

Instructors:
Michael Dove
Linda-Anne Rebhun
James Scott
Steven Stoll

Anthropology 541a
History 765a
Political Science 779a
F&ES 730a

Mondays, 1:30-5:20
8 Prospect Place, Room 119

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 nation-states, 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, 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 loosely bounded, 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 nation-state 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 Book Haven. In addition, we have placed a collection of all assigned articles on file at the office of the Program on Agrarian Studies Office (room 201 at 89 Trumbull Street). Students may choose to have a copy of this file made for their purchase and use.

September 6

Week 1

James Scott

Introduction

No Reading

September 13 Week 2

Steven Stoll

Landscapes and Commodities in Colonial America

Readings: Mart Stewart. 1996. *'What Nature Suffers to Groe': Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast*. University of Georgia Press. **(Book Haven)**

John F. Richards. "Landscapes of Sugar in the Antilles." *The Unending Frontier: an Environmental History of the Early Modern World*. University of California Press. **(Reading Packet)**

Ordinance of 1785 **(Reading Packet)**

Karl Marx, "The Commodity" in *Capital*, vol.1. **(Reading Packet)**

September 20 Week 3

Linda-Anne Rebhun

Gender

Readings: Gray, Marion W. 2000. Chapter 8, "'Scientific Agriculture' and the Sexual Division of Labor (1810-1830)." In *Productive Men, Reproductive Women The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres During the German Enlightenment*, 258-96. New York: Berghahn Books.

Babb, Florence E. 1985. "Producers and Reproducers: Andean Marketwomen in the Economy." In *Women and Change in Latin America*, edited by June Nash and Helen Safa, 53-64. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc.

Cole, Sally. 1988. "The Sexual Division of Labor and Social Change in a Portuguese Fishery," in *To Work and To Weep: Women in Fishing Economies*, edited by Jane Nadel-Klein and Dona Lee Davis, 169-89. St John's, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research.

Friedl, Ernestine. 1986. "The Position of Women: Appearance and Reality." In *Gender and Power in Rural Greece*, edited by Jill Dubisch, 42-52. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Salamone, S.D., and J.B. Stanton. 1986. "Introducing the Nikokyra: Ideality and Reality in Social Process." In *Gender and Power in Rural Greece*, edited by Jill Dubisch, 97-120. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Weismantal, Mary J. 1998 [1988]. Chapter 6, "Practice: Kitchen Life." In *Food Gender and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes*, 168-95. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Mitchell, Winifred. 1994. "Women's Hierarchies of Age and Suffering in an

Andean Community.” In *Women Among Women: Anthropological Perspectives on Female Age Hierarchies*, edited by Jeanette Dickerson-Putman and Judith K. Brown, 53-64. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Robben, Antonius CGM. 1988. “Conflicting Gender Conceptions in a Pluriform Fishing Economy: Hermeneutic Perspective on Conjugal Relations in Brazil.” In *To Work and To Weep: Women in Fishing Economies*, edited by Jane Nadel-Klein and Dona Lee Davis, 106-29. St John’s, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research.

Fisher, Eleanor. 2000. “Forest Livelihoods: Beekeeping as Men’s Work in Western Tanzania.” In *Gender, Family, and Work in Tanzania*, edited by Colin Creighton and C.K. Omari, 138-76. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

(All readings in Reading Packet)

September 27 Week 4

Michael Dove

Reading Agrarian Ethnography: The Politics of Describing the Disreputable

Readings: Harold C. Conklin. [1957] 1975. *Hanuno’o Agriculture: A Report on an Integral System of Shifting Cultivation in the Philippines*. Orig. published by the Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome. Reprint, Northford, CT: Elliotts Books. **(Book Haven)**

J.S. Otto and N.E. Anderson. 1982. “Slash-and-Burn Cultivation in the Highlands South: A Problem in Comparative Agricultural History,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24:131-47. **(Reading Packet)**

October 4 Week 5 James Scott
Rebellion, Resistance, Revolution

Readings: Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest against the European Colonial Order*. 1979. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Sections on Maji Maji and Saya San Rebellions, pp. 27- 42, 93-164. **(Reading Packet)**

October 11 Week 6 Steven Stoll

Expansion and Community in the American West

Readings: John Mack Faragher. 1986. *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie.* Yale University Press. **(Book Haven)**

Terry Jordan and Matt Kaups. 1992. *The American Backwoods Frontier.* The Johns Hopkins University Press. **(Reading Packet)**

October 18 Week 7 Linda-Anne Rebhun

Family, Marriage, and Alliance in Agrarian Societies

Readings: Collier, Jane Fishburne. 1997. *From Duty to Desire: Remaking Families in a Spanish Village.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. **(Book Haven)**

October 25 Week 8 Michael Dove

Development Discourse

Readings: James Ferguson. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. **(Book Haven)**

November 1 Week 9 James Scott and Steven Stoll

Seeds and Plants

Readings: Jan Douwe van der Ploeg. 1993. "Potatoes and Knowledge," in *An Anthropological Critique of Development*, edited by Mark Hobart, pp. 209-27. London: Routledge. **(Reading Packet)**

James Hightower. 1978. *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times.* The original Hightower report, unexpurgated, of the Agribusiness Accountability Project on the Failure of the American Land Grant College Complexes Commission for Agribusiness Responsibility, pp. 1-42. Cambridge: Schenkman. **(Reading Packet)**

Arturo Warman. 2003. *Corn and Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. **(Book Haven)**

November 8 Week 10

Steven Stoll and Jim Scott

Industrial Agriculture

Reading: Deborah Fitzgerald. 2003. *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture*. New Haven: Yale University Press. **(Book Haven)**

Walter Goldschmidt. 1947. *As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*. Montclair, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun and Co. Publishers, Inc. **(Reading Packet)**

Miriam Wells. 1996. *Strawberry Fields: Politics, Class, and Work in California Agriculture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. **(Book Haven)**

November 15 Week 11

Michael Dove

Depicting the Rural Poor in the American South

Readings:

James Agee and Walker Evans. 1988/1939. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. "Foreword," pp. xli-xliv; "Preamble," pp. 7-16; "Money," pp. 115-21; "Shelter," pp. 123-220; and "On the Porch," pp. 221-53. **(Book Haven)**

Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson. 1989. *And Their Children After Them: The Legacy of Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, James Agee, Walker Evans, and the Rise and Fall of Cotton in the South*. New York: Pantheon Books. "Maggie Louise," pp. i-v, Preface xv-xxiv; "King Cotton," 3-16; and "1936-1940," pp. 17-72. **(Reading Packet)**

November 29 Week 12

Linda-Anne Rebhun

Food, Diet, Taste

Readings: Du Puis, E. Melanie. 2002. *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink*. New York: New York University Press. **(Book Haven)**

John L. Hess and Karen Hess. 2000. *The Taste of America*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. **(Reading Packet)**