



HI 360: American Agricultural History

Fall 2019

TuTh 11:45-1pm

216 Mann Hall

Course website: <https://wolfware.ncsu.edu/>

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In 1790, census workers reported that 90% of Americans were farmers. In 2010, the census reported less than two percent of Americans farmed. Yet over the same period, production of food and fiber soared to unimaginable levels. How do we account for these two remarkable trends? This course will investigate the profoundly important changes--and surprising continuities--in American agricultural life. We will investigate not only economic and technological forces, but also the racial and ethnic

diversity of American farm families, the social life of farming communities, the politics and policies of agrarianism and the changing value and meaning of farm work.

- Course overview: This course covers the history of U.S. agriculture. Upon completion, students will:
- Understand some of the economic, social, political, environmental and cultural forces that shaped American agriculture from the 16th century to 21st century.
 - Comprehend the role of technological change in American agriculture.
 - Witness the expanding role of governmental involvement in agriculture across the continent and abroad.
 - Consider the continuing struggles for equality and access by diverse groups of American agricultural workers.
 - Perceive fundamental change and continuities in U.S. agriculture.
 - Understand the relationship between politics, economics, and agricultural science and practice.

Expectations: Education is a shared endeavor. You are expected to create and maintain a respectful classroom environment. You are expected to be responsible, prepared and to avoid distracting your instructors, fellow students and yourself. Thus:

- You must read all of the assigned material each day before coming to class.
- Respect others when speaking or listening. There is a fine line between free speech and hateful speech. The former is critical to learning; the latter stifles it. See our school policy: <https://www.ncsu.edu/free-speech>
- You are expected to come to class on time, place your entire attention on the course for the duration, and remain for the entire class period.
- If you must eat or drink, respect your neighbors, use discretion, and clean up after yourself.

Diversity of thought: Students in this class are drawn from more than two dozen majors and many backgrounds. I am so pleased to have a wide range of perspectives in this class. You are all welcome and have much to add. So do diverse voices from the past. I will use historical sources and voices that may be surprising and may also be offensive. That is part of teaching and learning the past.

Phone and laptop policy: Much research has been done on the effects of using laptop computers and phones in classrooms. The research shows that phones are always bad. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/07/27/class-cellphone-and-laptop-use-lowers-exam-scores-new-study-shows>

It is bad for the student, but it is much worse for other students nearby, who are distracted and annoyed, *especially* if students try to hide their phone use. In my student evaluations, students bitterly complain about other students using phones. *Phones are banned.* You may not answer a phone call, look at, make, or respond to text messages, or use the phone to check the time. No phones. (If you need an exception, talk to Prof. Booker.)

The research on laptops is more nuanced. Some students benefit from note taking on laptops, though research shows that handwritten notes are much more effective for learning and for recall on exams. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

Laptops are also distracting to other students. If you wish to take notes on a laptop, *you may sit in the front four rows of our classroom*. Those are the designated laptop seats. Out of respect for your fellow students, I ask that you use laptops solely for class-related purposes.

Coping resources: This class will require a great deal of your energy and your time. Depending upon your previous experience with humanities courses and the requirements of this discipline, you may find the assignments and reading load difficult. Many persons and resources are available to help you succeed. Instructors hold weekly office hours where you can ask questions and raise concerns about assignments and the course in general. The tutorial center, www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/ provides free writing and public speaking assistance to undergraduates. Use these resources!

Accommodations for Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with the Disability Resource Office on the third floor of Holmes Hall (Suite 304). For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.01). <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-01>.

Supporting fellow students: Occasionally, you may come across a fellow classmate whose personal behavior concerns or worries you. If this is the case, please contact NC State Students of Concern at <https://ncstatecares.dasa.ncsu.edu/>

Grading: History is a disciplined way of understanding our world as well as the record of the past. The goal is for you to learn to think historically by reading and writing historically. The assignments in this course are designed to assess your performance. They are also intended and designed to enhance your learning experience. There are no "busy work" assignments. You are expected to complete exams and written assignments within the time period allotted. Except for prior arrangement with the instructor or serious, proven emergency, *no late assignments will be accepted*.

