Rural Sociology 7600
Theories and Concepts in Rural Sociology
Fall 2025 Syllabus
Current as of 10.02.25

MONDAYS 5:30 TO 8PM. LOCTAIONS: KH460 AND TBA

Instructor:. Jeffrey B. Jacquet
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Office Hours: By appointment

University Escort Service—292-3322 Service available after 6 PM.

Course Description

Rural sociology is a broad sub-field of sociology which is informed theoretically and methodologically by the broader discipline. This course examines the distinct substantive foci of rural sociology, including agriculture/the food system, social inequalities, the environment, globalization/international development, community, and demographic processes--and the conceptual perspectives that have been applied to understand these substantive topics. In addition, the course addresses broader sociological questions about uneven regional development, the role of space in social theory, and the social construction of "rurality."

We will focus on classical and contemporary "big-picture questions" that rural sociologists address—and also examine how these might be carried-down to more empirically-oriented work.

The course has a seminar format and is directed toward students with a strong social science background. It is centered upon class discussion, critique of the readings, and your involvement in research assignments related to the course topic. We will also have rural sociology faculty members visit the course to discuss the exciting range of research questions they study!

Course Objectives

Student completing this class should gain the following knowledge and skills:

1. Understand the major research areas in contemporary rural sociology with their conceptual literatures and empirical traditions.

2. Gain a general background in key substantive focus areas of rural sociology, particularly social inequalities, agriculture/the food system, the environment, demographic change, and development/globalization.

3. Gain extra opportunity to pursue independent research related to thesis, dissertation work, and other scholarly interests, including working on your own articles for presentations and

publications.

4. Acquire an understanding of rural sociology as an overall field. Students will gain a "sociology of knowledge" understanding of rural sociology, which situates the sub-field of rural sociology into the broader discipline of sociology and other social sciences-- and also traces the development of the literature in rural sociology historically.

5. Be able to demonstrate how rurality introduces a spatial contingency to theory and social science generalization. That is, students should understand how and why trends and relationships involving social life found in the urban U.S. (the main focus of "modern" sociology) may not hold in other sociopatial settings.

6. Gain expanded analytical skills necessary for advanced work in the social sciences. We will discuss how sociologists apply theory and concepts to various substantive topics and how they interpret research results. The class should also help you to sharpen critical thinking as you engage in critiquing the theoretical and methodological approaches presented in the readings.

Course Requirements and Grading

This course has four sets of requirements:

(A) Participation in class | 35% of the Grade | this includes coming to class prepared (having done the readings, thought critically about them, and come to class with 3 questions, highlights or talking points about each of them) and leading the discussion for at least ½ of a class period (e.g. 1 ½ hours) (to be scheduled).

(B) A short review of literature and biography | 20% of Grade | A report or essay (~1500 words + references) on a rural sociologist or work of rural sociology to be selected by the student and presented briefly/informally to the class (selection Sept 11th, review/presentation due in October [date varies]).

(C) A term paper | 30% of Grade | on a topic that is mutually agreeable (topic due **October 9th,** literature review and outline due November 1st, paper due the last day of class, December 11th). This lengthy paper should investigate societal phenomena of interest to the student while engaging with a sociological concept or theory.

(D) Presentation of term paper | 15% of Grade | A 10 min presentation to the class on your term paper topic/analysis/findings. Dates may vary over last few weeks of the semester (e.g. presentation due before paper).

Given the above assignments and scheduling, each class period will include a combination 1-3 brief student presentations, student-led discussion of course material, and instructor led discussion of course material.

Attendance

Your in-person attendance of class is required. We may meet as a class on Zoom once or twice per semester and Zoom simulcast of the classroom may or may not be available. With the exception of one (1) unexcused absence per semester, you must be fully present for each class in addition to being a conscientious participant. Please be mindful that arriving late/leaving early disrupts on-going class discussion--and hurts a seminar climate where everyone is counted upon to contribute and to be "on the

same page" in terms of material discussed. Please put away all cell phones. Please be mindful not to text, check email, shop on amazon, browse instagram or refresh sports twitter as these destroy the learning environment for other students not to mention your own.

