ENVS 467/567: Issues in Sustainable Agriculture
MW 4:00-5:50
COL 142

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Hours: W 10:30-11:50, Th 2:00-3:30

Course Description and Purpose:
The purpose of the class is for students to develop an informed critique of agricultural production. We will review traditional non-industrialized, modern industrialized, modern organic, and GMC (genetically modified crops)-based systems through the lens of sustainability. For our purposes, sustainability includes not only environmental, but also economic and cultural considerations. While holding a holistic perspective, the course examines the various material components of production systems. In each unit we will highlight problems and explore alternatives to current methods of production. Finally, we will discuss food policy and food security. The greatest single share of the course material stems from North American experience but the class is decidedly global in scope.

Schedule

Unit 1: Defining Sustainable Agriculture
Unit 2: Traditional Agriculture and the Green Revolution
Unit 3: The Curious Case of Corn
Unit 4: Seeds and Genetically Modified Crops
Unit 5: Water Conservation and Management
Unit 6: Soil Conservation and Management
Unit 7: Pest Control Options
Unit 8: Energy and Agriculture
Unit 9: Access and Food Justice
Unit 10: The Global and the Local
Summary: Prospects for Change
Course Requirements:

**Class Participation:** (15%) All students are expected to be present and active participants in this seminar. This will only be possible if you stay current with the readings. I encourage thoughtful and respectful contributions to class discussion.

**Reading, Video, and Event Critiques:** (40%) Students are required to submit six 2-page critiques (one sheet, printed two sides) from the twenty daily readings and two video or event reviews. Reading responses are due at the beginning of each class period starting with the second meeting. Video reviews and event reports are due within one week of the showing or event. At least four critiques must be submitted by the beginning of week six. No late responses will be accepted.

**Field Reports:** (10%) Field reports are responses to two field trips, either group or self-designed investigative outing (details to follow).

**Book Review with Supplementary Annotations:** (35%) Students will prepare a 5-6 page book review accompanied by 8-10 annotated sources related to the book or a standard 8-10 page research paper on an approved topic.

**GRADUATE STUDENTS:** Required to complete all readings, submit 5 three-page reading critiques/video reviews, field trip reports, book review, and a 15-18 page research paper to be formally presented to the class. I am willing to consider alternative proposals for the research paper.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading responses</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5 x 6% of grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4-5 pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20-30 minute presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15-18 page work</td>
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**Class and Reading Schedule**

**Texts: Will be placed on reserve in the Knight Library**


**Electronic Reading Packet:** All readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

**READING SCHEDULE**

**{(Un)Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems}**

**January 6**


**January 8**


Halweil, “All Our Eggs in One Basket”, 1-21.

**Traditional Agriculture and the Green Revolution**

**January 13**


**January 15**


**Video:** Seeds of Profit, Seeds of Hunger

**The Curious Case of Corn**

**January 20**
Halweil, “Where Have all the Farmers Gone?”, 59-78.


**January 22**


**Video:** King Corn
Seeds and Genetically Modified Organisms

January 27


January 29

Manning, “In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World: Sustaining Traditional Farming and Genetic Resources”, 149-172.


GUEST SPEAKER: Nathan Lillegard

Water Conservation and Management

February 3

February 5


Video: Cadillac Desert

Soil Conservation and Management

February 10


February 12

Pollen, “Grass”, 185-207.

Wes Jackson and Marty Bender, “Investigations into Perennial Polyculture”, in Meeting the Expectations..., 183-194.

Pest Control Options

February 17
Manning, “From Basket Case to Bread Basket: When Biotechnology Has a Brain Trust”, 79-94

February 19

Clarren, Rebecca (2008) “Pesticide Drift”, Orion Magazine (July/August). (BB)
http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/3045/

**Agriculture and Energy**

February 24


February 26


**Access and Food Justice: Urban Designs**

March 3


March 5


**The Global and the Local**

March 10


GUEST SPEAKER: Dan Armstrong

Halweil, “Leveling the Field”, 133-144.

Halweil, “Coming of Age in Naples”, 146-156.


**Prospects for Change**

March 12

