Rural Sociology 7550  
Rural Community Development in Theory and Practice  
Spring 2016 ... 382 Kottman Hall ... Mondays 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 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 community and livelihood restructuring

Readings and organization of the course are selected/designed with these goals in mind:  
- acquire analytical and theoretical tools for understanding community development, community resilience 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, 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 major issues confronting people 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 directing many class discussions and will select and prepare topics to for several classes.

Grading and Requirements  
- lead and/or participate in class discussions and workshops - 30%  
- prepare 3 short analytical papers (Thought Pieces) based on course materials - 30%  
- participate in researching and presenting a group topic – 20%  
- submit a final paper on a research topic of your choice – 20%

Note: We meet only once a week and 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 can figure out a way to make up for the missed discussion on that day’s subject matter.

Required Readings  
There are 12 copies on reserve at the FAES Library. Each can be checked out for 7 days.  
WE WILL REVIEW SPECIFIC CHAPTERS TO REFRESH OUR MEMORIES ON SPECIFIC COMMUNITY CAPITALS—I.E., SOCIAL, HUMAN, POLITICAL, FINANCIAL, NATURAL, ETC.—AND MAKE SURE THAT WE SHARE THE SAME DEFINITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF EACH CAPITAL. 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.  
There are 10 copies on reserve at the FAES Library. Can be checked out for 7 days.  
A few readings are book chapters. These will be posted by e-reserves to our Carmen “content” page
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—I have posted a short explanation on our Carmen “content” page. You can find additional information about each on the internet. Almost all of our course materials will reflect one or more of these approaches.

**Recommended book:** on reserve at FAES Library

“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.

**COURSE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:**
There are 2 types of paper assignments spread out over the semester.

1. There are 3 *Analytical/Thought Piece Papers* assigned. These will provide you with an opportunity to revisit course materials and discussions of issues that took place in a specific timeframe.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 1
   Due in class Week 5, Feb 8
   Write an analytical essay on any topic of your choice from Weeks 1-5.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2
   Due in class Week 9, Mar 7
   On any topic of your choice from Weeks 6 to 9.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3
   Due in class Week 13, Apr 4
   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 (80%) on course materials and class discussions. 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. Provide full references for any non-course materials used.

2. **Final Paper** is a paper based on research on a topic of your choice relevant to the subject matter of this course. [If in doubt, check with me.] Be sure to indicate clearly which materials/authors influence your thinking and clearly identify your own ideas. 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 (I like a “road map” when reading)! “Research paper” means that your paper should not rely exclusively on course readings; it should be based primarily (75%) on materials not assigned for the course. Suggested length: about 2500-3000 words, not counting references. This paper is DUE ON MAY 4. E-mail it to me by that date (earlier 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 or 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 and approach 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 cite page numbers whenever you are discussing an idea from your sources. Correct grammar and spelling are important, so use Word spelling, punctuation and grammar functions.

GROUP PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENTS:
The last 3 class dates do not have topics assigned. For Weeks 14-15, we will vote on topics and class members will organize into 2 groups, each of which will select readings to assign and present on their topic and lead class discussion on that topic. Week 16 we will tie up “loose ends” and discuss the research that each of you are working on for your final papers. See last page for examples.

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 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 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 about 5-10 minutes before class begins so we all can “warm up” before starting. We also will take a 7-8 min. break at the halfway point so that we can re-energize. Sharing a hot beverage and snacks helps build our own “bonding capital” (see Flora and Flora book for definition). Class members are asked to volunteer to take turns bringing snacks (“munchies”) to share with the group. (Individual students also are free to bring their own food.) Munchies should be simple snacks—for example, cheese and crackers, carrots and celery with dip and crackers, 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

@ indicates the reading is an e-reserve item (posted to Carmen “content” page)

Week 1, Jan 11: What is the significance of “rurality” as a concept? Of “rural” as an identity or a reality? I will bring Munchies today

Shared readings:
Review Floras’ Chapter on “Rural landscape and importance of place”

Want to read more?
Colombo, Monica & Azzurra Senatore. “The discursive construction of community identity.” Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology 15, 2005:48-62. [useful discussion of different ways to analyze community identity—i.e., from a functional perspective (territorial, social-network relations) or from a discursive perspective; uses example from Italy ]
@Logan, John. “Rural America as a symbol of American values.” Rural Development Perspectives 12, 1, 1996:24-28. [brief consideration of the anti-urban bias in the US that underpins cultural beliefs about rural places, especially values tied to community, family, and work]

