

Exploring the Culture of Agriculture

Agro 496/896 Independent Study Section 101 - 1 credit

Fall 2020 Mini Course (November 30-December 18)

Updated November 25, 2020

Instructor

Dr. Andrea Basche

Contact information

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Student support hours

Tuesdays, 3-5pm, via Zoom: <https://unl.zoom.us/j/99479283152>

Course overview

This course will explore the culture and history of agriculture in the United States -- aspects such as the values, customs and social norms -- and how this history and culture can (and historically has) support as well as inhibit inclusivity in our research, extension/outreach, and workplaces. Through reading and discussion, we will work together to begin outlining actions that will ultimately provide more opportunity for all -- to unlock creative new ideas and create space at decision-making tables such that our shared professional goals might be thoroughly achieved.

Overall course learning outcomes

- Explore the societal value of having diverse cultural influences on the agricultural system
- Define terms related to culture and explain the interconnections they have to agriculture
- Describe farm related demographic information, in the context of US agriculture
- Summarize how some have lost land while others have gained land, in the context of US agriculture
- Analyze the culture of an agriculturally-related workplace and identify steps toward more inclusive work environments

Grading

Assessment	Topic	Points	Due Dates
Discussion posts	Week 1: Early course reflection	25 points	Monday, November 30
	Week 1: Exploring our own culture and history	25 points	Wednesday, December 2
	Week 2: Land grants and land treaties	25 points	Wednesday December 9
	Week 3: Bringing our whole self to work/teams	25 points	Wednesday December 16
Writing assignments	Week 1: Exploring agricultural organizations	50 points	Friday, December 4
	Week 2: Exploring policies that shape land ownership and loss*	50 points	Friday, December 11
	Week 3: Creating inclusive* workplaces	50 points	Friday, December 18
Total		250 points	

*Note that for Graduate Students (Agro 896) the final two writing assignments will be graded out of 75 points, for a course total of 300 points. More information about additional expectations can be found on Canvas

Grading scale

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	98.0 – 100.0%	C+	78.0 – 79.9%
A	92.0 – 97.9%	C	72.0 – 77.9%
A-	90.0 – 91.9%	C-	70.0 – 71.9%
B+	88.0 – 89.9%	D+	68.0 – 69.9%
B	82.0 – 87.9%	D	62.0 – 67.9%
B-	80.0 – 81.9%	D-	60.0 – 61.9%
		F	59.9% or less

Weekly learning objectives and assigned readings

Week 1: A (brief) look at US agriculture: Who gets to be a farmer?

Learning objectives

- Describe who is a farmer and landowner in the US, based on demographic information
- Identify interconnected aspects of culture, race, gender and sexuality in agriculture

Required reading and listening content

-All content in the Canvas modules, including pages on overall farmer and landowner demographics, rural America demographics, and issues facing farmers of color, women farmers and landowners, as well as LGBTQ farmers

-Megan Horst and Jamie Marion, Agriculture and Human Values, 2018, Racial, ethnic and gender inequities in farmland ownership and farming in the U.S. (*pdf available on Canvas*)
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10460-018-9883-3>

-Center for American Progress Report, “Redefining Rural America”, 2019
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/07/17/471877/redefining-rural-america/>

Week 2: Is this land “Our Land”?

Learning objectives

- Describe the forces that contributed to the loss of black farmers in the United States
- Summarize the benefits gained from the LGUs of indigenous land theft and discuss strategies for rectifying these injustices

Required reading and listening content

-All content in the Canvas modules, including pages on land treaties, and several other land ownership related policies including the Pigford versus Glickman lawsuit, redlining, 40 Acres and Mule, the Homestead Act, and Heirs Property

-1619 podcast episodes 4 & 5 “The Land of Our Fathers Parts 1 & 2”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html>

-Scene on Radio, “Losing Ground”
<http://www.sceneonradio.org/episode-43-losing-ground/>

-Investigation into origin of Land Grant University land and endowments, High Country News and related media coverage

Investigation:

<https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>

Related media:

<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/takeaway/segments/how-american-universities-profited-off-indigenous-land>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-New-Research-Calls-Some/248462>

Week 3: Moving forward: A seat at the table for all

Learning objectives

- Define culturally-related terms such as social norms, racism, structural racism, inequality and white supremacy
- Analyze the culture of a workplace or organization (such as a company or college) to identify steps that might be taken to be more supportive of diverse perspectives and human centered policies

Required reading and listening content

-All content in the Canvas modules, including pages on racism related terminology, exploring the food system, COVID-19, and representation

-Bryan Stevenson interview on Fresh Air, January 2020
<https://www.npr.org/2020/01/20/796234496/just-mercy-attorney-asks-u-s-to-reckon-with-its-racist-past-and-present>

-QZ, What does it mean to create an anti-racist workplace? June 2020
<https://qz.com/work/1864529/how-to-build-an-actively-anti-racist-workplace/>

Assignment information

Note that most all assignments will be due on Canvas by 11:59pm, unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Late assignments will have 10% of the total points deducted for every day that they are turned in late. Specific information about the assignments is available on Canvas.

