



THE UNIVERSITY
OF VERMONT

RURAL GEOGRAPHY

Fall 2023

GEOG 2760, 3 credits, Social Sciences (S1)

Lafayette 200

T/ TH 11:40-12:55

course number: 93985

Instructor:

Cheryl Morse, Ph.D

cheryl.morse@uvm.edu

<http://cherylmorse.com>

Office Hours:

In Old Mill 203: Tuesdays, 1:00-2:30.

On Teams, please email for appointment: Thursdays, 10:00-11:00.

Please email to schedule a separate time if needed

Course Syllabus and Expectations

This course is an introduction to the field of Rural Geography and therefore an introduction to ideas and processes that concern human geographers across sub-disciplines. We will focus on the rural at three scales: the global, regional within the United States, and the state of Vermont. The class is organized around 7 themes:

1. **The Rural: Real and Imagined.** An introduction to the field, defining the rural, and ideas that create the rural.
2. **Intersectional Rural Identities.** How rural identity connects with race, gender, sexual orientation, class and justice.
3. **Global Rurals.** Experience of rurality outside of the United States and Europe. Rural childhoods.
4. **American Rurals.** Team project on specific rural communities in the United States.
5. **Rural Challenges.** Health, environment, working landscapes, migration.
6. **New Rurals.** How might we design new rural geographies?
7. **Rural Knowledge Production.** Generating new scholarship and translating that scholarship visually.

The course examines pressing concerns in rural communities including: migration, livelihood, health, food access, environmental conditions, socio-political shifts and injustice. Students will gain an awareness the narratives about the rural that are circulated in film, literature, commentary, and music, and how these narratives either reflect or distort the rural experience. We will discuss how individual and cultural identities like class, gender, race, sexual orientation, and age influence personal experiences of specific rural places, sensitive to the fact that there are many 'rurals' across the globe, the United States, and within Vermont communities.

Participants in this class will attend lectures, engage in experiential and hands-on workshops, write, work in teams, watch films, discuss readings, and write a university-level scholarly paper and a brief policy statement that includes a visual. Over the course of the term we will have "scholarly tutorials" on the skills required to produce a short high-quality research paper.

Learning Objectives

- **Introduce students to a sub-discipline** within the field of geography as well as themes that cut across many fields of study in human geography including: demographic change, globalization, landscape change, identity politics, and global social and environmental problems.
- Engage students in **different modes of experiential learning.**
- To improve student scholarly and report writing skills, develop critical geographic analysis skills, and **produce new knowledge** about the rural.
- Practice communicating effectively to **non-academic audiences.**

Time and Effort Expectations

This is a three-credit course at the intermediate level. Students should expect to spend two and a half hours engaged with direct instruction (lectures, class activities, discussion) and six to nine hours on out of class work such as reading, conducting research, and doing assignments.

Course Designations

- **S1** – fulfills Catamount Core / General Education Social Science requirement.
Students completing a course fulfilling the S1: Social Science requirement will:
 - ✓ Be able to draw on course topics, materials, and activities to *describe* how individuals, groups or institutions affect and interact with each other.
 - ✓ Be able to *identify and demonstrate understanding of* theories of human behavior, experience, institutions, or social systems addressed in the course.
 - ✓ *Recognize and evaluate* methods and processes of systematic investigation in one or more applied examples of social science research
- **ENVS SS breadth** – fulfills Environmental Studies Social Science Breadth requirement
- Contributes to Geography Major electives

Class Organization

This course includes a workshop component and an online component in addition to in-person lecture and discussion classes. The semester is divided into two-week units. Each unit has a workshop. Occasionally, a unit will have an on-line component, in which case we will meet on Teams, or the work will be asynchronous. We will have at least one guest lecture on Teams. The detailed daily schedule and the course units section on Brightspace clearly outline the schedule and expectations. Workshops provide students an opportunity to directly engage with class material. Students will be split into two groups, EAST and WEST. You will find your group assignment in Brightspace. We will meet in the two-week unit schedule, shown below. Asynchronous remote content will be posted each week and all students will complete the remote assignments on their own schedule.

