

SPRING 2013
AGRARIAN LANDSCAPES
11:374:429

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding modern transformations of agrarian, or agricultural, landscapes. Agricultural systems, which cover nearly half the earth's land surface, are complex sites where ecology, technology, culture and political economies converge. Our class will explore these relationships from an interdisciplinary perspective with a focus on small-scale agricultural systems. We will examine the contemporary changes, challenges and opportunities faced by smallholders, and their historical roots. While much of this course focuses on Latin America, readings and cases from other regions of the world will also be incorporated.

LOGISTICS

Learning Goals:

1. Analysis of linkages between environment and society in the context of agriculture, including theories that help explain human-environmental relationships.
2. Critical investigation of how contemporary agrarian dynamics have been shaped by converging processes and objects, including: colonialism, capitalism, culture and non-human actors.
3. Understand contemporary challenges and opportunities faced by smallholder agriculturalists.
4. Improvement of communication abilities, including critical thinking, writing and discussion skills.

Time and place:

This class meets Wednesdays, 5:35-8:35pm, in Hickman 112.

TEACHING

Instructor: I, Heidi Hausermann, am the lead instructor for this course. I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Ecology. My contact information is:

Office: 211 Cook Office Building
Office hours: Wednesdays 10am-12pm & by appointment
Office phone: 848-932-9146; Email: heidi.hausermann@rutgers.edu

As students, you will also help instruct course material and facilitate discussion.

Students: This course is open to interested seniors and second-semester juniors and satisfies SEBS Junior/Senior colloquium requirement.

READING

Careful reading of all material is vital to your success in this course. You are required to purchase two books. All other documents are posted on Sakai except those marked with "OL" (on-line) on the schedule (De Las Casas, Marx, Marx and Engels, Pollan and Turner). These readings can be accessed via hyperlinks at the end of the syllabus.

WRITING

You will be asked to write three response papers. Each paper should reflect critically on what you read, discussed and learned in the course. Papers can pull together concepts and themes from lectures, discussions, readings and films and are expected to be 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced with **one-inch margins**).

THE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1/23	Course introduction	
1/30	Pre-colonial agrarian landscapes	Discussion leader: Quiz #1
2/6	Colonialism and agrarian systems	Discussion leader: Quiz #2
2/13	Rise of capitalism	Discussion leaders: Quiz #3
2/20	Post-colonial agrarian rebellion and reform	Discussion leaders: Quiz #4
2/27	Neoliberalism and agriculture	Discussion leaders: Quiz #5 Critical response paper #1
3/6	Non-human nature in agrarian systems	Discussion leaders: Quiz #6
3/13	Non-human nature in agrarian systems	Discussion leaders: Quiz #7
3/20	Spring break	Spring Break
3/27	Contemporary challenges and opportunities: Certified markets	Discussion leaders: Quiz #8
4/3	Contemporary challenges and opportunities: Certified markets	Discussion leaders: Quiz #9 Critical response paper #2
4/10	TBD	TBD
4/17	Contemporary challenges and opportunities: Industrial agriculture and GMO	Discussion leaders: Quiz #10
4/24	Contemporary challenges and opportunities: Land grabs	Discussion leaders: Quiz #11
5/1	Contemporary challenges and opportunities: Social and food movements	Discussion leaders: Quiz #12
TBD	TBD	Critical response paper #3