Grades in this course will be calculated as follows:

93-100% A	90-92% A-	87-89% B+	83-86% B	80-82% B-	77-79% C+	73-76% C	70-72% C-	67-69% D+	63-66% D	60-62% D-	0-59% F
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Note: I do not give A+ grades in lower-division courses. I am happy to discuss this in person.

Final course grades will be rounded up from .5, rounded down from .49. Example: Your total course grade is 79.50%: You earned a B-. Your total course grade is 79.49%: You earned a C+.

10% Participation: In-class activities, quizzes, and take-home writing assignments based on the reading are required elements of this course and are worth ten percent of your course grade.

5% Thanksgiving Oral History: During the week of **MONDAY NOVEMBER 25-SUNDAY DECEMBER 1** students will record an oral history relating to US agriculture and submit to the StoryCorps web platform. This assignment is worth five percent of your course grade. Details will follow in class.

25% Midterm exam: An exam consisting of short identification questions and essay questions administered in 216 Mann Hall on **SEPTEMBER 26** will make up twenty-five percent of your final grade.

25% Midterm exam 2: An exam consisting of short identification questions and essay questions administered in in 216 Mann Hall on **NOVEMBER 7** will make up twenty-five percent of your final grade.

35% Final exam: A comprehensive examination consisting of short identification questions and essay questions administered in 216 Mann Hall on **DECEMBER 10 FROM 8:00AM-11:00AM** will make up thirty-five percent of your final grade.

Attendance policy: By university policy, we must take attendance in this course. You may miss two regular classes for any reason without penalty. **Each additional unexcused** absence will deduct 1/3 of a percent from your final grade. Example: Your final course percentage is 80%. You have five unexcused absences. Your final grade is revised to 79%. Excused absences follow the university policy: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03-attendance-regulations/>

Drop for non-attendance: Students who miss the first three classes or fail to attend by the fifth business day (whichever comes first) will be dropped from the class. <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03-attendance-regulations/>

Writing requirements: History, like all disciplines, has specific methods. In this class, all evidence must be cited to the original source. With few exceptions, your arguments in course assignments and exams will be based on assigned readings not on Internet or other sources. *Never use unpermitted sources and always cite your evidence.* Confused about citations? See this link and ask the instructor: <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/research/apaintext.html>

Texts: You are responsible for all course materials. The texts for this course are available at the NCSU Bookstore, off-campus bookstores, and from online vendors such as www.powells.com Copies of both books are on reserve at D. H. Hill Library, but there is no guarantee a book will be available when you need it. Additional required readings will be provided on the course website.

- R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History, revised edition* (Purdue University Press, 2002) ISBN 978-1557532817--\$35
- William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England, revised edition* (Hill and Wang, 2003) ISBN 978-0809016341--\$15

SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS

NOTE: This schedule is a proposed course of action, not a contract. Dates, assignments and lecture topics are subject to change with notice.

Schedule	Assignment
Week 1: Introduction to the Course	Readings must be finished before class
Th Aug 22 The Problem of Agricultural History	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , preface & acknowledgements
Week 2: Planting a New World	
Tu Aug 27 Agricultural Societies Collide	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , ch. 1 William Cronon, <i>Changes in the Land</i> chs. 1-3
Th Aug 29 Changes in the Land	Cronon, <i>Changes in the Land</i> chs. 4-6; Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , ch. 2
Week 3: A Farmers' Republic	
Tu Sept 3 Mr. Jefferson's Dream	Cronon, <i>Changes in the Land</i> chs. 7-end
Th Sept 5 American Farm Families	Craig, "The Antebellum Puzzle" GUEST: Lee Craig, Department Head, Economics
Week 4: War Upon the Land	
Tu Sept 10 Slave Societies	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , chs. 3-4
Th Sept 12 Feeding the Armies	Lisa Brady, <i>War Upon the Land</i> , 93-126
Week 5: Agriculture and the City	
Tu Sept 17 Feeding the Cities	Booker, "Oyster Growers and Oyster Pirates in San Francisco Bay"
Th Sept 19 Animals in the City	Davidson and Lytle, "USDA Government Inspected"; Tarr and Stine, <i>The Horse and the City</i> , intro and epilogue
Week 6: Farmer Politics	
Tu Sept 24 Gilded Age Agriculture	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , ch. 5 Baum, <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> , excerpt
Th Sept 26 Midterm exam	Midterm exam