What is a workshop?

Workshops are opportunities to do *engage in activities and learn through experience*. We will use this time to make things like posters, maps, and poems, conduct field studies outdoors, and research using our surrounding resources both material and on-line. Students should bring their art supplies and cameras with them.

Sample Two Week Unit Schedule

WEEK 1	On Your Own Time: On-Line Content and Assignments Prior to Workshop: assignments you must do to be prepared for workshop	Tuesday LECTURE AND DISCUSSION All students meet in person	Thursday WORKSHOP WEST students meet in Lafayette 200, in person.
WEEK 2	On Your Own Prior to Thursday's Discussion (everyone) On Line Content and Discussion Preparation	Tuesday WORKSHOP EAST students meet in Lafayette 200, in person.	Thursday LECTURE AND DISCUSSION All students meet in person Friday Unit Portfolio Due , on Brightspace by midnight.

Platforms and Technical Support

We will use Brightspace and Microsoft Teams in this course. Please read this technology check list to make sure you are ready for classes. <https://www.uvm.edu/it/kb/student-technology-resources/>. Please call the **Helpline (802-656-2604)** for support with technical issues.

Required Course Materials

Workshop Supplies. Estimated cost \$10. Please bring markers or colored pencils to your workshop session (see description of workshops below). I will provide paper, tape, and other supplies for the workshops.

Access to a Phone or Digital Camera. You will need to take photos of some of your hand-drawn work. Anything that can take a digital photo will work. (If you happen to forget yours for a workshop, I can photograph your work.)

There is no required textbook for this class. All readings will be posted on our Brightspace site.

Portfolio-Based Assessment

One of the pedagogical goals for this class is to **put responsibility for learning in students' hands**. More than ever, we need to be selective about where we put our energies and to be flexible with our time. I have designed the assessments for this course so that they allow students to choose the activities and themes in which they engage. Students will be assessed based on the "products" they make. I will use rubrics that specifically explain how your grade is earned. ***The best products will result from full attendance at all workshops, doing all of the remote content, and participating in all discussions. I will take attendance at your Workshop session but not at lectures or other mandatory class meetings.***

As the table below shows, a portfolio is due at the end of each two-week unit. There are seven units in the course. You must complete six of these units (**6/7 units**). The "Producing Rural Knowledge" unit is mandatory. Of the remaining six units you will choose five to complete. You do not need to let me know which unit you choose not to do, you simply will not earn those points.

What is a Portfolio?

A portfolio is a **set of diverse assignments** that together demonstrate the **breadth and depth of your learning on a theme**. As an example, a portfolio might include: a) a response to a discussion, b) a reflection on a reading, c) a mini-essay on a lecture, d) a scholarly tutorial worksheet, and e) a photo of something you have created in a workshop. *Collectively, the diverse assignments address the fact that students learn and communicate best in different ways.* The portfolio assignment will be posted in Brightspace within the folder for the unit. You will find a form to fill out with instructions. Each portfolio set of assignments will offer some **choice**, meaning that *you might need to complete four out of five items, for example.*

How to Succeed in Portfolio-Based Learning

Portfolios are due every two weeks, at the end of a unit. Students who keep up with all work when it is assigned will find it easy to cut and paste their work into the portfolio form at the end of the unit. This statement is worth repeating: *The best products will result from full attendance at all workshops, doing all remote content, and participating in all required discussions.* Students are advised to **carefully read the feedback** they receive on early assignments so they can take guidance on how to improve their performance.