Required Text Book: None.

Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation. 2019. 2nd Edition by David L. Brown and Kai A. Schafft. Polity Press
Available online through the OSU Library
https://www.amazon.com/People-Communities-Century-Resilience-Transformation-dp-1509529861/dp/1509529861/ref=dp_ob_title_bk

Articles:

Available electronically. All or most readings are available for you to download directly from Carmen. If a reading is not posted on Carmen please download it via the OSU Library electronic journal system.

More About Rural Sociology – see below!
For an overview of the history of various subfields, key literatures and articles in rural sociology, go to the OSU library site, search for Oxford Bibliographies. Sociology [electronic resource] / editor in chief: Jeff Manza, go to the section on Rural Sociology, edited by Nick Garcia and Linda Lobao, 2018]

Campus Safety:

Several years ago the Undergraduate Student Government requested that faculty include the phone number for the University Escort Service on their syllabi, preferably on the first page somewhere and especially for courses that meet or end after dark.

University Escort Service—292-3322 | Service available after 6 PM.

Disability Statement:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession

of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages (www.oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html)
- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (www.oaa.osu.edu/coam/tensuggestions.html)
- Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity (www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.html)

Statement on Respect and Diversity:

The goal of this class is to create a safe environment for open and honest dialogue and stimulating intellectual discussion and debate. This class is based around discussion of societal trends and events, and we are likely to discuss topics that are controversial, personal, and emotionally-charged. This should be a space where all feel welcome to argue closely and passionately-held beliefs and also a space to have those beliefs respectfully challenged. Likewise, all should feel comfortable to argue a new position not considered previously or to even to play "devils' advocate" and to argue for a perspective that is not actually held at all, all without fear of reprisal, attribution, or retribution. Disagreements can and should be pursued, but done so respectfully without personal attack or aggression. Put another way: we are here to discuss ideas, we are not here to discuss one another. The topics of discussion should not carry outside of the classroom and members should not fear reputational harm due to their participation in class.

We are all required to help make the classroom a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment.

Land Acknowledgement Statement:

In 1862, the Morrill Act created a system to sell lands expropriated from indigenous peoples to fund state agricultural universities, including The Ohio State University. In 1870, the State of Ohio was granted 614,165 acres of lands expropriated from indigenous populations in places such as California, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The lands were sold to eastern settlers to provide revenue for the founding of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, known today as Ohio State University.

The Ohio State University occupies the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. The university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

The profession and discipline of rural sociology itself is deeply rooted in – and has directly benefited from – a land-grant university system that still today receives proceeds from these grants of indigenous

lands from over 150 years ago. In this class, we will directly explore these historical and contemporary linkages between indigenous lands, the land grant university system and rural sociology. We recognize the historical contexts that have and continue to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

COURSE SCHEDULE:
READINGS ARE PRELILMINARY
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Sept. 8
Week 1: Overview of course and The Bedrock of Modernity

Grading and Administrative Procedures. Syllabus Review. Organize the class schedule and chronology of student assignments. Discuss meeting locations and possible field trip(s). Begin discussion of class topics.

Kern, Stephen. 1983. *The culture of time and space, 1880-1918* Harvard University Press (Selected: Nature of Time, Speed, Distance)

Martin, Dale. 2018 *Ties, Rails and Telegraph Wires:* (Selected: Railroads and the Rural Landscape). Montana Historical Society Press

Renner, Rolf. G. 1999. *Edward Hopper – Transformation of the Real*: (Selected: Frontier of Civilization)

Cincinnati Commercial. 1870. *A Story About Iron Furnaces* 17 Jan 1870

Ohio History Central. N.D., *Iron Production*. https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Iron_Production

Recommended:
Jones, Christopher. 2014. F. *Routes of Power: Energy and Modern America* by Christopher F. Jones

September 15
Week 3: The Births of Sociology

Tonnies, Ferdinand. 1887 – Community and Society: Book One: A general classification of key ideas. (Loomis Trans. 1935)

