

Rural Community Field Project
Interdisciplinary Studies 3110
Fall, 2004
University of Minnesota, Morris

INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Engin Sungur
1350 Science Building, (320) 589-6325
sungurea@mrs.umn.edu
Benjamin Winchester
110 Community Services Building, (320) 589-6451
benw@mrs.umn.edu

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

Every two weeks, site and date to be determined.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides an educational experience in a rural learning environment that focuses on rural issues of community life, demography, culture, environment, and policy. A collaborative effort between the Center for Small Towns and a rural public entity (such as local units of government, non-profit agencies, and school systems) in West Central Minnesota will provide an environment in which civic engagement objectives will be achieved and grounded in a practical setting.

A focus in this course will be on the structure of rural society through directed readings that parallel a practical experience in rural Minnesota. Students will gain an understanding about the historical social structures of rural society, such as the rise of *rural* in American society, the uses and applications of the term *community*, notions of *growth*, and how these come together in current efforts to maintain and revitalize rural areas through *development* efforts by linking these concepts with a practical community problem.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Readings. A set of readings has been selected and organized into modules to guide and shape the learning environment. These readings will be made available to the student at the beginning of the course. Additionally, the context of the field project will also provide guidance for additional readings.
- B. Reading responses. Students will prepare a written response for each module of readings identified below. The papers, five pages in length (double-spaced) should summarize the readings and provide a critical reflection of how the concepts encountered are witnessed by the student in their field project. They will be due on a schedule defined at the beginning of the course. The papers will be returned the following week with brief written comments.
- C. Final Paper. The final assignment will bring together the readings and discussions in essay form to synthesize the predominant themes found in the reading responses with a thorough examination of the structures that are encountered during the course of the field project. This paper will not exceed twenty-five pages, double-spaced. A draft of the paper will be turned in two weeks prior to the due date for a structural review. This paper will be returned with three days with brief written comments.

GRADING

This course will be graded on a S-N basis. If the student satisfactorily completes the readings, the responses, and the final paper a grade of S will be granted. During any time, if the assigned work is not completed, the student will be notified that this will impinge upon the successful completion of the course.

Module 1. How has the term *rural* become part of our language usage and what does it mean today?

Galpin, Charles. 1915. *The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community*. Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin. Research Bulletin 34.

Dewey, Richard. 1960. The Rural-Urban Continuum: Real but Relatively Unimportant. *American Journal of Sociology*. 66(1):60-66.

Bealer, Robert C., Fern K. Willits, and William P. Kuvlesky. 1965. The Meaning of 'Rurality' in American Society: some implications of alternative definitions. *Rural Sociology*. 30(3):255-266

Willits, Fern K., Robert C. Bealer, and Vincent L. Timbers. 1990. Popular Images of "Rurality": Data from a Pennsylvania Survey. *Rural Sociology*. 55(4):559-578.

Wilkinson, Kenneth. 1991. Chapter 2 – The rural-urban variable in community research. *The Community in Rural America*. Greenwood Press: New York.

Blank, Steven C. 1999. The End of the American Farm? *The Futurist*. April:22-27.

Drabenstott, Mark. 2002. Exploring Agriculture's New Frontier. *The Main Street Economist: Commentary on the Rural Economy*. Center for the Study of Rural America. February.

Friedland, William H. 2002. Agriculture and Rurality: Beginning the "Final Separation"? *Rural Sociology*. 67(3):350-371.

Module 2. What is a *community* and how has it been historically defined?

Gillette, John M. 1926. Community Concepts. *Social Forces*. 4(4):677-689.

Hillery, George A. Jr. 1955. Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement. *Rural Sociology*. 20(June):111-123.

Warren, Roland. 1978. *The Community in America* (3rd ed). University Press of America: Lanham, MD.

Wilkinson, Kenneth. 1970. The Community as a Social Field. *Social Forces*. 48(3):311-322.

Wilkinson, Kenneth. 1991. Chapter 1 – The community: an interactional approach. *The Community in Rural America*. Greenwood Press: New York.

Module 3. What is *growth* and what does it mean?

Molotch, Harvey. 1976. The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place. *American Journal of Sociology*. 82(2):309-332.

Bridger, Jeffrey and Aaron Harp. 1990. Ideology and Growth Promotion. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 6(3):269-277.

Pfeffer, Max and Mark Lapping. 1994. Farmland Preservation, Development Rights and the Theory of the Growth Machine: the Views of Planners. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 10(3):233-248.

Module 4. What is Rural Community Development?

Summers, Gene. 1986. Rural Community Development. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 12:347-371.

Gilles, Jere and Michael Dalecki. 1988. Rural Well-Being and Agricultural Change in Two Farming Regions. *Rural Sociology*. 53(1):40-55.

Wilkinson, Kenneth. 1991. Chapter 4 – Rural community development. *The Community in Rural America*. Greenwood Press: New York.

Humphrey, Craig and Kenneth Wilkinson. 1993. Growth Promotion Activities in Rural Areas: Do They Make a Difference? *Rural Sociology*. 58(2):175-189.

Bridger, Jeffrey & A. E. Luloff. 1999. Toward an interactional approach to sustainable community development. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 15(4):377-387.