

Cultivating Change

ANT/ES 450 (CRN 90394)
Connecticut College
Fall 2013
Friday 1:15-4
New London Hall 204

Jeffrey Cole
Department of Anthropology
Winthrop 212 (ext. 2231)
Office hours: T 1-2, F 11-12
and by appointment
jcole1@conncoll.edu

I. Course Description

Not a few farmers and their allies have come to the conclusion that something is seriously amiss with agriculture in this country. Causes for alarm include increasing centralization of production and distribution, perilous levels of concentration of capital, land, and power, environmental degradation, heavy reliance on external inputs, rural depopulation, loss of knowledge and experience with natural cycles, and, in the context of abundant and cheap foodstuffs, poor nutrition and deleterious health consequences. The response has been varied and imaginative and has gained momentum in the past decade with support from scholars, consumers, business interests, policy makers, and members of the farming community. Shoppers today commonly purchase local food from ubiquitous farmers' markets and CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), and community gardens are making fresh food available in disadvantaged urban communities. School children are taking up trowels and hoes in edible schoolyards. Chefs and administrators are finding ways to source local foods for schools, colleges, other institutions, and businesses. Farmers, especially those with small and medium operations and pursuing sustainable agriculture, seek a customer base and market niche through direct marketing outlets, cooperative arrangements, and place-or-origin and other forms of distinctive certification authentication. And advocates of labor, here and abroad, have engineered fair trade protocols and labor agreements. Collectively, this food movement supports what has been called the "triple bottom line" of sustainability: preserving the environment, building community, and rewarding food producers fairly. In a seminar format we will review and assess such trends and efforts, from the holistic and comparative perspective of anthropology, with a geographical focus on North America.

In addition, we will pursue a collective research project on beginning farmers in southeastern Connecticut, the subject of my ongoing research program. Given the forces outlined above as well as the graying demographic profile of farmers in the country, the question of who will farm, ranch, and generally produce food in the future is an issue of significant concern for farmers and non-farmers. This endeavor will bring all of us into dialogue with important figures in the alternative agriculture movement in the greater New London area, or "foodshed," to adopt a key term of the movement. The project offers you an opportunity to gain experience with research design, methods, and analysis; and because I am at the beginning stages of my research, I anticipate that your insights and work will contribute to my thinking and future engagement with the topic. We will sort out the details of the project in the first month or so of class, so I ask for your patience, flexibility, and imagination. We are fortunate to have received support, once again,

for this endeavor in the form of a Margaret Sheridan '67 Community-learning Research Initiative Grant from the Holleran Center for Community Action and Public Policy.

It is my expectation that upon successful completion of this course you will have realized a number of outcomes and goals relevant to the anthropology curriculum in particular and a liberal arts education in general. (1) Through reading, reflection, and class activities you will achieve a solid grasp of the principal trends, key terms, and pressing issues concerning alternative agriculture and the associated food movement from the perspective of cultural anthropology and allied fields of inquiry. (2) Through a series of varied assignments, you will hone abilities of written and verbal expression, critical thinking, and collaborative learning and problem solving. (3) You will gain an appreciation for and experience with research methods, particularly through the collective project on beginning farmers. (4) That you never think of agriculture and food production in quite the same way as before and that this course might act as a platform for future learning, informed citizenship, and perhaps even food production, on whatever scale suits your circumstances.

This course is a 400-level seminar with enrollment capped at 16. It satisfies requirements for: a methods course for the anthropology major, a 400-level course for the anthropology major/minor, and a 400-level course for the Environmental Studies major (social sciences track). ANT/ES 450 is designated a W (writing) course owing to the quantity and format of writing assignments.

II. Course Materials

The following required texts are available in the bookstore and on reserve at Shain (the Jaffe book is also accessible as an e-book).

Carpenter, Novella. 2009. *Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer*. New York: Penguin.

Hassanein, Neva. 1999. *Changing the Way America Farms: Knowledge and Community in the Sustainable Agriculture Movement*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hinrichs, C. Clare and Thomas Lyson, eds. 2007 *Remaking the North American Food System: Strategies for Sustainability*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Jaffe, Daniel. 2007. *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Other readings and resources, both required and supplementary, are available on Moodle and at the reserve desk in Shain Library.

