Rural Sociology 7550
Rural Community Development in Theory and Practice
REVISED 1-13-2020

Spring 2020 … 460 Kottman Hall … Tuesdays 5:30-8:25

Dr. Cathy A. Rakowski
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414C Kottman, Office hours Tues 4-5 or by appointment

Course description
This is a graduate seminar that will focus on
- contemporary rural community development and social change issues (primarily in the US)
- an overview of sociological approaches to rural community development and rural change
- 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 (including some examples of implementation)

Some basic questions include: What are sociological definitions of “rurality” and “community”? How does civil society function in rural America? What aspects of community capitals (social, natural, financial, etc.) as defined by Flora and Flora are implicated in specific processes of rural change and/or community resilience? What are some of the major issues confronting people in rural America 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 for several classes. The class topic for Week 14 (April 10) is OPEN. Students will propose topics and we will discuss and vote on the topic(s) to discuss that day.

Grading and Requirements
- lead and/or participate in class discussions, including group discussions - 25%
- write, submit and discuss in class 3 analytical papers (“Thought Pieces”) of 5+ pages double spaced or space and a half (with .5 to .7 margins all around) based on course materials - 25% (Note: you may hand in a 4th analytical paper for extra credit if you wish)
- participate in presenting a group topic (i.e., where different class members read and report on different sets of readings) – 25%
- submit and discuss in class a final paper on a research topic of your choice – 25%

Notes:
Please use a normal font (i.e., Times New Roman or a similar font is preferred) with 11 pt. size; single space or space and a half with .7 inch margins all around; adjust paper length to take into account margin width (if larger than .7), if single space or more, if you use a font that uses variable spacing for each letter (such as Gill Sans MT Condensed) or if font size is larger than Times Roman or 11 pt.) NOTE: this syllabus is in Times New Roman 11 pt. font

We meet only once a week and only 14 times during the semester (excluding Spring break); each class day represents 7.1% 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

Flora, Cornelia Butler and Jan L. Flora. *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, 3rd edition. Westview, 2008. WE WILL REVIEW SPECIFIC CHAPTERS ON SPECIFIC COMMUNITY CAPITALS—I.E., SOCIAL, HUMAN, POLITICAL, FINANCIAL, NATURAL, ETC. This will assure that we share the SAME DEFINITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF EACH CONCEPT OF “CAPITAL.” If you have a personal copy that is a later or earlier edition, that is okay. There is much overlap. Just note that some chapter titles and chapter numbers may vary from one edition to another.

A few of our other readings are book chapters. These will be posted to Carmen Canvas

Most readings are journal articles that can be downloaded through the Library’s online journal service. If you have any difficulty with the journal site, check with the Library. Any articles that are unavailable will be posted to the Carmen Canvas module for the week assigned. Be sure to let me know if an article absolutely cannot be downloaded from a journal site.

Since I will not be teaching this course again, feel free to keep the books that I have lent to you.

Note: For those unfamiliar with the three major conceptual/theoretical perspectives in sociology—functionalism (also known as structural functionalism), conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism—I have posted a short explanation on Carmen Canvas as some of you may find it useful to distinguish the approach used by a specific author and the key differences among the 3 approaches. You can find additional information about each on the internet (https://www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides/sociology/the-sociological-perspective/three-major-perspectives-in-sociology). Almost all of our course materials will reflect one or more of these approaches.

“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 this 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 4
   Write an essay on any topic of your choice from Weeks 1-5.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 2
   Due in class Week 8, Feb 25
   On any topic of your choice from Weeks 6-8.

   Analytical/position/thought-piece paper 3
   Due in class Week 12, Mar 24
   On any topic of your choice from Weeks 9-12

These paper assignments provide an opportunity for you to explore ideas/theories/cases/concepts etc. in more in depth than what may take 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. Or you may wish to critique ideas or arguments in paper(s) read from the current or past weeks. 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.
2. The **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 you consulted influenced your thinking and clearly identify your own ideas. (Can be course readings and/or outside readings) 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. (It helps provide a “road map” when I read your paper.) “Research paper” means that your paper should not rely exclusively on course readings; it should be based primarily (at least 70%) on materials not assigned for the course. It may focus on a topic that we discussed in class but should go beyond our assigned readings. Suggested length: **between 3000-3500 words, not counting references.** This paper is **DUE ON APRIL 14 and you will discuss your papers in class that day.** Be prepared to answer questions about your research from classmates at that time. **E-mail the paper to me by that date** if not sooner.