Durkheim, Emile. 1893. – Division of Labor in Society (Simpson, Trans. 1933) – (Selected: Translators note, table of contents, chapter 1, and at minimum skim rest of the book)

An Exchange Between Durkheim and Tonnies on the Nature of Social Relations, with an Introduction by Joan American Journal of Sociology, May, 1972, Vol. 77, No. 6 (May, 1972), pp. 1191-1200

Warren, R.L. 1987. The Community in America: 3rd Edition. University Press Of America (Selection: Chapter 05 The Great Change in Rural Communities)

September 22
Week 4: Academic Apartheid

Du Bois, W.E.B . 1898. "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study." Bulletin of the Department of Labor 3(14):1–38.

Du Bois, W.E.B . 1899. "The Negro in the Black Belt: Some Social Sketches." Bulletin of the Department of Labor 22(40):1–17.

Dubois, W.E.B. 1940. "The Future of Wilberforce" (Commencement Address). June 13, 1940

Rabaka, Reiland, 2010. Epistemic Apartheid, W.E.B. Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology. (Selected: Chapter 1: Urban and Rural Sociology)

Morris, Aldon. 2015. The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Dubois and the Birth of Modern Sociology. University of California Press. (Selected: Chapter 6: Max Weber Meets W.E.B. Dubois)

Recommended: The article that inspired this module!:
Jakubek J, Wood SD. Emancipatory Empiricism: The Rural Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity. 2018;4(1):14-34.

September 29
Week 5: The City

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. The death and life of great American cities. (Selected: Sidewalks: Safety, Contact, Assimilation. New York : Random House

Simmel, Georg. 1903 – The Metropolis and Mental Life,

Nash, Rodreck 1973. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Yale University Press. (Selected: Chapter 02: A Wilderness Condition; Chapter 03: The Romantic Wilderness)

Wirth, Louis. Urbanism as a Way of Life. The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Jul., 1938), pp. 1-24.

Freudenburg, William R. 1986. The Density of Acquaintanceship: An Overlooked Variable in Community Research? American Journal of Sociology 1986 92:1, 27-63

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: *Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation*. 2019. 2nd Edition Polity Press. (Selected Chapters 1 Rurality in Metropolitan Societies, 2 Urbanization and Population Redistribution, and 3 Rural Politics and Governance)

October 06:
Week 6: The Invention of Rural America

Bailey, Liberty Hyde. *1909. Report of the country life commission*. US Government Printing Office, 1909.

Peters, Scott J., and Paul A. Morgan. 2004. "The country life commission: Reconsidering a milestone in American agricultural history." *Agricultural History* : 289-316.

Lee, Robert and Tristan Ahtone. 2020. "Land-Grab Universities: Exporpriated Indigenous land is the foundation of the land-grant University". *High Country News*. March 30th.

(Note: we won't be reading all of the below historical sociological works but will discuss them (along with others) together as a body of work -- but I list them here for help in Author Biography Assignment and more details provided in class.)

October 13
Week 7: | Sociology of Agriculture | Field Trip to Wooster(?)
Guest Readings TBA

Lobao, Linda and Katherine Meyer "The Great Agricultural Transition: Crisis, Change, and Social Consequences of Twentieth Century Farming." The Annual Review of Sociology 2001, pp. 103-124.

Johnson, Kenneth and Daniel T. Lichter. 2019. "Rural Depopulation: Growth and Decline Processes over the Past Century." Rural Sociology 84 (1):3-27.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2012. "Land, Space, and People: Constraints of the Capitalist World Economy." Journal of World Systems Research 18 (1): 6-14.

Borras, Saturnino and Jennifer C. Franco. 2012. "Global Land Grabbing and Trajectories of Agrarian Change: A Preliminary Analysis." Journal of Agrarian Change 12 (1): 34-59.