UNIT	DATES	PORTFOLIO DUE DATES	POINTS
1. The Rural: Real and Imagined. An introduction to the field and ideas that create the rural.	Aug 29 – Sept 8	Friday, Sept 8 at midnight	13 Workshop: 2
2. Intersectional Rural Identities. How rural identity connects with race, gender, sexual orientation, class and justice.	Sept 12 - 23	Friday, Sept 22, at midnight / 11:59pm	13 Workshop: 2
3. Global Rurals. Experience of rurality outside of the United States and Europe.	Sept 26 – Oct 6	Friday, Oct 6 at midnight / 11:59pm	13 Workshop: 2
4. American Rurals. Team project. Using research resources to understand specific communities. <i>You must sign up for this unit by October 5 so that I can place you in a team.</i>	Oct 10 – 20	Team Docs: Thurs, Oct 19 at 11:40am; Individual Reflection due Fri Oct 20 at midnight / 11:59pm	13 Workshop: 2
5. Rural Challenges. Health, environment, working landscapes, migration.	Oct 24 – Nov 3	Friday, Nov 3 at midnight / 11:59pm	13 Workshop: 2
6. Planning New Rurals. How might we design new rural geographies and small-town life?	Nov 7 - 17	Friday, Nov 17 at midnight / 11:59pm.	13 Workshop: 2
7. Rural Knowledge Production. Generating new scholarship and translating that scholarship visually – <i>mandatory unit.</i>	Nov 21 – Dec 7	Scholarly Paper due Thursday Nov 30 at midnight Visuals and presentations Dec 5 and 7	25 (mandatory)
The final grade is the sum of the points students have earned over the semester. Students will complete the mandatory Knowledge portfolio (25 possible points) and five of the remaining six units (15+15+15+15+15=75 possible points) (25+75=100 total possible points)			

Forms of Assessment

General Portfolio Assignments

As described above, students will be assigned work in a variety of formats for each portfolio. Each assignment will be assigned points commensurate to the time and effort involved, adding up to a total of 15 points for each portfolio.

Typically, students will have some choice in the set of assignments they submit. The assignments could include:

- short written reflections on discussions, lectures, or readings (a few paragraphs)
- formal short essays (one to two pages)
- worksheets that require on-line research and data analysis
- (photos of) products made by hand (maps, drawings, cartoons, word art) in workshops or for homework

A Few Thoughts on Class Discussions

The best learning comes from spirited discussion among people who are informed by reading/watching/listening to/engaging in common content. Discussions where the instructor is trying to motivate students to talk about something they didn't read, read too quickly, or didn't reflect upon are *so uncomfortable*, and frankly, a waste of everyone's time. So, as stated, I will not take attendance, but **I will directly call on students in class discussions** to respond to questions about the readings with the expectation that you have prepared ideas based on reading prompts I give you. I will also make assignments for the portfolio based on the content of our discussions. *It is up to each student to direct their own learning here.*

We can only learn to the extent we can take in other perspectives and put them in dialogue with our own. In practical terms, this means **we all need to cultivate the skills of listening, sympathetic imagining, and clear speaking** in order to create a learning environment. I ask that we invite others to share their points of view, and deeply and respectfully listen.

American Rurals Team Project

This is one of the optional units. Students work in small teams for this project. Teams will conduct a study of a rural county within the United States using a variety of data including agricultural and natural resource sector statistics, geographic and climate data, economic data, demographic information, well-being indicators, and cultural information. Teams will analyze this data and using it as a basis, develop a place-based community development proposal for a \$1 million grant competition. Each team will present their "pitch" in a group presentation. Assessments: team data file, team powerpoint, team presentation (6 points), individual reflection (7 points), attendance at workshop (2).

Rural Knowledge Production Project (RKP) - 25 points

Each student will write a 4-5 page original, fully-referenced paper on a topic of their choosing. **Environmental Studies students must choose an environmentally-related topic.** After the papers have been graded, students will make a fact sheet or policy brief that includes a visual component. Students will share the policy brief in a one-minute presentation in the final exam on Teams. The purpose is to communicate your knowledge or suggestions to a non-academic ("lay") audience. Assessments: scholarly paper (15 points), policy brief (4 pts), visual (4 pts), oral presentation at final (2 pts).

