

Sociology 325: Transition in Agriculture

120 Ross Hall
Spring, 2019
T/R 12:40-2:00 pm

Instructor

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Office hours: T/ R 3.30 – 4.30 pm, and by appointment

Teaching Assistant

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I. Course Catalog Description

The impacts of agricultural changes on farm families, rural communities, and consumers. Past, present, and future trends in family farms and their social implications. Fulfills CALS Ethics requirement.

II. Course Description

Social change is the process through which culture, institutions, social structures, and how people interact are transformed. From this perspective, the US agriculture and food (agrifood) system has changed dramatically, especially since the end of World War II. While social change is typically thought of as a good thing, sociologists argue that social change is complex, varied and often contentious because it can produce both positive and negative effects for different groups within society.

In this course, we will assess the social, ethical and sustainability implications of changes within the agrifood system for different groups, including farm families, farm workers, rural communities, consumers, and the environment. Any assessment of change within the agrifood system is complicated by the fact that agriculture not only produces food and fiber but also social, cultural, economic and environmental public goods that are critical to the broader well-being and sustainability of society.

III. Learning outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain key sociological and ethical concepts (e.g. social change, trust, values, social inequality, power) and provide examples related to the US agrifood system.
2. Understand key drivers of change (e.g. government policy, science and technology, corporations, social movements) within the US agrifood system, especially since WWII.
3. Critically assess the sociological implications of these changes for different groups (e.g. farmers, farmworkers, rural communities, consumers) and the environment.
4. Critically assess the ethical dimensions related to these changes, including critically considering our own values, beliefs and moral assumptions.
5. Identify academic and nonacademic sources and databases of reliable and scientific information on the US agrifood system.
6. Apply critical thinking skills to reflect on your own and other's values, beliefs, and perspectives related to controversial issues within the agri-food system.

IV. Course Materials

The following books are required and can be purchased from the University bookstore or amazon.com.

Konefal, J. and M. Hatanaka. 2019. *Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. New York: Oxford University Press

Leonard, C. 2014. *The Meat Racket*. New York: Simon & Schuster

- All additional reading materials are available on Canvas (see info below)

V. Course Requirements

1) Canvas

We will be using the on-line Canvas website <https://canvas.iastate.edu/> including for quizzes and exams. You must check the site regularly for emails, updates, announcements, readings, course changes, grades, etc. If you do not know how to use Canvas or the university email system or you have other questions regarding technology contact the **Solution Center on campus, 294-4000**.

2) Preparation, Attendance & Participation

Education is a collective endeavor – you get out of it what you put into it – **active participation** and engagement is the way that most of us learn best. Therefore, I expect all students to have completed all assigned readings **before** coming to class, bring the readings to class, and be prepared to discuss them. Most of the material from your assigned readings will not be covered in lectures and the lectures will cover material that is not in your assigned readings.

Undergraduate students are expected to spend two hours in preparation outside of class for each credit hour. Therefore, for this 3-credit course I expect that you will spend an average of **6 hours per week outside of class** on activities such as reading, note taking, participation assignments, reviewing lecture notes, etc.

Attending **all** lectures, completing the assigned readings, participating in classroom discussions, and conscientiously completing the course assignments is essential for **earning** the grade you desire.

Note that the lecture outlines posted on Canvas are a compliment to, not a substitute for, the notes you take in class. ***Therefore, you need to take complete notes during the lecture.***

- Attend office hours. We are glad to meet with you outside of class. If you cannot attend the scheduled office hours, let us know and we can organize another time to meet. Please note, however, that office hours will not be used to cover material that students miss when voluntarily deciding not to attend class.

3) Class Policies: Professionalism, Mutual Respect, Inclusivity

Learning is a group activity and the behavior of each person in class affects the learning outcomes of others. The following rules are designed to ensure that the classroom experience is a positive one for everyone involved. **NB: Non-compliance with these rules will result in the loss of active participation points.**

- It is expected that you will arrive to class on time and remain for the entire class period.

- To be an active learner requires giving your full attention for the entire class. Please do not sleep, chit-chat, read the newspaper or other materials, or engage in any other kind of disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- Electronic equipment (i.e. smart phones, laptops, iPads) may be used for class-related activities only (i.e. quizzes, note-taking). No exceptions.
- You are expected to treat myself and all other participants in the course with courtesy and respect. Your comments to others should be factual, constructive, and free from harassing statements. You are encouraged to disagree with other students, but such disagreements need to be based upon facts and documentation (rather than prejudices and personalities). It is my goal to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom. Please contact me if you have suggestions for improving the classroom environment.
- If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. You should obtain notes from a fellow classmate and inquire about any announcements made in class.