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: *Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation*. 2019. 2nd Edition Polity Press. (Selected Chapters 9 Making a Living in Rural Communities and 10 Farms, Farmers, and Farming in Contemporary Rural Society)

October 20 Week 8: The Discipline of Rural Sociology

1986a. "The Rural Sociological Society: Its Beginning." The Rural Sociologist 6(5):331–348

Galpin, My Drift into Rural Sociology:
https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/chla5075626_5410_001

L. Lobao, "Rural Sociology," The Handbook of 21st Century Sociology, Sage Publications 2007.

Nelson, Lowry. 1969 Rural Sociology: Its Origin and Growth in the United States

Kaysenbrect, R. (1932), RURAL SOCIOLOGY IN THE UNITED STATES1. The Sociological Review, a24: 37-46. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1932.tb01798.x

Flora, Cornelia B. 1972. “Women in Rural Sociology.” Rural Sociology 37:454–462.

Willits, Fern K., Linda M. Gelfi, and Michele E. Lipner. 1988. “Women in the Rural Sociological Society: A History.” The Rural Sociologist. 8(2):126–141.

Flinn, William. 1991. Eight Decades of Rural Sociology at Ohio State

October 27rd
Week 9: The Unequal Distribution of Space and Time

Kraenzel, Carl F. – *The Social Cost of Space in the Yonland*, Big Sky Books.

Landis, Paul .H., "South Dakota Town-Country Trade Relations: 1901-1931" (1932). South Dakota State Agricultural Station Bulletins. Paper 274. http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/agexperimentsta_bulletins/274

L. Lobao, "A Sociology of the Periphery Versus a Peripheral Sociology: Rural Sociology and the Dimension of Space." Rural Sociology, Issue #1 Spring, 1996, pp.77-102.

Lobao, Linda Continuity and Change in Place Stratification, Rural Sociology, Vol. 60, #1 2004, pp. 1-30. (Presidential Address)

Porter, Jeremy. 2011. “Context, Location, and Space: The Continued Development of our ‘Geo-Sociological Imaginations.” American Sociologist 42: 288-302

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation. 2019. 2nd Edition Polity Press. (Selected Chapter 11 Poverty Across Rural People and Places)

November 3rd:
Week 10: Urban Fortunes
Nash, Rodreck 1973. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Yale University Press.(Selected: Chapter 07: Wilderness Preserved, Chapter 10: Hetch Hetchy)

Molotch, Harvey. 1976. The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 82, No. 2 (Sep., 1976), pp. 309-332 (24 pages)
Contrell: Death by Dieselization

Death by Dieselization: A Case Study in the Reaction to Technological Change
W. F. Cottrell. American Sociological Review. Vol. 16, No. 3 (Jun., 1951), pp. 358-365 (8 pages)

Bell, Shannon Elizabeth and Richard York. 2010. “Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia.” Rural Sociology. 75(1):111-143.

November 10th:
Week 11: Community Sociology & How do we measure?

Flora, C.B. and Flora. J.N. 2013. Rural Communities: Legacy and Change 4th Edition. (Selection) West

View Press ISBN-10: 0813345057 - ISBN-13: 978-0813345055

Wilkinson, K. P. 1991. The Community in Rural America. Social Ecology Press ISBN: 0-941042-26-X. (Selection)

Daniel Lichter and David Brown, "Rural America in an Urban Society: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries." Annual Review of Sociology 2011, volume 37, pp. 565-592.

Isserman, Andrew M. "In the National Interest: Defining Rural and Urban Correctly in Research and Public Policy." International Regional Science Review. 28 (2005): 465-499.

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation. 2019. 2nd Edition Polity Press (Selected: Chapter 4 Understanding Community in Rural Society and 5 Community Institutions in Rural Society).

November 17

Week 12: Natural Resource Communities

Buttel, Fred, "Environmental Sociology and the Sociology of Natural Resources: Institutional Histories and Intellectual Legacies." Society and Natural Resources, Vol. 15, March, 2002, pp. 205-211. (OSU Library, electronic journal system).

Rudel, Thomas K., Timmons Roberts, and JoAnn Carmin, "Political Economy of the Environment." Annual Review of Sociology 2011, volume 37, pp. 221-238.

