

Agroecology 702: THE MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF AGRICULTURE

Spring, 2010

T Th noon to 2:30



The Line Storm, John Stuart Curry, 1935

The agricultural landscape serves a variety of social, economic, and ecological purposes for society. Yet these purposes often conflict in varying degrees and ways—thus the image above of a storm. Each may be associated with a different network of interests and values, leading to political and organizational challenges in the cultivation of a more beneficent agriculture. This course explores these diverse purposes and perspectives, with a special focus on social mobilization for the wise renegotiation of agriculture's conditions.

This course is also one component of the two-course core sequence of the Agroecology Masters Program. The other component, Agroecology 701: *The Farm as Socio-Environmental Endeavor*, takes the “inside-out” perspective of the farm contending with the challenges and opportunities of its diverse social and environmental contexts. 702 with 701 by taking the “outside-in” perspective of the diverse demands placed by different stakeholders on the agricultural landscape.

Instructor: Michael Bell

Students: This course is open to all interested graduate students, and is required for all students in the Agroecology Masters Program. Although it is part of a two-course sequence, it can be taken independently.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will become aware of the diverse expectations for the agricultural landscape, and the social networks associated with them, including commodity agriculture, ecosystem services, poverty and hunger alleviation, farm and community viability, leisure and symbolic values, and animal welfare.
2. Students will gain a set of tools for analyzing the range of interests, and the underlying value frameworks, involved in any site in the agricultural landscape worldwide.
3. Students will learn methods for policy development and social learning through engaging competing interests in a productive discussion of the wise renegotiation of agriculture's conditions.
4. Students will develop an appreciation of seeing the general in the specific, and the specific in the general, through the power of case study methods and a holonic approach to understanding complexity and potential reconfigurations.
5. Students will cultivate their communication abilities, including writing, oral, and performance skills.

Case Study Exercises: Each student will develop a case study of a site of disjuncture in an agricultural landscape, the varied voices of the varied perspectives on and in that site, and how imaginable changes to the multifunctionality of that landscape might be induced. The students will develop their cases incrementally through the semester. The final write-up and presentation will be in the form of a roughly 15 to 20 minute play, with roughly 2000 words of dramaturgical notes to contextualize your work. Students will be strongly encouraged, although not required, to work in groups for both the write-up and performance.

Intellectual Journal: Students will keep a weekly journal responding to the lectures and readings, which will be periodically assessed. Each week, students are expected to prepare entries in the range of 250 to 350 words that integrate the essential points of the week and develop critical inquiry. Students will share their weekly entries with a 3 to 4 member "journal group," via email, with a cc to the instructor, by Sunday midnight each week.

Readings: Course readings will be made available electronically on the course website: <http://www.agroecology.wisc.edu/courses/agroecology-702/home.html>

Assessment:

- 33% on participation in class
- 33% on intellectual journal
- 33% on case study presentation and write-up

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates	Topics
1 1/19, 1/21	<i>Introduction:</i> multifunctionality, sustainability, public goods, holonic thinking, case studies

Processes of Multifunctionality

2 1/26, 1/28	<i>Valuation:</i> externalities, convenience, markets, choice, contingent valuation, positional goods, Jevons paradox, non-market values	Case study selection
3 2/2, 2/4	<i>Regulation:</i> the Farm Bill, commodity payments, conservation, national differences, the Common Agricultural Policy,	
4 2/9, 2/11	<i>Spatialization:</i> world trade, regional differences, globalization, localization, the WTO	
5 2/16, 2/18	<i>Mobilization:</i> networks, solidarities, dialogue and monologue, social mobilization, the “top” and “bottom” of change	

Expectations of Multifunctionality

6 2/23, 2/25	<i>Expectation I—Ecosystem services:</i> habitat protection, water supply, air quality, carbon sequestration	Case study integration
7 3/2, 3/4	<i>Expectation II—Commodity agriculture:</i> “feeding the world,” biofuels, pharming, organics	
8 3/9, 3/11	<i>Expectation III—Farm and community viability:</i> local food systems, marketing, farm survival	
9 3/16, 3/18	<i>Expectation IV—Leisure and symbolic values:</i> rural amenities, farm tourism, exurban growth, agrarianism, negative images of agriculture	
10 3/23, 3/25	<i>Expectation V—Animal welfare:</i> animal welfare versus animal rights, welfare certification, husbandry practices	
	Spring Break!	
11 4/6, 4/8	<i>Expectation VI—Poverty and hunger alleviation:</i> economic development, food security, international dimensions	

Outcomes of Multifunctionality

12 4/13, 4/15	<i>Measuring it:</i> Indicators, assessment, quantitative and qualitative approaches	Case study completion
13 4/20, 4/22	<i>Getting it:</i> Agrarian movements, participation, landscape agroecology, role of the state	
14-15 4/27, 4/29 5/4, 5/6	<i>Case study presentations:</i> performance of plays, final written version due 5/11	