III. Assignments and Assessments

Participation: (1) You are expected to arrive to class meetings prepared to participate in a thoughtful and productive fashion. (2) You will be asked to cover additional materials and facilitate class discussion once during the semester. To give an example, for week 3 you may be asked to report on the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. (Over the first two weeks we will arrive at a schedule for this aspect of participation.) (3) In week 11 we will explore the power of institutions to effect change in the food system, and you will contribute to that

discussion with a short presentation on a topic to be worked out in consultation with me. (4) Participation also includes your individual contributions to the overall research project (for example, contributing to our list of farms in New London County).

Weekly reflections: Seven times during the semester (Weeks 2-4, 6, 8-10) you will bring to class a short (550-600 word) reflection on what you regard as the three most important ideas, trends, initiatives, or facts for that week's reading/viewing.

Journal: This is your opportunity to reflect on agriculture and related matters, in the personal format of a journal. The assignment is due in two installments of 1600-1650 words each. The *first* should contain three elements: (1) discussion of a visit to a farm; (2) description and discussion of at least three relevant media, print and/or on-line materials not assigned for the course; and (3) reflection on one or more visitors to the classroom. The *second* should contain three elements: (1) your own three-point proposal, grounded in demonstrable grasp of course materials, to improve the sustainability of agriculture in this country (this portion should run at least 1000 words); (2) description and discussion of at least two relevant media, print and/or on-line materials not assigned for the course; and (3) reflection on one or more visitors to the classroom. You are free to add additional elements to either installment of the journal.

Team project: As stated above the class will engage in a collective research project on the subject of beginning farmers. Together with three other students you will form a team responsible for completing one part of the larger study. Team assignments and the details of this task will be worked out as we develop the project, but members of each team can anticipate: contributing to background research on your theme; developing an interview schedule and other protocols for the research process; conducting at least two farm visits and interviews; transcribing and analyzing data from visits and interviews; contributing to draft and final versions of the team report; engaging in peer review with one or more teams; and presenting your project before the class. Considering the ever-evolving nature of our collective project, please realize that you may well be asked to engage in other relevant activities (developing a Google site or map, for example).

Final Reflection: At the end of the semester you will assess your experience with the collective research project. Details for this short written assignment (800-850) will be posted on Moodle.

Note on all written assignments: Unless otherwise noted, please submit assignments in double-spaced, double-sided, and stapled hard copy. Be sure to list the word count at the end of the text.

Assessment: Your final grade will be based on: participation (17.5), weekly reflections (25), the journal (25, or 12.5 for each installment), the team project (25), and the final reflection (7.5). Regarding assessment of written work, superior efforts are characterized: by demonstrable grasp of relevant materials; efficiency and clarity of expression; productive connections; judicious use of example and/or quotation; and appropriate length.

IV. Course Policies

Absences: Class attendance is mandatory, and unexcused absences will lower your grade. If you are seriously ill or must attend to a family emergency or must participate in a College-related

event, you may be excused, but only if you contact me before class. I reserve the right to lower your final grade (or fail you) if you miss more than two classes (unexcused).

Late work: Unless you have made arrangements with me before a due date, late work will be graded down one grade step (for example, B to B-) for each day late.

Disability statement from the OSDS: “If you have a physical or mental disability, either hidden or visible, which may require classroom, test-taking, or other reasonable modifications, please see me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, please be sure to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. You can do so by going to the Office of Student Disability Services, which is located in Crozier Williams, Room 221, or by contacting the Office at Campus Extensions 5428 or 5240, or by email to barbara.mcllarky@conncoll.edu or lillian.liebenthal@conncoll.edu.”

Honor code: Academic integrity is of the utmost importance in maintaining the high standards of scholarship in our community. Academic dishonesty is considered to be a serious offense against the community and represents a significant breach of trust between the professor, the classmates, and the student. There are many forms of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, submitting the same work in two courses without prior approval, unauthorized discussion or distribution of exams or assignments, and offering or receiving unauthorized aid on exams or graded assignments. Students violating the Honor Code may be referred to the college’s Honor Council for resolution.

