

SOCIOLOGY 398
Sociology of Agriculture and Sustainability: The Global Food System
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY, Fall 2016
Dr. Riley Chisholm (Olstead)

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Office Hours:

Mondays 8-11 and 1-2

Tuesdays 11-3:30

Wednesday: Not on campus

Thursdays 2-3:30

Friday: Not on campus

Class Times: Tuesday 9:45 am and Thursday at 8:15 am

This course begins with an interdisciplinary survey of the scientific, philosophical, political, social and cultural aspects of global agriculture and food production. Topics examined include the green revolution, the relationship between agricultural and social sustainability, local food versus export economies, food security, food sovereignty and justice, as well as biotechnology, soil science and climate farming. A farm visit is also included.

Required Reading:

1. Course Kit (Available in the bookstore – look for the course number and my name).
2. Shiva. V. 2016. *The Violence of the Industrial Revolution. Third World Agriculture, Ecology, and Politics*. University Press of Kentucky.

University and Classroom Policies

Plagiarism: Familiarize yourself with the university plagiarism policies and punishments. You are responsible for understanding them and abiding by them. The StFX library has links, tutorials, and definitions at this site: <http://sites.stfx.ca/library/plagiarism>. The StFX calendar outlines the procedures concerning and penalties for committing plagiarism.

StFX Equity Policy: Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space—both face-to-face and online—that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. These values and practices are in accord with the StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy which can be found at <http://www.mystfx.ca/campus/stu-serv/equity/>. Please feel free to talk to me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I

encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Marie Brunelle at mbrunell@stfx.ca.

Electronics: Although electronic technologies have the potential to enhance learning, recent studies suggest that the use of personal computers and other electronic devices can be detrimental to students' learning. See:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/laptop-use-lowers-student-grades-experiment-shows-1.1401860>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/>.

For this reason, I ask that students ONLY use devices for recording class notes. I reserve the right to ask students to leave the class should they not respect to this request. Cellular phones should be turned off and away, while class is being held.

Course grades and lectures policy: I do not use PowerPoint in class and do not post/provide my lectures to students. Students who miss classes are responsible to get missed lecture notes from another student in the class. I also, do not discuss or provide grades over email.

Schedule of Weekly Readings, Tests and Assignments

Competing values, practices and outcomes

Week 1: Introduction: Why a sociology of agriculture? (Sep. 6th and 8th)

- No readings this week

Week 2: Philosophical Approaches to Agriculture (Sep. 13th and 15th)

- Bellamy Foster, J. 1995. "The Treadmill of Production". Keynote address: *Watersheds '94 Conference, U.S. EPA*. Monthly Review.
- Berry, W. [1989] 2009. "Nature as Measure", In *Bringing it to the Table*. Berkeley, CA.: Counter Pont Press.
- Film: *Netukulmik*

Week 3: The Green Revolution (Sep. 20th and 22nd)

- Shiva, V. 2016. "Science and Politics in the Green Revolution", In *The Violence of the Green Revolution: Third World Agriculture, Ecology and Politics*.

- Perkins, J.H., (1990). The Rockefeller Foundation and the green revolution, 1941-1956. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 7(3-4):6-18.

Week 4: Food Regimes and Farming Crises

(Sept. 27th and 29th)

- Van der Ploeg, J. 2010. "The food crisis, industrialized farming and the imperial regime". *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10 (1): 98-10
- McMichael, P. 2009. "A food regime analysis of the 'world food crisis'", *Agriculture and Human Values*, 26 (4): 281-295.

Week 5: Agriculture and Trade Agreements

(Oct 4th and 6th)

- *Down on the Farm* (2001) Available at:
<http://www.citizen.org/documents/ACFF2.PDF>
- **Silver Donald Cameron (Guest speaker on the 29th)**
- **Mandatory attendance at the documentary film screening of *Green Rights*, Wednesday, Sept, 28th 7 pm. Location TBA**

Week 6: Water

(Oct 11th and 13th)

- Shiva Chapter 4: "Intensive Irrigation, Large Dams and Water Conflicts".
- Oct. 6th: Farm Visit: Sweetmountain Farm, 576 Ohio East Road: Organic Grass-finished Beef, Maple Syrup and Select-Harvest Wood Farm. Students will car pool. Pancake breakfast after tour.

Week 7: The Political and Social Costs of Industrial Agriculture

(Oct 18th and 20nd)

- Eplett, L. 2015. "Political Climates: Drought and Conflict in Syria". Available at:
<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/food-matters/political-climates-drought-and-conflict-in-syria/>
- Shiva, Chapter 5: "The political and cultural costs of the green revolution".

Week 8: Save Our Seed!

(Oct 25th and 27th)

- Shiva Chapter 2: "'Miracle Seeds' and the destruction of genetic diversity".
- Film: *The World According to Monsanto*

Week 9: The Political Economy of Food Aid
(Nov 1st and 3rd)

- Oxfam. 2001. *Food aid or hidden dumping? Separating wheat from chaff*. Available online at:

http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71_food_aid.pdf pp. 2-29

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2004. "The political economy of food aid in an era of agricultural biotechnology". *Global Governance*.

Week 10: Soil, and why it's sociological.
(Nov 8th and 10th)

- Shiva Chapter 3: "Chemical Fertilizers and Soil Fertility"
- Ikerd, John. 2011. "Healthy soils, healthy people: the legacy of William Albrecht". This one too?
- Film: *Dirt*

Week 11: Biotechnology and Brave New Food
(Nov 15th and 17th)

- Rosset, et al. 2000. "Lessons from the green revolution: Do we need new technology to end hunger?" *Tikkum*.
- Roberts, W. 2013. "Brave New Food", In *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food*. New Internationalist Publications.

Week 12: The high cost of cheap 'food'
(Nov 22nd and 24th)

- Pollan, Michael. 2003. "The way we live now: the (agri)cultural contradictions of obesity". *The New York Times Magazine*. Available online at:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/12/magazine/the-way-we-live-now-10-12-03-the-agri-cultural-contradictions-of-obesity.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>
- Martin, D. 2012. Nutrition transition and the public-health crisis: Aboriginal perspectives on food and eating. In M. Koc, J. Sumner and A. Winson (Eds.). In *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Toronto: Oxford. Pp. 208-222.

Week 13: Hope for a (sustainable) future
(Nov. 29th and Dec 1st)

- Leopold, Aldo. "Thinking like a mountain" available online at: <http://www.eco-action.org/dt/thinking.html>.

- Holt-Giménez. 2011. "Food security, food justice or food sovereignty?: Crises, food movements and regime change". In Aikon and J. Agyeman (Eds.). *Cultivating Sustainability*. Cambridge , MA. MIT Press. Pp.309-311.
- Desmarais, Annette Aurélie. 2002. "Peasants Speak: The Via Campesina: Consolidating an International Peasant and Farm Movement". *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 29(2):91-124.
- Hopi Prayer: "We are the ones we have been waiting for".