

## GEOG 9330 – Agro-food systems

### Course Outline: Section 001 – Fall 2018

#### 1. Course Information

##### 1.1. Classroom Location:

SSC 2322E, Thursdays 9am-12pm

##### 1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Tony Weis

Office: SSC 1403

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm or by appointment

Phone: 661-2111 x87472

Email: [aweis@uwo.ca](mailto:aweis@uwo.ca)

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

More information about “Accessibility at Western” is available at: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca>

#### 2. Calendar Description

This course seeks to build historical and theoretical foundations for understanding the agrarian transformations that underpin modern agro-food systems. The general approach is that of political ecology, appreciating social and ecological relations as inherently ‘bundled’, but the course reflects the fact that agrarian studies has traditionally been tilted much more towards political economy.

The core subjects to be covered are:

- peasantries and class differentiation in agriculture
- the advance of market compulsions, dispossession, and enclosure
- technological change and industrialization
- the unevenness of global market integration and resistance
- contemporary biophysical and economic problems and alternatives

The first half covers some key historical foundations, and the second half focuses on some of the most burning contemporary issues and debates in agrarian studies.

3 seminar hours, 0.5 course

#### 3. Textbook

Weekly readings are available through OWL and Western Libraries

## 4. Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- enhance the depth and breadth of knowledge concerning some of the pivotal transformations in world agriculture;
- enhance exposure to some key literatures, theoretical frameworks, and ongoing debates in critical agrarian studies;
- assess competing claims about contemporary agro-food systems;
- strengthen your basis for conceptualizing research problems and for positioning future contributions in relation to scholarly and policy debates and socio-ecological struggles.

## 5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should have:

- improved their ability to critically engage with scholarship, policy, and activism relating to agriculture and food systems;
- fortified the conceptual and theoretical basis for research into agro-food problems;
- improved analytical and both written and oral communication skills.

## 6. Evaluation

Insert information about exams and assignments and other components of the grade. Update the information below describing the exam and any relevant procedures as well.

Evaluation Component	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Weekly preparation and participation in seminars	20%	ongoing
Seminar leadership	10%	TBA
Paper proposal	10%	October 18
Research paper	40%	November 29
Paper presentation	10%	December 6

### **Seminars – weekly preparation and participation – 20%**

You are expected to come to class prepared to actively engage in discussions about the readings. This includes preparing a short reflection (250-500 words) about what you found most significant or challenging in the week's assigned readings.

### **Seminar – leadership – 10%**

You are expected to lead one seminar period. This will involve preparing a short summary discussion to begin (doing additional reading that week) and identifying good questions to

stimulate discussion. We will decide by the end of the first 2 sessions which session/date you will each take.

**Research Paper Proposal (due Oct 18) – 10%**

The proposal will indicate preliminary research outline, lines of exploration, and a working bibliography, and should be 250-500 words (double-spaced) plus 8-10 sources. You are encouraged to discuss your proposed topic as you work on the proposal.

**Research Paper (due November 29) – 40%**

The intent of this paper is for you to take a subject(s) that we cover in class and use it as a springboard to a more detailed review of the literature that is most relevant to your research. Your review should be guided by an argument, which means you need to take a stance on the key debates you encounter. The basic goal is to challenge you to dig more deeply into some aspect of the course in relation your research interests (which might contribute to the literature review for your thesis).

The final paper should be up to 4000 words (not including bibliography) and draw upon at least 15 significant journal articles or book chapters.

**Paper presentation (due December 6) – 10%**

The **presentation** is expected to be like a conference paper, not more than 15 minutes, followed by a short period of questions. You will be graded for the presentation’s content/argument and style (oratory + visuals).

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text. Students are **REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ALL COMPONENTS** of this course. There are no exceptions to this. Extra assignments to improve grades **will NOT** be accepted. **Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: You are responsible for your grades in this course.**

## 7. Unit Schedule

Date	Topic
September 13	Course introduction
September 20	The complexity of peasantries and agrarian classes of labour
September 27	The Great Transformation
October 4	The advance of markets and dispossession in the temperate world
October 8-12	Reading break
October 18	The advance of markets and dispossession in the tropics and semi-tropics <b>(proposal due)</b>
October 25	Technological change and industrialization I: focus of seeds
November 1	Technological change and industrialization II: focus on livestock

Date	Topic
November 8	Socio-ecological crises in world agriculture and the rise of agroecology
November 15	Deepening market integration, transnational agrarian movements, and 'food sovereignty'
November 22	The new land grabs and financialization
November 29	Agro-food struggles today <b>(final paper due)</b>
December 6	Paper presentations and wrap-up

## 8. University Policy Regarding Illness

### 8.1. Illness

Please visit the link to the university policy for more information.

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=-> Page 12

If you feel that you have a medical or personal concern that is interfering with your work, you should contact your Instructor, Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS.

### 8.2. Attendance

It is expected that students will attend all classes. The professor does not provide access to lecture notes. Students are encouraged to obtain missed lecture notes from a fellow student.

## 9. Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students

For the complete policy and regulations see:

[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/13.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html)

## 10. Procedures for Appealing Academic Evaluations

Students may appeal an academic decision or ruling in accordance with the appeal procedures set out below. Students have a right to appeal to their graduate programs and, if unsuccessful, to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Some decisions may be appealed further to the Senate Review Board Academic. The Vice-Provost's rulings in academic matters are final unless overturned or modified on appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA).

For the complete policy and regulations see:

[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/13.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/13.html)

## 11. Support Services

### 11.1. Support Services

Student Support Services can be reached at: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

[http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### 11.2. Short Absences

If you miss a class due to minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or exam. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow the missed lecture notes from a classmate.

### 11.3. Extended Absences

If you expect to be away from campus for an extended amount of time, please make prior arrangements with your course instructors and/or supervisor.

For the complete policy on registration, see:

[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/4.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/4.html)

### 11.4. Academic Concerns

If you are in academic difficulty, it is strongly recommended that you see your Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS.

## 12. Important Dates:

September 6: Classes resume

September 14: Last day to add a full course or a second term half course

October 8: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

October 9-12: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

**October 18: Proposal due**

November 12: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

**November 29: Research paper due**

November 30: Last day to drop a full course without academic penalty

**December 6: Paper presentations**

December 7: Classes end

December 8 and 9: Study days

December 10-21: Examination Period

December 21: Fall term

## 13. Other Information

For a list of Graduate Regulations please visit:

[http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/index.html](http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/index.html)

For The University of Western Ontario Senate Regulations, please see the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policies at:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic\\_policies/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html)

Email Policies: Please respect the fact that Professors receive multiple emails from students and will deal with those emails in a fair, organized and timely manner. Please ensure the subject line contains the name, number and section of the course in question.