

SYLLABUS: Rural Sociology 678
Women in Rural Society

Spring 2004

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Office Hours: Thursday and Friday 1:00-3:00 PM and by appointment

Course Description

This course examines women, work, and inequality in rural society from a comparative, cross-national sociological perspective. It focuses on women's roles in agriculture, other economic, particularly environmentally-related sectors, and household production and reproduction. We are concerned with how women's lives are shaped by social and economic change, such as transformations in the division of labor and global economy, state policy, and in the case of the developing world, the policies and technologies introduced by donor nations. In addition, we are concerned with women's active response to social and economic change, particularly as it is manifested politically. The first part of the course gives an overview of sociological and other social science perspectives on women's work and social positions. The second part discusses rural women in developing nations of the global South. The third part discusses women in transition, crossing borders from traditional rural settings to other nations and urban settings. The fourth part examines rural women in the U.S. and it draws comparisons between the status and work roles of rural women in developed and developing societies.

The course has a seminar format. It is centered upon student discussion, critique of the readings, and presentation of course material.

Course Objectives

1. To provide the student with a comparative, sociological view of rural society and an understanding of women's social and economic contributions to such society.
2. To understand the impact of social, economic, and environmental changes on the statuses and work roles of women in rural society; and conversely, to understand how women respond actively to change and shape the social structure around them. Our focus is on women's work and inequality in rural society.
3. To understand and to be able critique the sociological theoretical and methodological

approaches presented in the readings.

Course Requirements and Grading

This course will have three sets of written requirements in regard to grading: (1) a mid-term take-home examination; (2) a term paper on a topic that is mutually agreeable; (3) two short position papers, or critical essays about the readings. In addition, each student will participate in a group assignment that involves leading discussion of readings for one class period.

Your grade will be determined in the following way. The midterm exam and the term paper count 25% and 35%, respectively, toward your final grade. Each position paper counts 10%. An evaluation of your group performance and other class participation will count the remaining 20%. Criteria regarding class participation will be: (1) that your class participation reflects thoughtful consideration of the required readings, clearly demonstrating your knowledge, questions, and concerns about the topics introduced in the readings for each week; and (2) that you are consistent in class participation, which means that you contribute to each day's discussion and also that you are present for the full class time for each class (if you miss part of any class, note that this will be recorded as a "partial attendance"). *Please be sure that you attend each class. Your input to class discussion is very important!*

Required Readings:

1. Christine Harzig, Peasant Maids, City Women (1997 Cornell University Press).
2. Carolyn Sachs, Gendered Fields: Rural Women, Agriculture, and Environment (Westview Press, 1996)
3. Ester Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development (reprinted by Earthscan Publications Limited, London, 1989) (Still on back-order at OSU Bookstore).
4. Janet Townsend, Women's Voices from the Rainforest (Routledge, 1995)
5. Barndt, Deborah. Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).
6. Other readings: course packet of readings available at the Agricultural Administration Library. Note: one article-week 7-is available on-line through OSCAR.

List of Topics and Required Readings

I. STUDYING GENDER AND GLOBAL CHANGE IN RURAL PLACES

Week 1, March 31 Overview of course.

Begin discussion of topic. Grading and Administrative Procedures.

Weeks 2 and 3 Sociological Theory, Gender, and Global Change

April 7, 14

Carolyn Sachs, Gendered Fields (Boulder, CA: Westview Press, 1996).
Chapters 1, 2, and 3 "Situating Rural Women in Theory and Practice", "Feminist Theory and Rural Women," "Rural Women and Nature" (pp. 1-43).

"Buffalo Bird Woman" pp.110-122 in Native American Women's Writing, (Oxford, 2000).

Charles L. Harper and Kevin Leicht, "The Emerging Global System." (Chapter 12, pp. 264-293) from Exploring Social Change, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 2002).

"Studying Gender: An Overview" pp.2-29 in Claire Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran, Women, Men, and Society, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003.

"Sex, Gender, and Feminist Theory" pp. 167-193 in State Theories by Murray Kuttilla and Wendee Kubik, Zed Books, 2000.

II. RURAL WOMEN IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES

This section deals with the social status and work of rural women in developing countries and women's response to social change. Topics include: women's contributions to agriculture and other economic sectors; the impact of economic development and state policy on women; and women's political response to social structural change; and rural women and environment.

Week 4, April 21 Women and Global Production I

Women's Role in Economic Development, Ester Boserup (original, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970; reissued by Earthscan Publications, 1989). Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12 (pp.1-81, 174-193, 211-225).

Week 5, April 28 Women and Global Production II

Articles from Economic Development and Women in World Community edited by Roy et al. (1999) Chapter 1, "Economic Development and Women," Chapter 2, "Discrimination and Changes in the Status of Women," Chapter 7 "Women in South Asia with Particular Reference to India, Chapter 12 "The Magic of the Market and the Price Women Pay: Examples from Latin America and the Caribbean."

"Monogamy, Polygyny, or the Single State? Changes in Marriage Patterns in a Tanzanian Coastal Village," by Pat Caplan pp. 44-65 and "Born to Be Less Equal" by C. K. Omari and D.A. S. Mbilinyi pp.293-314 from Gender, Work, and Family in Tanzania (2000)

Week 6, May 5 Women of the Rainforest

Janet Townsend, Women's Voices from the Rainforest, Pp. 1-81, 123-167.

Week 7, May 12 Women's Response to Globalization

Joya Misra, "Gender and the World System,"

Wilma Dunaway "Women at Risk on the Cherokee Frontier," from Hall (ed.) A World Systems Reader, Rowman, 2000.pp 105-122, 195-208.

"From Feminising to Engendering Development", by Cathy McIlwaine and Kavita Datta, Gender, Place, and Culture, Volume 10, No. 4, December 2003, pp. 369-382. (Available through OSU OSCAR, on-line journals).

III. WOMEN IN TRANSITION: CROSSING BORDERS AND MOVING FROM TRADITIONAL RURAL SETTINGS

Week 8, May 19 Crossing Borders Historically: Immigration from Rural Europe to the U.S.

Peasant Maids, City Women pp. 1-97, pp. 143-181, pp. 299-338.

Week 9, May 26 Women and Commodity Chains in the U.S. and Cross-Nationally

Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail, pp.1-81, pp. 155-228.

IV. FARM AND RURAL WOMEN IN THE U.S. AND COMPARATIVELY

Week 10, June 2

Contemporary Rural and Farm Women and their Responses to Change

L. Lobao and K. Meyer, "Economic Decline, Gender, and Labor Flexibility in Family-Based Enterprises: Midwestern Farming in the 1980s," Social Forces, 1995 74 (2):575-608.

"Women and Persistent Rural Poverty", Rural Sociological Society Task Force Report, 1993 Chapter 7, pp.200-229.

"Rural Women: New Roles for a New Century." pp. 109-117 by Ann Tickamyer and Deborah Henderson, in Challenges for Rural America in the 21st Century, 2003.

Rural women in Comparative Perspective

Fagan, G. H. "Cultural Politics and (post) Development Paradigm(s) (pp. 178-195 in Critical Development Theory: Contributions to a New Paradigm. Zed Books, 1999.

Carolyn E. Sach's, Gendered Fields, Chapter 4, Rural Women's Connections to the Land (pp. 45-66), Women on Family Farms: A Reappraisal," (pp. 123-140) "Global Restructuring, Local Outcomes, and the Reshaping of Rural Women's Work," and "Conclusions" 9 pp (141-180).