A note on writing from the RWC: “The Roth Writing Center provides one-to-one peer tutoring (free of charge) to help student writers of all abilities during all stages of the writing process. To make an appointment, call x2173 or stop by the Writing Center at 214 Blaustein. If you're a confident, experienced writer we can help you to push your ideas and polish your style; if you're a relatively inexperienced and not-so-confident writer we can also help you, by working on grammar or organization or whatever you need. Writing Center tutors are trained to help you to discover what you think through writing. Working with a tutor gives you the opportunity to share your work-in-progress with an actual reader, so that you can get useful feedback on that work before you have to turn it in for a final grade. For further information, visit the Writing Center web page at <http://write.conncoll.edu/>.”

And from the Academic Resource Center: “The ARC offers services to support your academic work such as study skills workshops, time management, coaching and tutoring. Our offices are located in Main Street West, The Plex. Please visit us or call [860-439-5294](tel:860-439-5294) for more information or to schedule an appointment.”

Contingencies, etc.: From time to time I may alter a reading or viewing assignment to accommodate new information, a surprise guest speaker, and other unforeseen events and opportunities. I will alert you to these changes in class and/or via email and update the course Moodle webpage accordingly.

V. Class Schedule

Week 1

Date: August 30
Themes: Introduction to the Course

Reading:

Hylton, Wil. 2012. Broken Heartland. *Harper's Magazine*. July: 25-35.

Week 2

Date: September 6
Theme: Overview of Conventional and Industrial Agriculture/Farm Visit
Work Due: Reflection on week 2 material

Visit: White Gate Farm, East Lyme, Susan Mitchell
(We will depart campus at 2:15 and spend the second part of class on the farm.
Take a look at the website before the trip: <http://whitegatefarm.net/>).

Film: *King Corn*, dir. Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis, 2006 (90 min).
(Time permitting, we will watch the first chapter in class.)

Reading:

Berry, Wendell. 2009 [2002] Stupidity in Concentration. In *Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food*, 11-18. Berkeley: Counterpoint.

Berry, Wendell. 2002 [1991] Conservation and Local Economy. In *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*, ed. Norman Wirzba, 195-204. Berkeley: Counterpoint.

Ikerd, John. 2008. Corporate Agriculture and Family Farms. In *Crisis and Opportunity: Sustainability in American Agriculture*, 33-44. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Lyson, Thomas. 2007. Civic Agriculture and the North American Food System. In *Remaking the North America Food System*, ed. C. Clare Hinrichs and Thomas Lyson, 19-32. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Pollan, Michael. 2006. What's Eating America. *Smithsonian*. 15 June.

Wines, Michael. 2013. Genetically Altered Wheat in Oregon Comes as No Surprise. *The New York Times* 6 June.

Week 3

Date: September 13
Themes: Alternative Agriculture: Key Terms, Practices, and People/Research Project*
Work due: Reflection on material for week 3

Film: *The Greenhorns*, dir. Severine von Tscharner Fleming, 2011 (50 min).
View before class.

Reading:

*We will devote the later portion of class to a discussion of our collective research endeavor. I will post resources for this on Moodle. Your reflection need address only the list below.

Berry, Wendell. 2009 [2006]. On *Soil and Health*. In *Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food*, 161-172. Berkeley: Counterpoint.

Fukuoka, Masanobu. 2009 [1978]. *One Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming*. Trans. Larry Corn, Chris Pearce, and Tsune Kurosawa. New York: NYRB. Selections.

Hassanein, Neva. 1999. *Changing the Way America Farms: Knowledge and Community in the Sustainable Agriculture Movement*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Chapters 1-2.

Hewitt, Ben. 2010. *The Town that Food Saved: How One Community Found Vitality in Local Food*. New York: Rodale. Chapter One.

Ikerd, John. 2008a. Walking the Talk of Sustainable Agriculture. In *Crisis and Opportunity: Sustainability in American Agriculture*, 159-176. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Ikerd, John. 2008b. The Triple Bottom Line of Farming in the Future. In *Crisis and Opportunity: Sustainability in American Agriculture*, 224-239. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Pollan, Michael. 2011. How Change Is Going to Come to the Food System. *The Nation*. 11 September.

