural community development? |
| Munchies volunteer: Rakowski will bring Munchies today |

**Shared readings for discussion:**
- Flora & Flora Chapter 1 (either 3rd or 4th edition)

**Want to read more?**
- Logan, John. “Rural America as a symbol of American values.” Rural Development Perspectives 12, 1, 1996: 24-28. (brief consideration of anti-urban bias in the US that underpins cultural beliefs about rural places and values)

### Week 2, Jan 16: Allen & Dillman’s Against All Odds: Rural Community in the Information Age

You may find it helpful to prepare and bring notes for class discussions of the book “Bremer,” the town in the book, is really St. John, Washington. Current estimated pop. 545 ... if you want, check out their webpage [http://www.stjohnwa.com/](http://www.stjohnwa.com/) to see how different/similar it is today to the situation described in the book!

**Munchies volunteer?**

**Shared reading: The book**

We will focus on discussing Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 but can also bring in info from other chapters. We begin with a focus on “communityness,” agriculture, gender roles, social organization, and the history of the town.

It will be helpful to read the Floras’ Chapters on “Social capital and community” and “Cultural capital and legacy” before reading Allen & Dillman. The Floras provide useful tools for our discussion.
Week 3, Jan 23: Finish discussion of Allen & Dillman book
Munchies volunteer?

Shared reading: The book
We will discuss the remaining chapters but can also continue our discussion from last week. We will assess the strengths and weaknesses of Allen & Dillman’s analysis and frameworks. And we will draw our own conclusions regarding social and economic reality in Bremer.

Note: select your SET assignment for next week’s discussion

Week 4, Jan 30: “Community” and “Community development”: diverse conceptualizations
Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings: (closely read the set your sign up for but also scan the readings for the other set) We will break down into 2 groups for discussion.

Set 1: Community (29 pp)

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


Set 2: Community development (78 pp)


Want to read more?
It may be helpful to review the Floras’ Chapters on “Political capital,” “Governance” and “Generating community change”

Note: select your SET assignment for next week’s discussion

Week 5, Feb 6: Uneasy transitions: case studies of economic development strategies 1
Analytical/thought-piece paper 1 DUE TODAY
Munchies volunteer?

Note: It may be helpful to scan the Floras’ chapters on “Financial Capital” & “Political capital”

Read & discuss the set you signed up for. During class, we will break into groups each of which will discuss their respective Sets. Then each group will explain their topic/readings and major points on the pros and cons of development approaches to other class members and take questions. Time permitting we will discuss the diverse strategies as a group.
SET 1  The “growth machine” approach to development


SET 2  The “environment” as a factor in economic development


SET 3  “Contentious” approaches to economic development: Prisons, gambling, industrial recruitment


Want more?
Abrams, Jesse and John Bliss. “Amenity landownership, land use change, and the re-creation of ‘working landscapes’.” Society and Natural Resources 26, 2013: 845-59. (another perspective)

Week 6, Feb 13: Uneasy transitions: case studies of economic development strategies 2
Munchies volunteer?

It may be helpful to review the Floras’ chapters on “Built Capital” and “Natural Capital”

Shared readings:

Want more?
Week 7, Feb 20: Uneasy transitions: case studies of changing landscapes/land use & resistance
Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:
Bowness, Evan and Mark Hudson. “Sand in the cogs? Power and public participation in the Alberta tar sands.” Environmental Politics 23, 2, 2014: 59-76. [also Alberta, Canada]
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]

Want more?
Tauxe, Caroline. “Heartland community: Economic restructuring and the management of small town identity in the central U.S.” Identities 5, 3, 1998:335-377. [how two small towns compete with each other to attract businesses]

Note: select your SET assignment for next week’s discussion

Week 8, Feb 27: Race, class, ethnicity & immigration in rural America
Munchies volunteer?

Read the set you signed up for During class, we will break into groups each of which will discuss their respective Sets. Then each group will explain their topic/readings and major points on the pros and cons of development approaches to other class members and take questions.