Learning disabilities students: If you have a learning disability and need special accommodations, make this known to me at the beginning of the semester. You will also need to contact the Disability Resources (DR) office, located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076 or call them at 515-294-6624.

VI. Course Assessment

The course is divided into three parts.

1. Short Essay (10%)

You will be responsible for writing a short essay on a sociological and ethical topic related to the agrifood system. Further details will be provided in class.

2. Exams (45%)

There will be three exams: one after each section of the course. Each exam will cover material from lectures, films, and assigned reading materials. The exams will include multiple choice, short-answer, and short essays. The final exam will focus on material from Part III but will include some material from the entire course.

3. Ethics Research Project (30%)

You will be required to complete an individual research project on a social and ethical issue related to the agrifood system (e.g. biotechnology, food waste, food insecurity, farm workers, climate change). Further details will be provided in class.

4. Quizzes (5%)

Regular multiple-choice quizzes that cover the readings and lecture material will be assigned for you to complete on Canvas outside of class. The objective of these quizzes is to help you prepare for the exams.

5. Active Class Participation (10%)

****NB:** You will not be allowed to make-up in-class participation grades for any reason.**

Every class period will provide students the opportunity to engage with, discuss, and reflect on the material presented in the lectures and readings. **Active participation** in class is worth a total of 10 percent of your final grade. Each class, points will be assigned to a variety of activities, which may include preparation and involvement in discussions and debates, individual (i.e., reading summaries/demographic analysis) and group assignments. In calculating your final grade, your **four** lowest grades will be dropped. **NB: you must attend class to receive active participation points** (i.e. you cannot complete a quiz if you do not attend class).

- We **do not** accept any assignments by email.
- All written assignments will be graded on both structure and content including: clarity, logic, grammar, spelling, how well the questions assigned are answered, understanding and incorporation of course readings, correct use of citations and bibliography.
- The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus during the semester as necessary. I will inform the class of any changes as far in advance as possible.

Top Five Tips to Do Well

1. Read the syllabus and refer to it throughout the semester.
2. Come to class and be prepared to actively participate (this includes actively listening).
3. Check your grades every week.
4. Meet with Iim or myself (sooner rather than later) to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about the coursework or your performance.
5. Carefully read the essay and project guidelines, exam guides, or grading rubric **before** starting the assignment. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification.

Grading and Evaluation

Due Date	Assignment	Total Points	% Grade	Grading Scale
				A 94% and above
Feb 5	Exam I	100	10	A- 90-93%
Feb 25	Essay	100	10	B+ 87-89%
March 14	Exam II	150	15	B 83-86 %
April 25	Research Project	300	30	B- 80-82%
May 6	Exam II	200	20	C+ 77-79%
Weekly	Quizzes		5	C 73-76%
Weekly	Active Class Participation	270	10	C- 70-72%
	Total		100	D+ 67-69%
				D 63-66%
				D- 60-62%
				F 0-59%

Course Schedule: Topics and Readings

Part I: A Framework for Understanding Social Change in the Agri-food System

Week 1 (Jan 15 & 17): Sustainable Food Systems: A Sociological and Ethical Perspective

Syllabus

Konefal and Hatanaka, 2019, Introduction. In *Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture*.

Optional

Gould and Lewis, 2017. The Sociological Imagination. In *Ten Lessons in Sociology*.

Week 2 (Jan 22 & 24): Sustainable Food Systems: A Sociological and Ethical Perspective

CAST. 2005. *Agricultural Ethics*

Optional

Neff and Lawrence, 2015, Food Systems

UC Davis, ND. What is Sustainable Agriculture

Week 3 (Jan 29 & 31): Engaging in Controversial Issues in Agriculture

Faivre, 2016. Moving beyond advocacy. *Feedstuffs*

Haidt, 2012. Chptr 2: The Intuitive Dog and its Rational Tail and Chptr 4: Vote for me (here's why). In *The Righteous Mind*.

Part II: The Changing Structure of Food Production

Week 4 (Feb 5 & 7): The Industrialization of Agriculture

Constance, 2019, The Industrialization of Agriculture. In *Twenty Lessons...*

Glenna and Tobin, 2019. Science, Technology, and Agriculture. In *Twenty Lessons...*

Week 5 (Feb 12 & 14): The Industrialization of Agriculture

Leonard, 2014. Part I. In *The Meat Racket*

Week 6 (Feb 19 & 21): Corporate Control of Agrifood Markets (Under Contract)

Howard, 2019. Increasing Corporate Control: From Supermarkets to Seeds. In *Twenty Lessons...*

Leonard, 2014. Part II. In *The Meat Racket*

Week 7 (Feb 26 & 28): Corporate Control of Agrifood Markets

Leonard, 2014. Part III. In *The Meat Racket*

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty

The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic dishonesty. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. Any type of academic dishonesty that is discovered will result in a 0 for the assignment and possibly a 0 for the course.

