The rural workforce, in general, earns less than its urban counterparts. While general income has gained or remained steady for urban and suburban workers over the past twenty years, income earned by rural workers remained at about eighty percent of what urban workers earn. Consequently, public tax collections are much lower in rural areas, and, severe financial challenges face policy makers in the areas of challenging poverty and providing sufficient funds for schools and other important social services.”

President Obama – speaking to farmers in rural Missouri, 2009

“The challenges for rural schools - for all schools – will continue for many years. We’re not only caught in a deep global recession, we are also rapidly shifting to an information culture that has huge implications on how students learn and are taught. Education at all levels – including the university – is transcending from a print-centric model closely related to batch processing, to a radically personalized digitally delivered asymmetrical model (DDAM). Rapid change favors the small and nimble – this could be a transformative time for rural schools if policy development embraces DDAM.”

Tom Vander Ark – IC Systems, 2011

I. Course Description

Rural U.S, as well as global rural Communities, faces both opportunities and challenges that result from recent demographic and economic developments. On one hand, rural areas enjoyed a relatively strong economic recovery following the international 2001 recession. The availability of more technology, the modest upswing in school funding, the traditional emphasis of family life in the homes and schools of rural America, and the partial stabilization of income levels, have assisted rural communities until 2007.

On the other hand, the rapid rise in global energy costs, the increased problems in substance abuse, rising teenage pregnancy, an appropriate role for religious groups in an increasingly diverse demographic environment, surges of largely uneducated immigrant populations, the severe and lasting recession (2007 to present), the collapse of the tax structure (local and state revenue), have curtailed, and in some cases, eliminated the gains made from 2001 through 2007.

Contemporary Global Issues in Rural Education is a course of focused questions such as: What are the implications for rural America and the rural global community for the next twenty-five years? What can rural areas do to reposition, reset, and formulate a doable strategy going forward? What could be the potential for rural communities with digital manufacturing? Could the rich history and roots of rural America portend a hidden potential for future success? What can we learn from such American greats as Thomas Jefferson, Abigail Adams, Wendell Berry, Carl Sandburg, John Updike, Edward Hopper, and Aaron Copeland about the DNA of American rural character? Although this class has a particular focus on rural education in North America, will also explore rural education in the following countries: Cuba, Venezuela, Canada, South Korea, China, Germany, Scotland, Norway, Australia, and New Zealand. We shall explore the
history, the present, and more significantly, the future of rural communities with a primary focus on education in the middle grades and high school.

Books

Required - Wendell Berry, The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture, Sierra Club Books
ISBN – 978-0-87156-877-9 – Buy this book anywhere that has the best price!


*Other books that will be used – Please note – every student will read either Jaber Crow or Winter Wheat – both books are available through Amazon and other sources – used copies are just fine. We will do group reports on these two books in class.


Discover Port William, the characters and history that embody America’s rural beginnings and the loss of many of the dreams that foreshadows the challenges of modern America, through the eyes of Jayber Crow; Port William barber and grave digger.

Rural Education and the Consolidated School (History), Julius Bernhard Arp (1920), Bibliolife (open source) Press, 2009. – Book Provided for student use!

An authentic reproduction of an original eleven chapter book on rural education published in 1920. The dedication reads as follows:

“To all the millions of country boys and girls in America, and to all who feel an abiding interest in rural American life, this book is respectfully dedicated.”


A story about coming into one’s own life-direction, becoming a woman who knows the touch of the earth, the harvest times, the rural ways of being connected to nature; in times of a growing disconnection to the “old ways” that no longer hold the allure of promise, adventure, and progress.

Core Intentions:

- Explore the history, current situation, and future possibilities for rural education in the U.S.;
- Investigate the unique conditions of rural education in Oregon;
- Investigate the unique cultural and historic conditions of specific countries concerning rural education;
- The small school movement and rural small schools; and
- Understand the social, economic and multicultural influences that challenge rural communities schools throughout the United States and the world;
- To become knowledgeable about the conditions necessary for student success in Oregon rural schools, and the U.S.
- To create an interest for possible employment as a rural school educator at the middle and high school levels.
- To understand the main objectives and goals of the course text.
Course format will consist of lectures and discussions facilitated by Professor Casbon and invited guests, group discussions, project reports, individual reports, and final exam.

**Link to Conceptual Framework, Knowledge Base, and National and State Guidelines**
The Professional Teacher and Counselor Education (PTCE) unit Conceptual Framework is based on four foundational or core values that are listed below. To find out more about how the knowledge base relates to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) guidelines, review the Conceptual Framework at the website: [http://oregonstate.edu/education/accreditation/](http://oregonstate.edu/education/accreditation/)

1. Ethics and Professionalism
2. Reflective Practitioner
3. Lifelong Learners
4. Diversity and Equity

With respect to national standards, this course includes application of NCATE content knowledge, professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills, dispositions, and student learning. NCATE Unit Standards: [http://www.ncate.org/public/unitStandardsRubrics.asp?ch=4](http://www.ncate.org/public/unitStandardsRubrics.asp?ch=4)

The Oregon TSPC Standards embedded in this course include the following:
- Standard 1: Plan Instruction that supports student progress in learning and is appropriate for the developmental level.
- Standard 2: Establish a classroom climate conducive to learning.
- Standard 3: Engage students in planned learning activities.
- Standard 4: Evaluate, act upon, and report student progress in learning.
- Standard 5: Exhibits professional behaviors, ethics, and values.

**Methods of instruction:**
- Lecture, Small group discussion/activities, Whole group discussion/activities
- Reading/Independent study inquiry, Blackboard

**Evaluation for Graduate Students:**
In keeping with the learner-centered project approach for this class, Participants are expected to claim responsibility for their own learning and to assist their colleagues with collaborative efforts as well.

- A grade of “A” indicates work that meets the components of assignments and is done with distinction – the work engages and applies the ideas of assignments with clarity, thoroughness, and creative expression.
- A grade of “B” indicates work that meets the standard of acceptable graduate work at the Graduate School of Oregon State University – clear and precise thinking and expression, evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

**Evaluation, weighting, and emphasis**
- Fifty percent of the evaluation concerns group and classroom readiness and participation.
- Twenty-five percent is determined by the final exam
- Twenty-five percent by assigned reports (group and individual).

“What we need in education is not relevance but abundance, variety, adventurousness, thoroughness. A student should suppose he (s) will need to know much more than she (h) can learn”. Wendell Berry
University Expectations – Student conduct at http://oregonstate.edu/adim/stucon/acgon.htm

Academic Integrity – Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty, defined as: “An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work”. For further information, visit Avoiding Academic Dishonesty (http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/avoid.htm, or contact the Office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

Student Disability Policy – Accommodations are collaborative arrangements between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Graduate students who believe they are eligible for accommodations or have not obtained approval, should contact DAS at 541-737-4098. Additionally, you may key on to http://orgonstate.edu/dept/budgets/genupol/gudissu.htm

University Policy Concerning Weapons – All weapons on our campus are prohibited! The complete weapons policy can be found at http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS 500/OAR 576/576 065.html