

APPLIED RURAL SOCIOLOGY

SOC/COD 574

COURSE SYLLABUS

SPRING 2006

Course Information:

Meeting Place: 206 Kethley Hall

Meeting Times: Monday, 6:00–8:00 pm

Instructor: Dr. Alan Barton

Office: 201F Kethley

Telephone: (662) 846-4097

E-mail: abarton@deltastate.edu

Webpage: http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/

Office Hours: The instructor holds regular office hours on Mondays from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. See the instructor's webpage for other regular office hours. If you cannot make one of these times, contact the professor to set up an appointment.

Course Webpage: Additional materials and updated course information can be found on the course webpage:

http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/SOC474Sp06/SOC474Syllabus.htm

Course Overview:

Rural sociology has long been an important subfield of the general discipline of sociology. Although sociology generally focuses on modern society, and thus urbanization and urban areas, these could not exist without rural areas. Rural sociologists study the connections between rural and urban areas, as well as characteristics of rural people. In this course we will study the state of social conditions in rural America, focusing on social relations and social institutions. We will pay particular attention to economic conditions, and structural transformations in agriculture, an important rural industry. We also will focus on community in the rural South. You will engage the course material through readings, class discussions, and practical projects.

Readings:

David L. Brown and Louis E. Swanson. 2003. *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press. (ISBN: 0-271-02242-6).

Thomas A. Lyson. 2004. *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food and Community*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England/Tufts University Press. (ISBN: 1-58465-414-7).

William W. Falk. 2004. *Rooted in Place: Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press. (ISBN: 0-8135-3465-8).

Norman Tyler. 2000. *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles and Practice*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (ISBN: 0-39373-039-5).

The books are available at the university bookstore. You should purchase the books or otherwise arrange to complete all of the reading assignments. There will also be occasional handouts to supplement the books.

Course Organization and Approach:

This course uses a participatory, learner-centered, adult education approach. An adult education approach recognizes that you are responsible for your own learning. The professor can only provide opportunities to learn, but cannot force you to learn. You are expected to work hard in this course, meaning that for every hour of class time, you should spend at least three hours outside of class preparing by doing readings, assignments, studying for quizzes and exams, and thinking about the course material.

You are expected to take responsibility for the success of the course, that is, you should take an active interest not just in the course material, but in the course itself, making it a success for all participants. Factors such as interest, motivation, creativity, and initiative are important elements in evaluating your performance and assigning a grade.

Course material is presented in several formats, including class discussions, readings, and practical exercises. Readings on current issues in rural sociology are presented in the assigned chapters in the book *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-first Century* by David Brown and Lou Swanson, and in several assigned articles. Two other books present specific topics pertaining to rural areas. *Civic Agriculture*, by Tom Lyson, traces the history of economic restructuring in agriculture in a global system, and presents alternative approaches to community development for rural areas. *Rooted in Place*, by William Falk, illustrates the idea of community in rural areas, focusing on one African American family in the rural South. *Historic Preservation*, by Norman Tyler, provides practical information on preserving heritage sites, and will be useful for the group research project connected to current efforts to use heritage tourism as a means of community development in the Mississippi Delta.

Learning Opportunities:

You must complete the following assignments:

(1) Engaging in Class Discussions (20 points)

- You are expected to do all of the assigned readings and attend all class sessions
- You are expected to engage actively in classroom discussions, reflecting on the topic and readings
- The quality of contributions to class discussions is more important than the quantity of contributions

(2) Leading Class Discussions (20 points)

- You will lead class discussions on the assigned readings during the semester; the readings will be divided up among the graduate students in the course
- Your responsibilities are to get other students talking about the topic, to mediate the contributions of other students, to keep the discussion focused, and to guide the discussion to ensure that the social and policy issues are covered
- Each discussion should last approximately 50 minutes

(3) Current Topics in Rural America (20 points)

- You will lead one 15-minute discussion on topics of current interest pertaining to rural America
- First, select a recent article from a newspaper that presents a topic of interest to rural residents
- One week before your discussion, distribute a copy of your article to other class members, and submit a copy to the instructor
- During your presentation, present a short summary of the article to the class, focusing on the social or policy issue
- Facilitate a class discussion on the topic, encouraging participation by all members of the class
- Your responsibility is get class members talking about the social and policy issues, using the article as an example

(4) Group Project (40 points)

Over the course of the semester, graduate students will engage in a group project centered on the development of a heritage area in the Mississippi Delta.