Letter Grades and Points

A+ 98-100	B+ 88-89	C+ 78-79	D+ 68-69	F – below 60
A 93-97	B 83-87	C 73-77	D 63-67	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Staying healthy: Please remain mindful of our interactions in the shared space of the classroom. I ask that you do not attend class if you are feeling ill or have a cough, sneezing or a fever. Please wear a mask if you have been exposed to any variant of COVID.

Emergencies: Unfortunately, emergencies happen. If you must interrupt your schoolwork for any reason, please send me an email as soon as you can. The course is designed so that students can miss up to two weeks of work without a negative impact on your progress. We will problem-solve together to address issues and unexpected issues.

Academic Integrity: You are a member of a scholarly community. Dishonesty not only interrupts your educational process but also damages the integrity of the learning community. Academic dishonesty includes: plagiarism (submitting

someone else's work as your own), using AI to write a paper or essay, cheating, copying another's work, and fabricating information or citations. Suspected academic dishonesty will be handled by the Office of Academic Integrity. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please talk directly with me.

Religious Holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Students should submit in writing to me by the end of the second full week of classes their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. I will permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up this work.

Extracurricular Obligations: If you participate in any other UVM-sanctioned activity which will cause you to miss class, it is your responsibility to give a full schedule of your planned absences to me by the second full week of classes. I will allow you to reschedule an assignment under these conditions.

Email and Office Hours: I look forward to getting to know you and helping you do your best in this course. The best way for me to do this is by meeting with you during my office hours or working with you in our occasional Thursday work sessions. I will have both in-person times and times on Teams. Please see the times at the top of this syllabus and on BB. If you cannot make my office hours, please email me to set up an appointment.

Access: If you have a disability or a learning difference which in any way interferes with your performance in class, or your access to the classroom, please speak with me as soon as possible so we can make the proper accommodations.

Key University and Course Dates

Friday, Sept 1	last day to add class w/o instructor permission	Mon, Oct 30	Last day to withdraw from classes
Mon, Sept 4	Labor Day, no classes	Nov 20-24	Thanksgiving Break
Mon, Sept 11	Add/drop deadline	Friday, Dec 8	Last day of classes

(the detailed daily schedule and due dates are posted on Brightspace)

Readings and Learning Materials

We will read a variety of academic journal and newspaper articles, essays, website pieces, reports, chapters, newspaper articles, films, and book excerpts in this class. This is a partial list.

American Epidemic: The Nation Struggles with Opioid Addiction. Wall Street Journal. <http://www.wsj.com/video/american-epidemic-the-nations-struggle-with-opioid-addiction/0BD4A072-D631-482A-9A60-C667EC09CCFB.html>.

Brown, David and Kai Schafft. 2018. *Rural People and Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience and Transformation*, 2nd Edition. Selected chapters.

Chea, Lyda, and Roy Huijsmans. 2018. "Rural youth and urban-based vocational training: gender, space and aspiring to 'become someone'." *Children's Geographies* 16 (1):39-52. doi: 10.1080/14733285.2017.1300234.

CBC News. 2020. How a small B.C. island can help us understand the role of racism in disease treatment. Aug 3. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/darcy-island-leprosy-1.5669873>