SET 1 RACE & RACISM in rural development

SET 2 IMMIGRANTS & GUEST WORKERS in rural development (focus on Hispanics)

**SET 3 AFRICAN REFUGEES/IMMIGRANTS (focus on Somalis)**


Want more?


**Week 9, Mar 6: Big box stores in rural places: what’s all the fuss about?**

**Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2 DUE TODAY**

**Munchies volunteer?**

**Film: Store Wars: When Walmart Comes to Town** (we will view it in class; 1 hour)

**Shared readings:**


**Want More?**

It may be helpful to scan the Floras’ chapter on “Consumption in Rural America”


Week 10, Mar 13: No class / Spring Break

Week 11, Mar 20: Collaboration and conflict resolution: some examples

Discuss and select topic for Week 14

Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:
Arnold, Jennifer & Maria Fernandez-Gimenez. “Building social capital through participatory research: An analysis of collaboration on Tohono O’odham tribal rangelands in Arizona.” Society and Natural Resources 20, 2007:481-95. [successful collaboration]
Margerum, Richard. “Overcoming locally based collaboration constraints.” Society and Natural Resources 20, 2007:135-152. [focus on the 5 constraints discussed]

Want more?

Week 12, Mar 27: Farming and farmers in crisis: the struggle for survival and profit

Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:
Pilgeram, Ryanne. “‘The only thing that isn’t sustainable...is the farmer’: Social sustainability and the politics of class among Pacific Northwest farmers engaged in sustainable farming.” Rural Sociology 76, 3, 2011: 375-93.

Want more?
Note: select your SET assignment for next week’s discussion

Week 13, Apr 3: Mining and energy production community impacts: Examples
Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3 DUE TODAY
Munchies volunteer?

Everyone reads:
Wilson, Lisa. “Riding the resource roller coaster: Understanding socioeconomic differences between mining communities.” Rural Sociology 69, 2, 2004:261-81. [looks at community impacts of mining projects whose boom-bust cycles are similar for new extractive energy projects]

Read the set you signed up for

SET 1 Coal


SET 2 Gas and Oil

Fernando, Felix, and Dennis Cooley. “Socioeconomic system of the oil boom and rural community development in Western North Dakota.” Rural Sociology 81, 3, 2016:407-444.

SET 3 Wind energy


Want more?
Filteau, Matthew. “‘If you talk badly about drilling, you’re a pariah’: Challenging a capitalist patriarchy in Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale Region.” Rural Sociology 81, 4, 2016: 519-44.

Lobao, Linda, Minyu Zhou, Mark Partridge and Michael Betz. “Poverty, place, and coal employment across Appalachia and the United States in a New Era.” Rural Sociology 81, 3, 2016: 343-86. (Note: text is 343-364 and 371-379; rest is tables and bibliography)


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**Week 14, Apr 10:** class topic choice  TBA  (Note: There are two options: entire class discusses 1 topic in the class period or 2 groups discuss 2 topics in the class period. There are advantages and disadvantages to both that we can discuss before making a decision)
Munchies

TBA (see below)

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**Week 15, Apr 17:** Discussion of student papers and Tie up loose ends
Munchies

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**Some topics you might consider for topic choice(s), Week 14:**
- Native American communities/reservations, issues of autonomy, exploitation/marginalization, migration & livelihoods, discrimination, how Native Americans lost their lands, contemporary issues faced by Native Americans (i.e., resistance to scaling back their lands, resistance to oil pipelines through their territory, etc.)
- Environmental movements, sustainable agriculture movements
- Factory farms, conflicts between corporations and farmers, between local residents and factory farm (includes livestock and poultry operations)
- Climate change and natural disasters—preparation for, adaptation, mitigation, likely impact of current political position on climate change
- Water and watersheds—management issues, conflicts, privatization vs. public good
- Gender issues in rural settings and in research (women’s activism, women’s roles, etc.)
- Masculine bias in rural-focused social science research and policy-making, a gendered re-reading and critique of prior research and policymaking
- LGBTQ issues and experiences in rural areas and small towns
- Feel free to suggest others for consideration