Discussion posts

Discussion posts should be approximately 250 words (at a minimum) and should demonstrate that students have engaged with the Canvas materials as well as other assigned content.

Discussion posts will be made available to all students in the course. You are welcome to respectfully respond to other student posts, but not required to do so. I will encourage you in all writing assignments to write much more than the minimum if you have more that you want to share.

Writing assignments

Writing assignments should be approximately 500 words (at a minimum) and should also demonstrate that students have critically engaged with Canvas materials and other assigned content, as well as other related content. Specific writing prompts will require students to thoroughly and properly cite the ideas of others presented in their assignments. I will encourage you in all writing assignments to write much more than the minimum if you have more that you want to share.

Additional Course Information and Policies

Technology

In this course we will use the Canvas learning management system to share the majority of our content, including assignment submissions and discussion posts. *If you have any concerns about your access to technology and familiarity with technology platforms, please let me know as soon as possible and we will come with solutions to support you.* Canvas support can be very helpful to troubleshoot issues, and are available via phone (1-877-244-8884) or live chat via the help menu on the left hand side of your Canvas dashboard.

Course climate and “netiquette”

Thoughtful, critical, and respectful participation is not only encouraged, it is expected. I understand that participating in class can be a challenge for some, and so I ask us all to be responsible for creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect so that everyone’s questions can be expressed and constructively addressed. Importantly, this respectful environment will help us learn collaboratively, together, in this class. Because some of our interactions will take place together online (discussion posts, and the possibility of zoom discussion sections), it is even more important that we consider “netiquette”, or proper online communication. Remember that your online and email communications are permanent records! You should write like you would speak, in a professional manner, with kindness and respect for your colleagues and teaching team. Here are a few other guidelines to consider: Try to avoid informal abbreviations that you might use in text message or social media, as not everyone may know what they mean and avoiding them will help you communicate more clearly; Make use of subject lines to help give people a clue about topics for emails, discussion posts, etc.; Typing in all caps is considered “yelling” online, so please avoid using all capital letters; Sarcasm and joking in person rely on non-verbal communication, and therefore should be used sparingly and carefully in online posts so as not to be misunderstood; Be frugal with exclamation points as they can also be misconstrued. Any behavior in class that violates this will result in a grade penalty and/or removal from sessions at my discretion.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution, and it is even more critical that we engage in best practices during our remote learning. In particular for this class, plagiarism in writing is a specific concern. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. The University's [Student Code of](#)

Conduct, available [here](#), addresses academic dishonesty. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, will receive a “0” for an assignment. You may also be subject to further disciplinary action and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision.

Support Services and Policy Statements

Diversity & Inclusion

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation.

Services for students with disabilities or other special needs

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), *please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately*. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD can be located at 232 Canfield Administration Building or at 402-472-3787. Please know that I am constantly working to improve inclusivity and accessibility in my classroom. If there is something you feel that I can do to better support you, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Experiencing difficulties?

I understand that college is a period of transition in life that can be exciting at some times, but also extremely challenging and stressful at other times. If you are experiencing difficulties in this class, please do not hesitate to visit with me to discuss on how you can respond to improve your performance. Below I have included a few additional resources that might be helpful if you are struggling with class or beyond. Remember that *everyone* goes through periods of life when they need to ask for help from others.

Classes: If you are experiencing difficulties with more than just my class, you may want to visit with your advisor or take advantage of the CASNR Cares program make an appointment with Megan Schaefer, Student Development Coordinator, (megan.schaefer@unl.edu; (402) 472-7812) in 103 Ag Hall. From the CASNR Cares website: “CASNR Cares is the first point of contact for students, faculty, staff and parents when there are questions, concerns or situations that affect a student’s educational experience at CASNR.”

Mental health and well-being: If you feel like you are overwhelmed and/or experiencing general problems with depression, anxiety or other issues, I encourage you to contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office in the Student Health Center to utilize the resources that they have available to students (<http://health.unl.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services-caps>; (402) 472- 7450). In addition, Big Red Resilience & Well-Being (BRRWB) provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. More information about BRRWB is available at <https://resilience.unl.edu/home> or 402-472-8770.

Basic needs and security: It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, I

urge you to contact the Husker Pantry (<https://pantry.unl.edu/welcome>) located at the University Health Center room 123 (550 N. 19th Street). From the Husker Pantry website: *“Food and shelter insecurities are an unfortunate reality for students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and nationwide. Nearly one in three students on our campus worries about not having enough food until they have money to buy more.”* They are there to help and can provide food, other items and resources to students with their NCard.

Childcare, family care or other responsibilities: Given the current public health crisis, we may all find ourselves in situations never imagined with new responsibilities for caregiving, within our families or communities. I encourage you to speak with me privately if you have any concerns about managing workload in this class with your other life responsibilities. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes regardless of parenting or caregiving status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for balance. You may also find support and connection via the Students with Children RSO (<https://womens-center.unl.edu/student-parents>).