Freudenburg, William. "Environmental Degradation, Disproportionality, and the Double Diversion: Reaching Out, Reaching Ahead, and Reaching Beyond." (Presidential Address). Rural Sociology 2006, Volume 71 #1: 3-32.

Jacquet, Jeffrey and Kay, David 2014. The Unconventional Boomtown – Updating the model for new spatial and temporal scales. *Journal of Rural and Community Development* Volume 9 (1)

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: *Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation*. 2019. 2nd Edition Polity Press (Selected: Chapter 6 Natural Resources and Social Change)

November 24th

(Class likely on Zoom)

Week 13: Contemporary People Measurements

Lichter, Daniel et al. 2007. "National Estimates of Racial Segregation in Rural and Small Town America. " Demography Volume 44 #3, pp. 563-581.

Annes, Alexis, and Meredith Redlin. "Coming out and coming back: Rural gay migration and the city." *Journal of Rural Studies* 28.1 (2012): 56-68.

Lichter, Daniel T., and Kenneth M. Johnson. "A demographic lifeline? Immigration and Hispanic population growth in rural America." *Population Research and Policy Review* 39.5 (2020): 785-803.

Martha Crowley, Daniel T. Lichter, Richard N. Turner, 2015. Diverging fortunes? Economic well-being of Latinos and African Americans in new rural destinations, Social Science Research, Volume 51, Pages 77-92,

Schnore LF. The rural-urban variable: An urbanite's perspective. Discussion, (Robert C. Bealer) Comment (Thomas R. Ford) and Reply (L.F. Schnore) *Rural Sociol*. 1966;31(2):131-155.

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation. 2019. 2nd Edition Polity Press. (Selected Chapters 7 Youth, Aging, and the Life Course and 8 Racial and Ethnic Minorities in Rural Areas)

December 1st

Week 14: Post-modernity/Tourism I

Baudrillard • 1994 - Simulacra and Simulation (The Body, In Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism) 33601st Edition by Jean Baudrillard (Author), Sheila Faria Glaser (Translator)

Debord, Guy, 1993 - Society of the Spectacle. Zone Books (Selected: Chapters 1 and 2)

Jeffrey Wimmer & Thorsten Quandt (2006) LIVING IN THE RISK SOCIETY, Journalism Studies, 7:2, 336-347, DOI: 10.1080/14616700600645461

December 8th

FINALS WEEK

Week 15: Post Modernity and Tourism II

Fergen, Joshua T. and Jeffrey B. Jacquet, 2021 – "Doomscrolling in My Backyard: Corrosive Online Communities and Anti-Wind Development in Rural Ohio", Energy Research and Social Science

Jacquet and Stedman 2016. *Social-Psychological Disruption as an Impact of Energy Development and Environmental Change.* Environmental Planning and Management.

Jobes, Patrick C. 2000. *Moving Nearer to Heaven: The Illusions and Disillusions of Migrants to Scenic Rural Places*. Praeger.

Winkler, R., Field, D.R., Luloff, A.E., Krannich, R.S. and Williams, T. (2007), Social Landscapes of the Inter-Mountain West: A Comparison of 'Old West' and 'New West' Communities*. Rural Sociology, 72: 478-501. https://doi.org/10.1526/003601107781799281

Sherman, Jennifer. 2018. "'Not Allowed to Inherit My Kingdom': Amenity Development and Social Inequality in the Rural West." Rural Sociology 83 (1): 174-207.

The Fruit of Difference: The Rural-Urban Continuum as a System of Identity[1]

Michael M. Bell https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.1992.tb00457.x Volume57, Issue1 March 1992 Pages 65-84

Lyons, Jeffrey. Parker. 2021. You're Not From Here!: The Consequences of Urban and Rural Identities Political Behavior DOI: 10.1007/s11109-021-09680-3

Brown, David L. and Kai A. Schafft: Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Change: (Selected: Chapter 12 A Transformed Rural Society: Challenges and Opportunities for the

Future)

December 15
Week 16: Finals Week

Student Final Project Presentations