

History of United States Agriculture

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History 380
Fall 2019
TTh 9:00-10:15
Recitation Hall 308

Course Description:

This course will survey American agricultural history from approximately 7100 B.P. (ca. 5000 B.C.) to the present. It will emphasize the area of the continental United States. The main topics of study will include Early American agriculture; the plantation system, land policy, settlement and agricultural expansion, scientific and technological change, farming in wartime, agrarian politics, water rights, migrant labor, and agricultural policy. Matters of race, class, and gender will inform all class discussion.

Objectives:

Our goals are to: (1) gain a broad understanding of the major economic, social, political, and scientific and technological developments in the history of American agriculture; and, (2) analyze the causes, consequences, and significance of the major events, developments, and issues that have influenced the agricultural history of the United States.

Grades:

There will be four exams and one paper. Other brief writing assignments may be scheduled. The exam format will be essay, short answer, and identification. You will need to bring a blue book (preferably two for insurance) to class each exam day. The exams and paper will be worth 100 points each. The total points earned will determine your grade based on the scale of: 90 percent = A; 80 percent = B; 70 percent = C; 60 percent = D. Plus and minus grades will be assigned.

Research Paper:

You will write a research paper on any topic related to American agricultural history, including the history of a family farm. You should choose a subject that you would like to learn more about. The paper must be 12 to 15 pages of text with the endnotes extra. The paper must be double-spaced, paginated, and set with 12-point Times Roman font. We will discuss your research paper in detail during class.

Paper Due Date: Thursday, November 14, a hardcopy and an electronic copy. A letter grade will be deducted for each day that the paper is late.

A book prize will be awarded for the best paper based on written student evaluations and nominations. You will justify in a one-page paper your choice of the best research paper. A maximum of 10 extra credit points will be given for this optional assignment.

A makeup exam requires prior approval, and it will be given on the last day of class (December 6).

Attendance: Expected

Books:

The following books are required for the course:

Anderson, J. L. The Rural Midwest since World War II. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014. **Available Online Through the Library.**

Bushman, Richard Lyman. The American Farmer in the Eighteenth Century. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

Hersey, Mark D. My Work is that of Conservation: An Environmental Biography of George Washington Carver. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011. **Available Online Through the Library.**

Jones, Lu Anne. Mamma Learned Us to Work: Farm Women in the New South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. **Available Online Through the Library.**

Sherow, James E. The Chisholm Trail: Joseph McCoy's Great Gamble. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. **Available Online Through the Library.**

Additional online readings may be assigned.

Week #1:

August 20 and 22: Introduction; Colonial Agriculture
Bushman, Chs. 1-7

Week #2:

August 27 and 29: Colonial Agriculture
Bushman, Chs. 8-12

Week #3:

September 3 and 5: American Revolution, Antebellum Agriculture (South and Midwest)
Bushman Chs. 13-14

Week #4:

September 10 and 12: Civil War

Sherow, Chs. 1-3

EXAM #1; SEPTEMBER 12

J. L. Anderson, "The Vacant Chair on the Farm: Soldiers, Husbands, Farm Wives, and the Iowa Home Front, 1861-1865," in Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War, edited by Ginette Aley and J. L. Anderson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 148-168. **ONLINE ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY**

Week #5:

September 17 and 19: Great Plains

Sherow, Chs. 4-6

Week #6: Far West, Technology

September 24 and 26

Sherow, Chs. 7-9

Week #7: Post-war South

October 1 and 3

EXAM #2; October 3

Week #8:

October 8 and 10; **NO CLASS October 8, Fall Break**

Hersey, Chs. 1-3

Week #9:

October 15 and 17: Agrarian Revolt; Agricultural Education

Hersey, Chs. 4-6

Week #10:

October 22 and 24: **NO CLASS**

Hersey, Chs. 7-9, Epilogue

Work on Paper

Week #11:

October 29 and 31: Agricultural Extension; Technological Change

Jones, Preface, Introduction, Ch. 1

Week #12: The New Deal

November 5 and 7:

Jones, Chs. 2-4

EXAM #3; NOVEMBER 5

Week #13: The New Deal

November 12 and 14

Jones, Chs. 5-6

PAPER DUE; NOVEMBER 14**Hard Copy and Electronic Copy****Week #14: Migrant Labor**

November 19 and 21

Jim Norris, "Hispanics in the Midwest since World War II," in The Rural Midwest since World War II, edited by J. L. Anderson (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 255-73. **ONLINE ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY**

Week #15: Migrant LaborNovember 26 and 28 [**Thanksgiving**]

Kendra Smith Howard, "Ecology, Economy, Labor: The Midwestern Farm Landscape since 1945," in The Rural Midwest since World War II, edited by J. L. Anderson (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 44-65. **ONLINE ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY**

J. L. Anderson, "Uneasy Dependency: Rural Farm Policy in the Midwest since 1945," in The Rural Midwest since World War II, edited by J. L. Anderson (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 126-59. **ONLINE ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY**

Week #16: The Midwest

December 3 and 5:

Best Paper Nominations Due December 3; Optimal Assignment

Jenny Barker Devine, "Farm Women in the Midwest since 1945," in The Rural Midwest since World War II, edited by J. L. Anderson (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 160-182. **ONLINE ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY**

Debra A. Reid, "'The Whitest of Occupations?' African Americans in the Rural Midwest 1940-2010," in The Rural Midwest since World War II, edited by J. L. Anderson (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 204-54. **ONLINE ACCESS THROUGH THE LIBRARY**

FINALS WEEK: December 9-13**EXAM #4****Exam Day and Time to be Determined**

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means using the words and work of someone else as your own, that is, copying. This applies not only to books, articles and documents, but also to the papers written by classmates. It also means using the words of others, even paraphrased, without

attribution. The penalty for plagiarism is failure of the assignment. Plagiarism can be easily avoided by putting things in your own words or quoting the material. The penalty for cheating on an exam is failure of the course.

Emergencies:

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes because of a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. In the case of an emergency, you can get information about this course through Blackboard, by sending me an email at doughurt@purdue.edu, or by calling me at: 494-6757.