- Team up with two other graduate students in the course for this project
- Select a particular issue related to heritage tourism in the Mississippi Delta, and conduct qualitative research on this project, using focus group interviews
- Each group should conduct three or four focus groups, with each group member taking the lead on one group; each leader should have a specific research question pertaining to your issue in mind for their focus group
- Identify subjects for your focus groups; each focus group should have 5 to 7 subjects, selected according to specified criteria
- Conduct the focus group with your group members, according to procedures presented in class and readings
- Once you have completed the focus groups, organize and analyze your results; each group member can use the results from all of the focus groups that your group completed
- Submit a 15-page paper in which you discuss the particular issue and present your results, using quotes from your focus groups as evidence to support your points

(5) Engagement (+/- 10 points)

- A total of 10 points may be added or subtracted from your final grade to reflect the degree of engagement in the course that you exhibit
- Engaged students demonstrate qualities such as motivation, extra effort, interest in the course material, improvement over the course of the semester and leadership.
- Lack of engagement is manifested by frequent absences, talking with others or dozing off in class, lack of interest in the course material, lack of preparation, and lack of participation in course activities.

Grading:

There are a total of 100 points available for the semester. Your final score is simply the sum of all points earned over the semester. If you accumulate 92 or more points over the course of the semester, you will get an "A" in the course. If you accumulate 84 to 91 points, you will get a "B," for 76 to 83 points you will get a "C," and for 68 to 75 points will get a "D." If you get less than 74 points, your final grade will be an "F." Note that you start with zero and earn points; you do not start with 100 and lose points.

Policies and Expectations:

Responsibility:

YOU are responsible for learning the course material and for your progress in the course. You are expected to **attend class regularly** and **complete all of the assignments**. You are expected to know **all** material presented during class sessions, whether you attended the class or not. If you miss a class session, you should check with another student to see what you missed. “I didn’t know” is **NEVER** a valid excuse. If you don’t know something, it is your job to find out.

Learning Opportunities:

You are responsible for completing all of the assigned work in this course in a timely fashion. Assigned work is designed to provide you with learning opportunities, and all work is due at the time specified; **no late assignments will be accepted**, and missed assignments **cannot** be made up. If you miss class or an assignment, you are making a choice that prioritizes other activities above the class, and you will receive a grade of zero for any assignment that you fail to turn in.

ALL work that you submit (except in-class work) should be **typed/word processed**. If you submit a paper with more than one sheet, please attach all sheets with a staple or paper clip **BEFORE** you bring the assignment to class to turn in. The instructor will **NOT ACCEPT** work that is handwritten or that has multiple pages that are not attached with a staple or paper clip.

Absences:

You are expected to attend all class sessions and activities. Please make sure that you **sign the roll sheet** at each class meeting, as this will serve as official documentation of your attendance. If you miss class, you must document your absence, or points will be deducted from your grade (See the information on grading attendance). Please notify the instructor **IN ADVANCE** if you must miss class. It is in your interest to provide the instructor with **written** notification (e.g. a note or e-mail) to document any missed classes. It is risky simply to tell the instructor and expect him to remember.

Illnesses and Emergencies: Illnesses and emergencies **MUST** be documented with a note from a doctor or other professional. You should bring the note to the next class meeting and submit it to the instructor. Illnesses and emergencies pertain **only** to the student, not to the student’s family, friends or others.

University Activities: If you must miss class for an official university activity, you should make arrangements with the instructor **BEFORE** the missed class. Appropriate documentation is required.

Making Up Missed Work: If you miss an exam or other assignment due to a documented illness, emergency or official university activity, a make up will be given at the end of the semester. The make-up exam will be an oral exam with the instructor, in which you will be required to respond to a series of questions

You are responsible for all material presented in all classes, even during an excused absence. You should get class notes from another student for all class sessions you miss.