Week 7: The Factory and the Farm	
Tu Oct 1 Markets and Technology	Olmstead & Rhode, "Reshaping the Landscape"
Th Oct 3 Agricultural Extension	North Carolina State University agricultural extension records GUEST: Virginia Ferris, NC State Libraries

Week 8: Crisis in the Countryside	
Tu Oct 8 Boom and Bust	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , ch. 6; Film: <i>The Plow that Broke the Plains</i> (1936)
Th Oct 10 Fall Break	No class
Week 9: Farm Labor	
Tu Oct 15 A New Deal for Agriculture	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , ch. 7 Ludington, "Short History of Farm and Food Subsidies"
Th Oct 17 Why Are Farmworkers Illegal?	John Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> , chapter 5; Richard Street, <i>Beasts of the Field</i> , excerpt
Week 10: Science and Agriculture	
Tu Oct 22 Harvest of Shame	CBS News Reports, Harvest of Shame (1960)
Th Oct 24 Chemicals	John Perkins, <i>Insects and Insecticides</i> , 3-23; Russell, <i>War and Nature</i> , 1-16
Week 11: Green Revolutions	
Tu Oct 29 Green Revolution	Norman Borlaug, "Feeding a World of Ten Billion People"; Perkins, <i>Geopolitics and the Green Revolution</i> , excerpt
Th Oct 31 Why Land Grant Universities?	Carpenter & Colvard, <i>Knowledge is Power</i> , v-21 GUEST: Randy Woodson , past-President, APLU , "The origins and future of the land grant university"
Week 12: Consequences	
Tu Nov 5 Warnings	Rachel Carson, <i>Silent Spring</i> , excerpt; Film: CBS News Reports, "The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson" (1963)
Th Nov 7 Midterm exam	Midterm exam
Week 13: Old Realities, New Hopes	
Tu Nov 12 Remembering Agricultural History in Historic Sites	Swanson, <i>A Golden Weed</i> , excerpt GUEST: Jessica Shillingsford , Former director, Duke Homestead State Historic Site, "Piedmont Tobacco Material Culture"
Th Nov 14 Big Organic vs. GMOs	Jonathan Kaufman, "How back to the landers and longhairs changed the way we eat" ; Dan Charles, "Lords of the Harvest," excerpt
Week 14: From Agriculture to Food	

Tu Nov 19 What does Local mean?	Edna Lewis, <i>The Taste of Country Cooking</i> , xi-7, 17-27; Booker, "What Should We Eat?"
Th Nov 21 Where Are All the Black Farmers?	Madeline Thomas, "What Happened to America's Black Farmers?" GUEST: Dr. Gail Meyers , Farms to Grow, Inc.
Week 15: Thanksgiving Break	
Tu Nov 26 Oral History Exercise	No class <u>StoryCorps oral history assignment</u>
Th Nov 28 Give Thanks	No class <u>StoryCorps oral history assignment</u>
Week 16: Memory and History	
Tu Dec 3 Back to the Land	Hurt, <i>American Agriculture</i> , chapter 9; Raphael, "The Everyday Life of the New Pioneers"
Th Dec 5 The Politics of Memory	Laura Ingalls Wilder, <i>On the Banks of Plum Creek</i> , chapters 1-12, 16-17, and 25-28; speeches 1935-37
Tu Dec 10 Final Exam	FINAL EXAM 8am-11am 216 Mann Hall