Week 2, Jan 18: NO CLASS / Martin Luther King Holiday

Week 3, Jan 25: Allen & Dillman’s Against All Odds: Rural Community in the Information Age
You may find it helpful to bring notes for class discussion.
“Bremer,” the town in the book, is really St. John, Washington. Current estimated pop. 558 ... check out their webpage @ http://www.stjohnwa.com/ to see how similar it is to the 1990s as described in the book!
Munchies volunteer?____________________

Shared reading: The book
It will be helpful to review the Floras’ Chapters on “Social capital and community” and “Cultural capital and legacy” before reading it

Week 4, Feb 1: “Community” and “Community development”: changing conceptualizations
Munchies volunteer?____________________

Note: select SET topics for next week’s discussion
**Shared readings:** (everyone reads both sets)

**Set 1: COMMUNITY**
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**

**Want to read more?**
It may be helpful to review the Floras’ Chapters on “Political capital,” “Governance” and “Generating community change”
Emejulu, Akwugo. “The silencing of radical democracy in American community development: The struggle of identities, discourses and practices.” Community Development Journal 46, 2, 2011: 229-44 (very interesting analysis of how and when the “status quo” pushed aside and suppressed demands for deeper social and structural change demanded by minority groups)

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**Week 5, Feb 8: Case studies of economic development strategies:** Workshop
Analytical/thought-piece paper 1 DUE TODAY
Munchies volunteer?__________________________

**Shared readings:**
It may be helpful to review the Floras’ chapters on “Financial Capital,” “Political capital” & “Natural capital”

**Read the set you are assigned.** During class we will break into groups to discuss each Set. Then each group will explain their topic/readings on development approaches to other class members.

**SET 1 The “growth machine” approach to development**
SET 2 The “environment” & economic development

SET 3 Alternative approaches to economic development: Prisons, gambling

Want to read more?

Week 6, Feb 15: Uneasy transitions 1: changing social & physical landscapes
Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:

Want to read more?
It may be helpful to review the Floras’ 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. [European farmer experiences]
Week 7, Feb 22: Uneasy transitions 2: conflict over identity and place
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 to read 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 towns compete with each other as part of regional economic change-fun to read]

Week 8, Feb 29: A workshop on race, class, ethnicity & gender in rural America
Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:

Read the set you are assigned. During class we will break into groups to discuss each Set. Then each group will explain some key themes/ideas from their set to other class members. The goal is to get a sense of some

SET 1 Examples of experiences with RACE & RACISM
Gallardo, Jennifer Hale & Taylor Stein. “Participation, power and racial representation: Negotiating nature-based and heritage tourism development in the rural South.” Society and Natural Resources 20, 2007:597-611. [combines class and race]
**SET 2** Examples of experiences based on ETHNICITY

**SET 3** Examples of GENDERed experiences

**Want to read more?**

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**Week 9, Mar 7: Big box stores in rural places: what’s all the fuss about?**
**Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2 DUE TODAY**

Munchies volunteer?

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

**Shared readings:**
It may be helpful to review Floras’ chapter on “Consumption in Rural America”

Also, read one of the following:
Week 10, Mar 14: No class / Spring Break

Week 11, Mar 21: Collaboration for development and conflict resolution: some examples

Discuss group presentation assignments during class
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]

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 held by CD “experts” influenced studies of community stability/instability. Did you know that rural communities could be classified as unstable if women held leadership roles instead of being homemakers?]

Week 12, Mar 28: 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 to read more?

Week 13, Apr 4: Mining and energy production community impacts: Examples
Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3 DUE TODAY
Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:

Read the set you are assigned

SET 1  Coal

SET 2  Gas and Oil


Want to read more?
Topics you might consider for group presentations:

- Appalachia communities (coal towns, poverty, tourism, migration, alternative sources of livelihood)
- Native American communities/reservations, issues of autonomy, exploitation/marginalization, migration & livelihoods, discrimination
- Agri-environmentalism, environmental movements, sustainable agriculture movements
- Factory farms, conflicts between corporations and farmers, community and environmental issues
- Climate change and natural disasters—preparation for, adaptation, mitigation, recovery
- Water and watersheds—management issues, conflicts, privatization vs. public good
- Rural masculinities, LGBTQ folks in rural communities

Feel free to suggest others for consideration.

There are two options: 1 group presents 1 topic in a single class period or 2 groups present 2 topics in a single class period. There are advantages and disadvantages to both that we can discuss.