Examples of specific acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

1. **Obtaining unauthorized information.** Information is obtained dishonestly, for example, by copying graded homework assignments from another student, by working with another student on a take-home test or homework when not specifically permitted to do so by the instructor, by looking at your notes or other written work during an examination when not specifically permitted to do so, or obtaining work from an online homework or exam warehouse.
2. **Tendering of information.** Students may not give or sell their work to another person who plans to submit it as his or her own. This includes giving their work to another student to be copied, sharing work when the instructor's directions were that work be completed independently, giving someone answers to exam questions during the exam, taking an exam and discussing its contents with students who will be taking the same exam, or giving or selling a term paper to another student.
3. **Misrepresentation.** Students misrepresent their work by handing in the work of someone else. Examples include: purchasing a paper from a term paper service; reproducing another person's paper, project, research, or examination (even with modifications) and submitting it as their own; having another student do their computer program, complete their design project, or complete their online quiz.
4. **Bribery.** Offering money or any item or service to a faculty member or any other person to gain academic advantage for yourself or another is dishonest.
5. **Plagiarism.** Unacknowledged use of the information, ideas, or phrasing of other writers is an offense comparable with theft and fraud, and it is so recognized by the copyright and intellectual work laws. Offenses of this kind are known as plagiarism.

Disability Accommodation

Iowa State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Sect 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you have a disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please contact (instructor name) to set up a meeting within the first two weeks of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your need. Before meeting with (instructor name), you will need to obtain a SAAR form with recommendations for accommodations from the Disability Resources Office, located in Room 1076 on the main floor of the Student Services Building. Their telephone number is 515-294-7220 or email disabilityresources@iastate.edu. Retroactive requests for accommodations will not be honored.

Dead Week

This class follows the Iowa State University Dead Week guidelines as outlined in <http://catalog.iastate.edu/academiclife/#deadweek>

Harassment and Discrimination

Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U.S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact his/her instructor, Student Assistance at 515-294-1020 or email dso-sas@iastate.edu , or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance at 515-294-7612.

Reporting of Sexual Abuse

Under Title IX, a federal civil right law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities, I and all of your instructors are considered “Responsible Employees,” which means that in the event that you choose to write or speak about having survived sexualized violence, including rape, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, Iowa State University policy requires that I share this information with the ISU Title IX Coordinator (<https://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/students/sexualmisconduct#CampusNotConfidential>). One of the coordinators will contact you to let you know about resources and support services at ISU as well as options for holding accountable the person who harmed you. It is **YOUR CHOICE** if you want to speak further with them.

If you do not want the Title IX Administrator notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus and in the community (<https://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/students/sexualmisconduct#Confidential>). They can connect you with support services and help explore your options now, or in the future. Campus confidential resources include:

- **Margaret Sloss Women’s Center** 515-294-4154 (<http://www.mswc.dso.iastate.edu/>)
- **Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success** 515-294-5433 (<http://center.dso.iastate.edu/>)

If you are a survivor, or are concerned about someone else and need immediate information on what to do, please go to <https://www.sexualmisconduct.dso.iastate.edu/help-a-friend/confidential>

Religious Accommodation

If an academic or work requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances, you may request reasonable accommodations. Your request must be in writing, and your instructor or supervisor will review the request. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

Contact Information

If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email academicissues@iastate.edu.

ISU Principles of Community

Respect: We seek to foster an open-minded understanding among individuals, organizations and groups. We support this understanding through outreach, increasing opportunities for collaboration, formal education programs and strategies for resolving disagreement.

Purpose: We are encouraged to be engaged in the university community. Thus, we strive to build a genuine community that promotes the advancement of knowledge, cooperation and leadership.

Cooperation: We recognize that the mission of the university is enhanced when we work together to achieve the goals of the university. Therefore, we value each member of the Iowa State University community for his or her insights and efforts, collective and individual, to enhance the quality of campus life.

Richness of Diversity: We recognize and cherish the richness of diversity in our university experience. Furthermore, we strive to increase the diversity of ideas, cultures and experiences throughout the university community.

Freedom from discrimination: We recognize that we must strive to overcome historical and divisive biases in our society. Therefore, we commit ourselves to create and maintain a community in which all students, staff, faculty and administrators can work together in an atmosphere free from discrimination, and to respond appropriately to all acts of discrimination.

Honest and respectful expression of ideas: We affirm the right to and the importance of a free exchange of ideas at Iowa State University within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect. We work together to promote awareness of various ideas through education and constructive strategies to consider and engage in honest disagreements.