Seminar on American Rural Life

In this seminar, we will be studying the history of the rural United States, from the late 18th century to the year 2000. We will read and discuss books and articles on the subject, and will study the subject from a number of temporal and geographic perspectives. The overriding question for the semester will be what is rural America, and what are the most effective ways to study this often neglected portion of the nation?

Required Texts:


Articles, available on JSTOR:


Readings will be assigned to specific weeks. Since participation will account for a substantial portion of your grade, being prepared with each week’s readings is essential to your grade -- not to mention the success of the class.


September 5 Labor Day holiday, no class.

September 12 Discuss Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Midwife’s Tale. Paper proposals due. Be prepared to discuss yours with the class.


September 26 Discuss Mary Neth, Preserving the Family Farm. Progress reports from all students.

October 3 Required individual fifteen minute conferences, either during office hours or class time. Sign up.

October 10 Work week, no class. Professor available for consultation during office hour and class time.

October 17 Work week, no class. Professor available for consultation during office hour and class time.

October 24 First drafts due by 6:00 p.m. Papers to be handed in to professor and to class.

October 31 Paper presentations/group critiques begin.

November 7 Paper presentations/group critiques continue.

November 14 Paper presentations/group critiques continue.
Students choosing this option should familiarize themselves with the form that historiographic essays normally take. For example, please see the following, available in JSTOR.


**Late policy:** All assignments, unless otherwise noted, are due at 6:00 PM on the day to which they are assigned. If you require an extension, you must notify me before missing the assignment, and will have to present a good excuse (meaning a verifiable family emergency or illness). If I ask for verification, you must provide it. If you do not contact me ahead of time or your excuse is unacceptable, your assignment will lose 10 points for every week day that it is overdue, beginning on the day it was due. **Plan ahead. Last minute computer glitches are not acceptable excuses for lateness.**

**Presentations:**

All seminar participants will be required to present their projects to the class, and participate in critiques of their colleagues’ work. The presentation should be a ten minute discussion of the highlights of the paper – its thesis, materials used, problems confronted. All students will read all of the papers being presented in a given week. Two students will be the discussants, and prepare careful critiques of the paper, using the guidelines for article referees used by the journal *Agricultural History*, as provided by the professor. One copy of the comments will go to the paper’s writer, another to the professor. The discussants will have a total of ten minutes to present their critiques, and will lead the rest of the class in up to ten minutes of critique, for a total presentation time of 30 minutes. The discussants will prepare separate critiques, and will decide how to divide the 10 minutes between themselves.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others without giving credit where credit is due. The rule is that you must give prompt acknowledgment that you have used someone else’s ideas by means of an endnote or footnote that refers to the page or pages in question. Paraphrases of someone else’s ideas must also be cited. You must