Class Participation:

Class participation is an important element in this course. The purpose of class discussions is to provide you with an opportunity to practice thinking skills in a safe environment. In discussions, you are encouraged to explore ideas presented in the readings and lectures, to think about and apply concepts, and to develop arguments and evaluate evidence.

If you repeatedly engage in **disruptive behaviors** during class discussions, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

- You must demonstrate **appropriate respect** for the opinions and ideas of other students during class discussions. It is acceptable (and encouraged) to disagree with the perspectives of other students or the instructor, but you should phrase this to show disagreement with the **idea or opinion**, not with the person presenting the idea or opinion. If you repeatedly show disrespect for other class members, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Class discussions are **NOT** a time to chat with other students about topics not related to the course. Talking privately with other students while the rest of the class is trying to carry on a discussion is disruptive, bothersome, and disrespectful to other students and to the professor. If you repeatedly speak when you do not have the floor, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Class is **NOT** a time to catch up on your sleep. If you are not prepared to stay awake and participate in class discussions and other activities, you should not come to class. If you continually fall asleep during class sessions, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

If you are asked to leave the classroom for disruptive or disrespectful behavior, you **cannot** make up any work that you miss as a result.

Electronic Devices (Cell Phones, Pagers, etc.):

Please make sure that all cell phones, pagers, and similar electronic devices are **turned off** during class time. If your phone or pager repeatedly interrupts class, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

DO NOT bring cell phones or other portable communication devices to class during quizzes, exams, or in-class assignments. If the instructor sees a cell phone or other device during a quiz, exam or in-class assignment, you will receive a grade of zero on the quiz, exam or in-class assignment, and you will be asked to leave the classroom.

If you must have a cell phone or pager (e.g. if you are a volunteer fireman or emergency responder), you **MUST** make arrangements with the instructor in advance.

Academic Honesty:

You are expected to **comply with all academic standards and ethics** as defined in the DSU Bulletin and Handbook. You are expected to do your **own work** in this course. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will **NOT** be tolerated.

You should be fully aware of the Course Policy on Plagiarism and Cheating. If you are caught cheating in this course, you will be dismissed from the course with a grade of "F." In addition, a report will be filed with the university's Vice President for Academic Affairs.

IT IS **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** TO UNDERSTAND THESE GUIDELINES. Make sure you know what constitutes plagiarism and cheating **BEFORE** turning in any assignments. Once you turn in an assignment, you are representing it as your own work. If you are suspected of committing plagiarism, pleas of "I didn't know what plagiarism was" will not be accepted.

If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, see the DSU Library's "Plagiarism Prevention: A Guide for Students," at <<http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/1268.asp>>. The Course Policy on Plagiarism and Cheating also outlines examples of plagiarism. If it is still unclear, see the instructor.

Special Accommodations:

Appropriate accommodations will be made for students with medical problems or diagnosed disabilities. Have Dr. Richard Houston at **Reily Student Health Center** (846-4690) contact the course instructor to make arrangements.

Course Outline:

Date	Topics & Assignments	Readings
Week 1: Course Introduction		
Jan. 9	Course Overview and Expectations; Review Syllabus	
	Introduction to the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area (Guest: Dr. Luther Brown)	
Week 2: Martin Luther King Holiday		
Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Holiday	
Week 3: Defining Rural America		
Jan. 23	Who Lives in Rural America?	Challenges: Ch. 1 (Johnson), pp. 19–31; Ch. 5 (MacTavish & Salamon), pp. 73–85
	Exercise: What is Rural?	
	Conducting Focus Group Interviews (Guest: Dr. John Green)	Handout (Focus Group Interviewing)
Week 4: Social Relations in Rural America		
Jan. 30	Race & Ethnicity	Challenges: Ch. 2 (Harris & Worthen), pp. 32–42; Ch. 4 (Saenz & Torres), pp. 57–70
	Current Topics in Rural America; Discussion Leaders	Handout (Newspaper articles)
	Tourism in Rural America & the Mississippi Delta	Challenges: Ch. 14 (Krannich & Petrzelka), pp. 190–199; Handout (Barton, 2005)