- Cramer, K. 2016. *The Politics of Resentment*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. / Walsh, K. Cramer. 2012. Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective. *The American Political Science Review*. 106(3): 517-532.
- Cronon, W. 1995. The Trouble with Wilderness, Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature (excerpted from chapter in Uncommon Ground) *Environmental History* 1 (1): 7-28.
- Crosley-Cronon. 2016. How to Explain Privilege to a Broke White Person. Huffington Post. July 16.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-crosleycorcoran/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255.html.
- Crossley, E. 2012. "Poor but Happy: Volunteer Tourists' Encounters with Poverty" *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment* 14:2, 235-253, doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2011.611165
- Datta, Amrita. 2018. "Pride and shame in the city: young people's experiences of rural-urban migration in India." *Children's Geographies* 16 (6):654-665. doi: 10.1080/14733285.2018.1495317.
- Gange, J. 2019. *Suddenly You Are Nobody. Vermont Refugees Tell Their Stories*. Burlington, VT: Huntington Graphics. Selected excerpts.
- Hood, Abby Lee. 2022. "The Unexpected, Radical Roots of 'Redneck'." *Daily Yonder*. Sept 5. <https://dailyyonder.com/the-unexpected-radical-roots-of-redneck/2022/09/05/>
- Johansen, P. H., Tietjen, A., Iversen, E. B., Lolle, H. L., & Fisker, J. K. 2023. *Rural Quality of Life*. Manchester University Press.
- Klein, Naomi. 2020. "A Message from the Future II: The Years of Repair." *The Intercept*.
- J. Drew Lanham, "The Lay of the Land," *Places Journal*, September 2016. Accessed 07 Nov 2017.
<https://placesjournal.org/article/lanham-the-home-place/>
- Marema, T. 2022. Mud and Mutual Aid: The Early Days of Recovery from Eastern Kentucky Floods. Center for Rural Strategies. August 1.
- Margonelli, Lisa. 2013. The Trailer Park at the End of the World. *Pacific Standard*. May/June, pp. 38-49.
- Morse, C., A. Trubek, C. Morgan. 2020. Planning Regenerative Working Landscapes. In: *Handbook of Sustainable and Regenerative Foods Systems*. Jessica Duncan; Michael Carolan; Han Wiskerke, eds. London, Routledge.
- Morse, C. and J. Mudgett. 2018. Happy to be Home: Place Attachment, Family Ties, and Mobility of Contented Rural Stayers. *The Professional Geographer* 70 (2), 261-269. DOI: 10.1080/00330124.2017.1365309.
- Mutiso, R. M. How to bring affordable, sustainable electricity to Africa. TEDSummit 2019, Scotland.
https://www.ted.com/talks/rose_m_mutiso_how_to_bring_affordable_sustainable_electricity_to_africa#t-241009
- Penniman, L. *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*. White River Jct, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Phiri, Douglas Tendai. 2016. "Rural children's role in buffering household poverty through ganyu (piecework) in Zambia." *Children's Geographies* 14 (6):685-700. doi: 10.1080/14733285.2016.1163326.
- Rose, Deborah Bird. 2013. "Fitting into country" in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*. P Howard, I Thompson and E Waterton, editors. Routledge: London and New York.
- Skovdal, Morten, and Ruth Evans. 2017. "The emergence of an ethic of care in rural Kenyan schools? Perspectives of teachers and orphaned and vulnerable pupils." *Children's Geographies* 15 (2):160-176. doi: 10.1080/1.

Swift, Hilary and Abby Goodnough. 2020. "'The drug became his friend': Pandemic drives hike in opioid deaths." New York Times. Sept 29/30. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/29/health/coronavirus-opioids-addiction.html>.

The Daily Yonder. A digest of rural news stories: <https://dailyyonder.com/>.

Trimbach, D., W. Fleming and K. Biedenweg. 2020. Whose Puget Sound? Examining Place Attachment, Residency and Stewardship in the Puget Sound Region. *Geographical Review*. 10.1080/00167428.2020.1798763.

Unambitious Loser with Happy, Fulfilling Life Still Lives in Hometown. *The Onion*. July 23, 2013: <http://www.theonion.com/article/unambitious-loser-with-happy-fulfilling-life-still-33233>.

Van Sant, L. and K. Bosworth. 2017. Race, Rurality, and Radical Geography in the U.S.. Antipode. <https://antipodefoundation.org/2017/09/14/race-rurality-and-radical-geography/>.

Van Sant, L. Van Sant, C. Levi. 2019. Land Reform and the Green New Deal. *Dissent Magazine*. Fall issue. <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/land-reform-and-the-green-new-deal>

Woods, Michael. 2005. *Rural Geography*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications. (chapters on global agricultural change, rural resource extraction communities and economies, cultural narratives of the rural)

Woods, Michael. 2011. *Rural*. London, Routledge.