Visually, I prefer to read papers with 11 pt. font (i.e., Times New Roman), single-spaced with .7 inch (and no more than 1 inch) margins all around. (Easier to read and uses less paper.) You may use whatever discipline-approved style you wish for references and citations. Just be consistent throughout and make sure that you include at the end 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, research interests, and style of analysis. I will take this into account in the interest of fairness. (We also can discuss ahead of time your planned paper topic and approach based on your discipline of study and I may provide advice or ask questions for clarification.) It helps if your paper is interesting, thought-provoking, and “flows” from beginning to end! Give your paper a descriptive title that fits its focus. Use a consistent 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’s spell and punctuation check and grammar check functions.

**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 policy is to give an F in the course if plagiarism is proven. So cite your sources carefully and use quotation marks when you borrow someone else’s words.

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 on 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 a few minutes before class begins so we all can “warm up” before starting discussion. We also will take a 10-12 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, chips with dip, etc. Nothing expensive! I will bring snack on the first day of class.

**Note:** I don’t mind setting up the beverage service at the start of class, but I do appreciate help packing things up at the end.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

@ indicates the reading is posted to Carmen for the Week indicated

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 1, Jan 7: What is the significance of “rurality” as a concept? Of “rural” as an identity or a reality?</th>
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<td>I will bring Munchies today</td>
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**Shared readings:**

Review Floras’ Chapter 1 on “Community capitals and the rural landscape”


**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]

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<th>Week 2, Jan 14: Cultural Capital and Legacy &amp; Social Capital and Community</th>
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**Shared readings:** Chapters 3 and 5 in Flora and Flora book. (We also will go over last week’s readings by Bell and Fitchen and—if necessary--Chap 1 from Flora and Flora.)

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<th>Week 3, Jan 21: Allen &amp; Dillman’s Against All Odds: Rural Community in the Information Age</th>
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<td>You may find it helpful to bring notes for class discussion.</td>
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<td>“Bremer,” the town in the book, is really St. John, Washington. Current estimated pop. 558 ... check out their webpage @ <a href="http://www.stjohnwa.com/">http://www.stjohnwa.com/</a> to see how similar it is to the 1990s as described in the book!</td>
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<td>Munchies volunteer?</td>
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**Shared reading:** The book
We will discuss the Bremer book. We can apply concepts from the Floras’ Chapters on “Social capital and community” (Ch. 5) and “Cultural capital and legacy” (Ch. 3) from prior weeks as tools to jump start our discussion and analysis of the Bremer case.
Week 4, Jan 28: “Community” and “Community development”: Classic and changing conceptualizations (If needed, we can finish our discussion of Bremer)
Munchies volunteer?____________________________________________

Note: select SET topic group members for next week’s discussion

Shared readings: (everyone reads both sets) We will analyze both concepts (community, community development together) How have the rural sociological concepts of and research on “community” and “community development” changed over time??

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” OR “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)

Week 5, Feb 4: Case studies of economic development strategies: Workshop
Analytical/thought-piece paper 1 DUE TODAY
Munchies volunteer?____________________________________________

Shared readings:
It may be helpful to read the Floras’ chapters on “Financial Capital,” “Political capital” & “Natural capital” as background for the topics this week.

Discuss the set you signed up for and read. 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 and answer questions on the readings.
Workshop

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 11: Uneasy transitions 1: changing social & physical landscapes
Munchies volunteer?

Shared readings:

Want to read more?
Week 7, Feb 18: 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 25: 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 how these issues have been studied and analyzed by rural sociologists.

SET 1 Examples of research on 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 approaches to research on ETHNICITY

SET 3 Examples of early conceptualizations and research approaches on GENDERed experiences

Want to read more?

Week 9, Mar 3: 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 if I can find my copy or I will find another film)

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

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

Week 11, Mar 17: “Differences,” conflicts, collaboration (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, place)
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 critique of how stereotypes and bias held by community development “experts” influenced study outcomes 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 24: 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, March 31: 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

SET 3  Wind

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.