Date	Topics & Assignments	Readings
Week 5: Social Relations in Rural America		
Feb. 6	Gender & Age	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 8 (Tickamyer & Henderson), pp. 109–117; Ch. 6 (Glasgow), pp. 86–96
	Approaches to Studying Rural America	Handout
	Groups and Topics	<i>Historic Preservation</i> , Ch. 1, pp. 11–32
Week 6: Economic Conditions in Rural America		
Feb. 13	Restructuring Rural Economies	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 10 (McGranahan), pp. 135–151; Ch. 11 (Falk & Lobao), pp. 152–165
	Current Topics in Rural America; Discussion Leaders	Handout (Newspaper articles)
	Developing Interview Protocols	<i>Historic Preservation</i> , Ch. 2, pp. 33–58
Week 7: Economic Conditions in Rural America		
Feb. 20	Poverty in Rural America	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 9 (Jensen, McLaughlin & Slack), pp. 118–131; Ch. 28 (Zimmerman & Hirshl), pp. 363–374
	Current Topics in Rural America; Discussion Leaders	Handout (Newspaper articles)
	Practicing Focus Groups	
Week 8: Agriculture in Rural America		
Feb. 27	Community & Agriculture	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 17 (Lyson & Tolbert), pp. 228–238; Ch. 13 (Buttel), pp. 177–189
		<i>Civic Agriculture</i> : Ch. 1 & 2, pp. 1–29
	Reports from the Field	<i>Historic Preservation</i> , Ch. 3, pp. 59–82

Date	Topics & Assignments	Readings
Week 9: Agriculture in Rural America		
Mar. 6	The Global Food System	Challenges: Ch. 18 (Bonanno & Constance), pp. 241–251; Ch. 29 (McMichael), pp. 375–384
		Civic Agriculture: Ch. 3 & 4, pp. 30–60
	Reports from the Field	Historic Preservation, Ch. 4, pp. 83–92
Mar. 13	SPRING HOLIDAYS	
Week 10: Agriculture in Rural America		
Mar. 20	Localizing Food Supply: Linking Agriculture, Community and Place	Civic Agriculture: Ch. 5–7, pp. 61–105
	The Cleveland Farmers Market (Guest: Dr. John Green)	
	Organizing focus group data (Guest: Dr. John Green)	
Week 11: Social Institutions in Rural America		
Mar. 27	Health Care & Religion	Challenges: Ch. 22 (Morton), pp. 290–302; Ch. 20 (Glenna), pp. 262–272
	Current Topics in Rural America; Discussion Leaders	Handout (Newspaper articles)
	Compiling Results from Focus Groups	Historic Preservation, Ch. 5, pp. 93–107
Week 12: Social Institutions in Rural America		
Apr. 3	Communities as Agents of Development	Challenges: Ch. 26 (Green), pp. 343–352; Ch. 15 (Luloff & Bridger), pp. 203–213
		Rooted in Place: Intro, Appendix, Ch. 1, 2, pp. 1–50, 191–199
	Compiling Results from Focus Groups	Historic Preservation, Ch. 7, pp. 139–153

Date	Topics & Assignments	Readings
Week 13: Social Institutions in Rural America		
Apr. 10	Education & Rural Youth	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 7 (Lichter, Roscigno & Condron), pp. 109–117; Ch. 21 (Beaulieu, Israel & Wimberley), pp. 273–289
		<i>Rooted in Place</i> : Ch. 3–5, pp. 51–117
	Analyzing Results from Focus Groups	<i>Historic Preservation</i> , Ch. 9, pp. 168–183
Week 14: Social Institutions in Rural America		
Apr. 17	Changes in Rural Governance	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 27 (Sharp & Parisi), pp. 353–362; Ch. 19 (Warner), pp. 252–261
		<i>Rooted in Place</i> : Ch. 6–8, pp. 118–190
	Reporting Results	<i>Historic Preservation</i> , Ch. 10, pp. 184–207
Week 15: The Future of Rural America		
Apr. 24	Challenges for Rural Development	<i>Challenges</i> : Ch. 30 (Pigg & Bradshaw), pp. 385–396; Conclusion (Swanson & Brown), pp. 397–405
	Engaging the Literature in Rural Sociology; Presentations by Undergraduates	
	Reporting Results	<i>Historic Preservation</i> , Ch. 11, pp. 208–219
Week 16: Dead Week		
May 1	TBA	