

**Sociology 376W: Rural and Urban Sociology**  
**Section 1: 2:00 to 3:30**  
**Spring 2008: Room 307 AB1**

**Instructor:** Dr. Douglas H. Constance  
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**Office Hours:** T/TH 12:30 – 1:30;  
Monday 10-12, or by appointment.

**Required Texts:** Lyon, Larry. 1999. **The Community in Urban Society.**  
Eric Schlosser. 2002. **Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal**

**Course Descriptive and Objectives:** The study of “community” is a central focus of sociological investigation. The “Great Transformation” from feudalism to capitalism has greatly impacted the structures and functions of communities. The objective of the course is to examine the human community in its ecological, cultural, and associational aspects. The course is divided into two parts. This first part of the course focuses on the “Sociological Question” or, in other words, how to balance the “I” and the “We” in modern societies as we move from the village to the city, from the rural to the urban. We begin this part of the course with a review of the classical positions on community, including the dominant theories and approaches, and end with a discussion of “Community and Quality of Life Issues”. The second part of the course focuses on the relationship between the food system and community. The Schlosser book is used to illustrate the controversy surrounding the impacts of the trends towards urbanization, economic concentration, and globalization of the agri-food system on both urban and rural peoples and their communities. Sociology 131: Principles of Sociology is a pre-requisite for this course.

**Tests and Grading:** There is a total of 500 possible points for the class. The grading is divided into three categories. The three exams are worth 100 points and will be in a true/false, multiple choice, and essay format. The professor may allow students to make up missed exams if the student contacts the professor prior to the exam and provides documentation as to the reason for missing the exam. One book review (4-5 pages) worth 100 points will be required (I will provide a format for reviews). Late book reviews will not be accepted. Finally, the class will be divided into groups. Each group will do a research project on an agrifood commodity. The students will collectively prepare a power-point presentation of this research and present it to the class at the end of the semester. This project is worth 100 points. I will assess 50 of the points; the students will grade the other students in their group regarding the remaining 50 points. There is no curve and grading is based on total points: 450-500 = A; 400-449=B; 350-399=C; 300-349=D; below 300=F.

**Extra credit opportunities:** Students may elect to do THREE of FOUR possible 5 point extra-credit assignments during the semester. First, on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>. students who elect to do this extra credit will turn in papers (3-4 pages) and make a class presentation on “Intentional Communities” - either the Oneida Community, The Farm in Tennessee, the Findhorn Community of Scotland, or Twin Oaks in Virginia. Second, on March 6<sup>th</sup>., students who elect to do this extra credit will turn in papers (3-4 pages) and make a class presentation on either Social Capital or Communitarianism. Third, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. And 24<sup>th</sup>. students who elect to do this extra credit will turn in papers (3-4 pages) and make a class presentation on either Community Supported Agriculture, Slow Food, Fair Trade Movement, Organic Agriculture, Marine Stewardship Council, and/or Foodsheds and Food Circles. Fourth, students are encouraged to volunteer for a total of 5 hours in the community of Huntsville/Walker County (or if necessary in the community in which they live) at locations such as the Good Shepherd Mission, the Senior Center (Grandparents Center), or the Community Organization for Missionary Endeavors (COME) here in the Huntsville/Walker County area. Please volunteer at one of these three sites if possible, but if you clear it with me, you can arrange to volunteer elsewhere. A report on the voluntary activity will be written including a contact name for the organization. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these extra credit opportunities.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in class activities. A record of attendance will be maintained by the instructor. Punctual attendance is also expected of each student. Please be respectful and arrive to class on time. Students are expected to show appropriate cause for both absences and tardiness and are also expected to initiate action to satisfy all missed class work. Failure to do so will affect grades.

**Academic Dishonesty:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive an F for that assignment with more severe sanctions as appropriate.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities must register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center and then arrange a conference with the instructor in order that accommodations can be made to assure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

**Religious Holidays:** The Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious Holy Day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible regarding any missed classes due to "Religious Holy Days".

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students shall arrive to class on time and be respectful to their other students. If a student needs to arrive to class late or leave class early the student will make the professor aware of these needs prior to class time. All cell phones and beepers must be turned off and stowed away while in the classroom. Students who disrupt the class will be contacted by the professor to adjust their behaviors. In extreme cases students who cannot comply with these requirements can be removed and resigned from the class.

**Visitors to the Classroom:** Unannounced visitors to the class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor is allowed to remain in the classroom.

**Instructor Evaluations:** Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

#### Schedule of Readings, Assignments, and Exams:

##### Week of:

Jan. 14            Lyon, Ch. One: The Concept of Community

Jan. 21            Lyon, Ch. One: The Concept of Community  
Lyon, Ch. Two: The Typological Approach

Jan. 28	Lyon, Ch. Three: The Ecological Approach
Feb. 4	Lyon, Ch. Four: The Community as a Social System Lyon, Ch. Five: The Conflict Approach
Feb. 10	Lyon, Ch. Six: The Multiple Approaches to Community Exam #1: Thursday the 13 <sup>th</sup> .
Feb. 17	Lyon, Ch. Seven: The Loss and Quest for Community
Feb. 24	Tuesday the 25 <sup>th</sup> . Extra Credit Report Due: Intentional Communities Lyon, Ch. Eight: Community Development
March 3	Lyon, Ch. Nine: Planned Communities Social Capital and Communitarianism Extra Credit on Thursday the 6 <sup>th</sup> .
March 10	Spring Break
March 17	Lyon, Ch. Fourteen: Field Research: Holistic Studies and Methods
March 24	Lyon, Ch. Fourteen: Field Research: Holistic Studies and Methods
March 31	Lyon, Ch. Fifteen: The Quality of Life and Quality of Communities Exam #2: Thursday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
April 7	Structure of Agriculture and Quality of Life Issues
April 14	Schlosser book review due and discussion Tuesday the 15 <sup>th</sup> . The Globalization of the Agri-Food System
April 21	Visions of Alternative Agriculture: Extra Credit Presentations CSA, Slow Food, Fair Trade Movement, Organic Agriculture, Marine Stewardship Council, Foodsheds and Food Circles.
April 28	The Globalization of the Agri-Food System Commodity Chain Presentations on Thursday
May 5	Commodity Chain Presentations Volunteer Reports due on Thursday the 8 <sup>th</sup> .
May 12	<b>Final Exam: Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup>. 2:00 to 4:00</b>