

Anthropology 541a
History 765a
Political Science 779a
F&ES 80054A

Instructors: Amity Doolittle
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Mondays, 1:30-5:20
Room A002
77 Prospect Street

Fall 2007

Agrarian Societies
Culture, Power, History, and Development

This seminar presents a multi-disciplinary perspective on the modern transformation of the countryside of the world. The rise of a capitalist mode of production as the engine of a world economy, the emergence of a contentious international polity of nationstates, and the propagation of rationalizing religions and standardizing education are three distinct yet intersecting processes in the modern transformation of the world since the 1500s. These processes have not been inevitable, or irreversible, or complete. However, they have been compelling, in so far as they have come to frame both our acceptance of and resistance to the modern order in which we find ourselves.

"Peasant studies" is a rubric for the looselybounded, interdisciplinary exploration of the initial modernization of the European countryside and the subsequent engagement and ongoing incorporation of the countryside of Asia, Africa, and the Americas into this modern order. At its most precocious, it tries to comprehend the intrusive thrusts of nationstate formation, capitalist production, and the rationalization of belief into the most distant agrarian regions of the world. At its most instructive, it insists that people everywhere have confronted those forces with their particular histories and distinctive, local configurations of environment, society, and culture. Everywhere, the encounters of old and new ways of viewing the world and organizing activities have been fitful and frightful, always metamorphic, but never uniform. Animating peasant studies has been the concern to demonstrate the varied ways in which peasants have shared in the making of the modern world that has in turn transformed their lives.

We intend this to be an introductory seminar. That is, we assume you may be ignorant of much of the basic literature. We also assume that you work hard and learn fast. Although the varying backgrounds of students and faculty require us to be somewhat eclectic, we hope that the seminar will prove foundational in an interdisciplinary sense for subsequent work on agrarian issues in any discipline. We encourage you, in your writing and discussion, to make vigorous efforts to be understood across disciplinary boundaries.

Seminar meetings combine lectures and discussions. We expect regular attendance; please notify us in advance if you are unable to come to a session. We regard participation in discussions to be a gauge of students' completion and comprehension of the assigned readings. We will evaluate your performance in the seminar on the basis of this participation and on the quality and timeliness of the writing assignments.

Beginning in the third week, designated students will be asked to take formal responsibility for organizing the discussion of the readings. Such responsibility will be shared as equitably as possible. As far as writing assignments are concerned, there are two. First, students are required to submit short (3 page) essays on **THREE** weekly themes/readings of their choice. They may want to link these essays to themes for which they have some responsibility in organizing the discussion. A second paper is due at the end of the course. This may be either a research paper on a topic related to the course concerns or a theoretical discussion or synthesis of some of the analytical readings we have covered. In either case, it should be negotiated with one of the instructors.

All assigned readings for the seminar are on reserve at the Social Science or Cross Campus Libraries. Copies of all assigned books are available for purchase at Labyrinth. In addition, we have placed a collection of all assigned articles on file at the office of the Program on Agrarian Studies Office (**room C220 at 89 Trumbull Street**). Students may choose to have a copy of this file made for their purchase and use.

Course Syllabus

September 10

Week 1

Scott

Introduction

No Reading

September 17

Week 2

Doolittle

Shifting Cultivation

Readings:

Harold C. Conklin. [1957] 1975. *Hanunóo Agriculture: A Report on an Integral System of Shifting Cultivation in the Philippines*. Originally published by Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome. Reprint, Northford, CT: Elliot's Books. **(Labyrinth)**

Anon. 1957. Shifting cultivation. *Unasyva* 11(1):9-11.
(Reading Packet)

Anon. 1951. Colony of North Borneo: Report of the committee on shifting Cultivation. Sabah Archives KPP/TN1. **(Reading Packet)**

Anon. 1913. Shifting cultivation (ladang). Notes on forestry department and shifting cultivation in North Borneo. **(Reading Packet)**

Lecture: Shifting Cultivation: Forest-Eaters, Primitive Environmentalists

September 24

Week 3

Harms

Chayanov – Household Peasant Economy

Readings:

A.V. Chayanov. 1986. *The Theory of Peasant Economy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. Pp. xi-xxiii, 1-24, 35-117. **(Labyrinth)**

Donald Donham. 1981. Beyond the domestic mode of production. *Man* 16:515-41. **(Reading Packet)**

Lecture:

The Economic Basis of Peasant Societies

October 1

Week 4

Shannon-DiPietro

American Agriculture

Readings: J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur. 1957. *Letters from an American Farmer*. New York: E.P. Dutton. Letter II, “On the Situations, Feelings, and Pleasures of an American Farmer,” pp.17 – 35. **(Reading Packet)**

Deborah Fitzgerald. 2003. *Every Farm a Factory*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 1, “The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture,” pp.10 – 32. **(Reading Packet)**

Kathryn Marie Dudley. 2000. *Debt and Dispossession*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **(Labyrinth)**