Stevenson, G.W. et al. 2007. Warrior, Builder, and Weaver Work: Strategies for Changing the Food System. In *Remaking the North America Food System*, ed. C. Clare Hinrichs and Thomas Lyson, 19-32. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Viertel, Josh. 2012. Beyond Voting with Your Fork: From Enlightened Eating to Movement Building. In *Food Movements Unite! Strategies to Transform Our Food Systems*, ed. Eric Holt-Giménez, 137-147. Oakland: First Food Books. [below, with urban?]

Week 4

Date: September 20
Themes: Sustainable Farming/Women in Farming
Visitor: Allyson Angelini, Full Heart Farm, Ledyard (1:15-2:30)
Film: *Ladies of the Land*, dir. Megan Thompson, 2007 (30 min)
(View before class.)
Work Due: Reflection on week 4 material

Reading:

Hassanein, Neva. 1999. *Changing the Way America Farms: Knowledge and Community in the Sustainable Agriculture Movement*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Chapters 3-6.

Week 5

Date: September 27
Themes: Educational Farms/Research Project*
Visitor: Bennett Konesni, Sylvester Manor Educational Farm (2:45-4)

Reading:

*We will continue our discussion of the project. Readings and resources for the day will be posted on Moodle.

Week 6

Date: October 4
Themes: CSAs, Farmers' Markets, Cooperatives, Scaling Up
Visitor: Jiff Martin, Sustainable Food Systems, UCONN (1:15-2:30)

Work Due: Reflection on week 6 material

Reading:

Alkon, Alison Hope. 2008. From Value to Values: Sustainable Consumption at Farmers' Markets. *Agriculture and Human Values* 25(4): 487-498.

Barham, Elizabeth. 2007. The Lamb that Roared: Origin-Labeled Products as Place-making Strategy in Charlevoix, Quebec. In *Remaking the North America Food System*, ed. C. Clare Hinrichs and Thomas Lyson, 277-297. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Gillespie, Gilbert et al. 2007. Farmers' Markets as Keystones in Rebuilding Local and Regional Food Systems. In *Remaking the North America Food System*, ed. C. Clare Hinrichs and Thomas Lyson, 65-83. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Ostrom, Marcia Ruth. 2007. Community Supported Agriculture as an Agent of Change. In *Remaking the North America Food System*, ed. C. Clare Hinrichs and Thomas Lyson, 99-120. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Stevenson, G.W. and Holly Burn. 2007. The “Red Label” Poultry System in France: Lessons for Renewing an Agriculture of the Middle in the United States. In *Remaking the North America Food System*, ed. C. Clare Hinrichs and Thomas Lyson, 144-162. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

No class October 11—Fall Break

Week 7

Date: October 18
Themes: Urban Food Production, Community Gardens, Food Security
Work Due: First installment of journal

Reading:

Carpenter, Novella. 2009. *Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer*. New York: Penguin. Part I.

Week 8

Date: October 25
Themes: Urban Food Production, Community Gardens, Food Security
Visitor: Craig Haney, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture
Work Due: Reflection on week 7-8 material

Reading:

Carpenter, Novella. 2009. *Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer*. New York: Penguin. Parts II and III.

Week 9

Date: November 1
Themes: Fair Trade/Agricultural Labor/Land Access
Visitor: Kathy Ruhf, Land For Good (1:15-2:30)
Work Due: Reflection on week 9 material

Reading:

Jaffe, Daniel. 2007. *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Preface-Chapter 5.

Week 10

Date: November 8
Theme: Fair Trade/Updates of Research Projects
Work Due: Reflection on week 10 material

Reading:

Jaffe, Daniel. 2007. *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 6-Conclusion.

Week 11

Date: November 15
Themes: Farm to Fork/Institutions Effecting Change/Updates on Research Projects
Work Due: Individual presentations on changing the food system

Week 12

Date: November 22
Theme: No class/I will be away at the AAA Annual Meeting in Chicago
Work due: Draft of team reports

No class November 29—Thanksgiving Break

Week 13

Date: December 6
Theme: Discussion of peer review
Work Due: Second installment of journal

Week 14

Date: December 13
Theme: Research findings
Work Due: Team presentations

December 18 (by noon)

Work Due: Final reflection
Final version of team reports