

RURAL AND AGRARIAN STUDIES

**School of Social Sciences
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Credits: 3

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The twenty-first century is slated to witness the passing of rural and agrarian cultures to that of a predominantly urban world. Subjected to unprecedented changes in the past decades of accelerated globalisation, the rural, and not necessarily only the agrarian, is a site that needs to be studied thoroughly. Past and established studies have set up key debates (the agrarian question, the modes of production debates, peasantry as a class, agrarian movements etc) and there is need now to revisit these debates in the light of contemporary conditions and altering situations and assess what new ideas and trends are discernable. Further in the light of transdisciplinary scholarship, this may also be an opportunity to review the rural and agrarian contexts through interdisciplinary lens and to understand rural and the agrarian societies in their complexities. In order to strengthen this interdisciplinary perspective, it is important that the cultural, the political, economic and social be seen as interlinked. This reading list combines such interdisciplinary perspectives and also integrates a comparative perspective to understanding India's rural and agrarian cultures. Each section focuses on either key categories or debates and includes the classic readings as well as contemporary ones.

EXPECTATIONS FROM STUDENTS: Students are advised to do the readings in the order noted below. Focussing on key categories or ideas, the links between the historical contexts and debates and the contemporary issues and trends need to be made. A comparative perspective should be drawn on to reflect on issues relevant for India. The readings listed below each topic are the key readings, but students are encouraged to read other materials. Readings marked with an * are recommended as additional reading. Students are also encouraged to read novels in English and Indian languages [eg, Premchand, Emile Zoya, Pearl S. Buck (*The Good Earth*), John Steinbeck (*The Grapes of Wrath*), Garcia Marquez, John Berger, Mahasweta Devi, Wendell Berry, Jeremy Seabrook etc], and view films around some of these themes.

Themes

I. Comparative Worlds of Agriculture

Clark, Samuel. "The Importance of Agrarian Classes: Agrarian Class Structure and Collective Action in Nineteenth Century Ireland".

Havens, Thomas R.H. "Kato Kanji (1884 – 1965) and the spirit of Agriculture in Modern Japan".

Hopcroft, Rosemary L. "The Social Origins of Agrarian Change in Late Medieval England".

Lee, Shu-Ching. "Agrarianism and the Social Upheaval in China".

Lewis, Gavin. "The Peasantry, Rural Change and Conservative Agrarianism: Lower Austria at the Turn of the Century".

Shin, Gi-Wook. "Conflict and the Origins of Korean Capitalism".

I B. India: Colonialism and the Remaking of Agri-Cultures.

Bayly, CA. "State and Economy in India over Seven Hundred Years".

Washbrook, David. "Progress and Problems: South Asian Economic and Social History, c 1720-1860.

Thorner, Daniel, "Agrarian Social Structure"

II. Rural Sociology and Sociology of Agriculture/Rural Studies: approaches; theories, methods;

McMichael, Phillip and Buttel, Frederic H. "New Directions to the Political Economy of Agriculture".

III. The Agrarian Question/s

Lehman, David. Two Paths in Agrarian Capitalism, Or a Critique of Chayonovian Marxism.

Patnaik, Utsa, “The Agrarian Question and Development of Capitalism in India”

T.J. Byres, “Agrarian Question with reference to Asia”

*Herring, Ronald *Land to the Tiller*

IV Mode of Production and Transition Debates

Patnaik, Utsa. *Agrarian Relations and Accumulation: The Mode of Production debate in India.*

V. The Village: Reality and Representations

Breman, Jan “The Shattered Image: Construction and Deconstruction of the Village in Colonial Asia”

Corbridge, Stuart “Ousting Singbonga: the Struggle for India’s Jharkhand.

Dumont, Louis, “The Village Community from Munro to Maine”

Srinivas, M.N. The Myth of the Self Sufficient Village.

Marriott, Mckim. “Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization”

Surendra Jodhka (essay on Villages in India)

* Srinivas, M.N. The Remembered Village

Mid-Term Exams: In-house, open book.

PART II

VI. Peasantry; Peasant Economy and the Peasant as Subaltern

Bernal, Victoria. Peasants, Capitalism and (Ir) Rationality.

Feeny, David. *The Moral or the Rational Peasant? Competing Hypotheses of Collective Action.*

Shanin, Teodor. "Defining Peasants: Conceptualisations and De-Conceptualisations: Old and new in a Marxist Debate"

Ludden, David. "Subalterns and Others in the Agrarian History of South Asia".

Agarwal, Bina "Disinherited Peasants, Disadvantaged Workers: A Gender Perspective on Land and Livelihood"

*Wolfe, Eric R. *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century.*

VII. The Culture of Agriculture

Bohannon, Paul "Land, Tenure and Land Tenure"

Gardner, Katy. "Desh- Bidesh: Sylheti Images of Home and Away."

Shipton, Parker and Goheen, Mitzi. "Understanding African Land-Holding: Power, Wealth, and Meaning".

Kloppenburg and Geisler, "The Agricultural Ladder: Agrarian Ideology and the Changing Structure of U.S. agriculture"

VIII. Transformation and /Transition: Forms of Change in Rural Societies:

(Book Review to be presented and submitted)

* Scott, James. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia.*

*Roseberry, William. *Coffee and Capitalism in the Venezuelan Andes.*

*Taussig, Michael. *Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America.*

* Vasavi, A.R. *Harbingers of Rain: Land and Life in South Asia.*

IX. Green revolution as Development. Debates; conditions and Criticism (selections to be made)

Selections from the below three texts will be made available:

*Harris, John. *Rural Development: Theories of Peasant Economy and Agrarian Change*.

*Shiva, Vandana *The Violence of the Green Revolution*

*Gupta Akhil. *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*.

XI Agriculture and Environmentalism

C.Jackson and Molly Chattopadhyay, “Identities and Livelihoods: Gender, Ethnicity, and Nature in a south Bihar Village

Gidwani, Vinay. “*Laboured Landscapes: Agro-ecological Change in Central Gujarat, India*”

Roy, Tania and Borowiak, Craig. Against Ecofeminism: Agrarian Populism and the Splintered Subject in Rural India.

- Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*.
- * Arun Agrawal and K. Sivaramakrishnan, editors, *Agrarian Environments: Resources, Representations, and Rule in India*.

XII Rural Labour: Form of Control and Change

Ortiz, Sutti, “Laboring in the Factories and in the Fields”

Kapadia, Karin. “Discipline and Control: Labour Contracts and Rural Female Labour”

Boehm, Christian “The Social Life of Fields: Labour Markets and Agrarian Change in Lesotho”

XIII Agrarian Movements

Brass, Tom, ‘The Politics of Gender, Nature and Nation in the Discourse of the New Farmers’ Movements’

Rabasa, Jose, “Of Zapatismo: Reflections on the folkloric and the Impossible in a Subaltern Insurrection”

Balakrishnan, Pulapre “Land Reforms and the Question of Food in Kerala”

XIV Globalization and Ruralities; the new ruralities

Berry, Wendell “The Agrarian Crisis as a Crisis of Culture”

Tsing, Anna “Agrarian Allegory and Global Futures”

Lewontin, R. C. “The Maturing of Capitalist Agriculture: Farmer as Proletarian”

Patnaik, Utsa, “Unleashing the Market: Global Capitalism, Deflation and Agrarian Crisis in Developing Countries”