Michael Pollan. 2006. *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*. London: Penguin Press. “Industrial Corn,” pp.1–122. **(Labyrinth)**

Eric Schlosser. 2003. *Reefer Madness*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. “In the Strawberry Fields,” pp.75 – 109. **(Reading Packet)**

Lecture: The Cultivators of the Earth and the Soil that Feeds Us

October 8

Week 5

Doolittle

Property Rights

Readings: Carol M. Rose. 1994. *Property and Persuasion: Essays on the History, Theory, and Rhetoric of Ownership*. Boulder: Westview Press. Chapter 2 “Property as Storytelling: Perspectives from Game theory, Narrative Theory, Feminist Theory,” pp.25-45 **AND** Chapter 9 “Seeing Property,” pp.267-304. **(Reading Packet)**

Nancy L. Peluso. 1996. Fruit trees and family trees in an anthropogenic forest: Ethics of access, property zones, and environmental change in Indonesia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38:510-48. **(Reading Packet)**

Lecture: Property Rights: Social Relations Surrounding Access to and Ownership of Resources

October 15

Week 6

Scott

Rebellion/Revolution

Readings: John Womack. 1970. *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*. Knopf.
(Labyrinth)

John Steinbeck. 1975. *Zapata*. Penguin Books (screenplay). (Labyrinth)

Lecture: **The Sociology of Revolution: North and South Vietnam, Northern and Southern Mexico**

October 22

Week 7

Harms

Social Change and the Longue Durée

Readings: Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. 1974. *The Peasants Peasants of Languedoc*, translated by John Day. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. (Labyrinth)

Robert Brenner. "Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe," **and** Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "A reply to Robert Brenner," in *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe*, edited by T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin, pp. 10-63, 101-6. (Reading Packet)

Lecture: **Social Change and the Longue Durée**

October 29

Week 8

Scott

Crops

Readings: Michael Pollan. 2001. *The Botany of Desire*. Random House. (Labyrinth)

James McCann. 2005. *Maize and Grace*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Labyrinth)

Lecture: **Potatoes and Tomatoes**

November 5

Week 9

Harms

Colonial Agriculture

Readings: Allen Isaacman. 1996. *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann. **(Labyrinth)**

Michael R. Dove. 1997 "Political ecology of pepper in the 'Hikyat Banjar': the historiography of commodity production in a Bornean kingdom," in *Paper Landscapes: Explorations in the Environmental History of Indonesia*, edited by P. Boomgaard, et al. Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal, Land-en-Volkenkunde, pp. 341-77. **(Reading packet)**

Lecture: **Agriculture and Colonialism**

November 12

Week 10

Viertel

The Sustainable Food Movement

Readings: Michael Pollan. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. London: Penguin Press. "Pastoral Grass," pp.122-73. **(Labyrinth)**

Coleman, Eliot. 1995. *The New Organic Grower*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company. Chapter 10, "Soil Fertility," pp. 94-110; and Chapter 17, "Pests?" pp.172-84. **(Reading Packet)**

Wendell Berry. 2002. *The Art of the Commonplace*. Washington, DC: Counterpoint. "The Whole Horse," pp.236-49; "Solving for Pattern," pp. 267-75; "The Pleasure of Eating," pp.321-27. **(Reading Packet)**

Wendell Berry. 1982. *The Gift of Good Land*. New York: North Point Press. "Agricultural Solutions to Agricultural Problems," pp.113-24. **(Reading Packet)**

Sir Albert Howard. 1943. *An Agricultural Testament*. New York and London: Oxford University Press. Introduction. **(Reading Packet)**

Andrew Kimbrell, ed. 2002. *The Fatal Harvest Reader: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*. Sausalito, CA: Foundation for Deep Ecology. Part One, "Corporate Lies: Busting the Myths of Industrial Agriculture," pp. 1-36; and Part Four and Afterward, "Organic and Beyond: Revisioning

Agriculture for the 21st Century," pp.225-321. **(Labyrinth)**

Explore Websites for Slow Food USA and Slow Food International <http://www.slowfoodusa.org>
<http://www.slowfood.com/>

Lecture: From Soil Organic Matter to Eco-Gastronomy

November 26

Week 11

Doolittle, Harms, Scott

Conservation Heroes/Oral Histories

Readings: Theodore Rosengarten. 1974. *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw* Knopf (distributed by Random House). **(Labyrinth)**

Edward Ives. 1993. *George Magoon and Down East Game War: History, Folklore, and the Law*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. **(Labyrinth)**

Visit: <http://www.mountainvoices.org/> to explore oral histories

Lecture:

December 3

Week 12

Doolittle, Harms, Scott

Global Environmentalism/Development

Readings: Michael Goldman. 2005. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in an Age of Globalization*. Yale University Press. **(Labyrinth)**

Options: James Ferguson and Larry Lohmann. 1994. The anti-politics machine: "development" and bureaucratic power in Lesotho. *The Ecologist* 24 (6): 176. **(Reading Packet)**

Lecture:
Universalism

Parochialism Dressed up as