THE OBJECTIVES of this seminar are: (1) to provide participants a thorough grounding in some of the main debates in critical agrarian studies and a deepened appreciation for the connections between agriculture, trade, environment, climate, food, energy, water, health, technology, property, conflicts, governance, livelihoods, and rights; and (2) to develop and/or advance research projects with a focus on rural or rural-urban aspects of any of these or related issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR THE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) **Active and informed participation** in class discussions of assigned readings and other participants’ research projects. What you learn in this course (and your grade) will depend significantly on how deeply you engage with the material and with the other people in the course. If you are extremely shy or inhibited (as many of us are or once were), use this seminar as an opportunity to get over it, because it will only hold you back. Anthropologists need to be able to interact with people as part of their fieldwork and in academic and other professional settings. If you are not shy, it is very important that you contribute to creating a supportive environment for those who might be.

(2) A statement (one page) about a planned research project for the course, to be submitted via email no later than (and preferably before) March 15. Include a preliminary list of sources. The best research and writing have long gestation periods. You probably can’t produce a really good paper at the last minute. It is important that you begin thinking about a term paper topic early in the semester, that you discuss it with the instructor and with your classmates, and that you begin the research and writing well before the end-of-semester crunch.

(3) An **oral presentation** of approximately 30 minutes that outlines the approach and/or the main findings of the research for the course paper (presenters may assign a rough draft of their paper or other material in advance of the meeting). This will occur toward the end of the semester and is an opportunity to share with the rest of the group what you have been doing and to get feedback and suggestions. I understand that presentations will be of works-in-progress, not polished texts. This means that the findings may still be tentative and that some aspects of the planned paper may not be fully fleshed out. That is expected and perfectly okay.

And (4) a written **course paper** due at the end of the semester (by May 24). Writing and publishing excellent, original papers is the key to advancement in academia. Many (not all) term papers in Graduate Center courses are publishable, even if the authors don’t always try to publish them. I always recommend that doctoral students publish something before they obtain the PhD. How else in this lousy job market can they obtain a full-time position or a post-doc? (See Lennard Davis’s [article](#) and Wendy Belcher’s book, listed below, on this). As much as possible, term papers should be of professional quality in every sense. They should analyze a significant problem, be well organized, carefully proofread, and—
hopefully—of publishable quality and exciting to read. I prefer lucid prose to academic “thick writing” and data-based arguments to unsupported assertions (this can be helpful in grant proposals too). Length is less important than content and clarity. Any system of citation (AAA, APA, Chicago, etc.) is fine, as long as it is used consistently. I welcome papers that express views or that use approaches different than my own. Late papers will be accepted only under unusual circumstances. Papers must be submitted as Word (not pdf) email attachments. This will facilitate commenting and editing.

Assigned articles will be available either through hyperlinks in this syllabus or on the Blackboard site. Shakespeare’s bookstore on Lexington Avenue (between 68 and 69 Streets) has ordered the books.

We will read the following **BOOKS**, as well as articles and other documents listed in the schedule below:


**Recommended books**


**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

**Tues. Feb. 2**: Introduction and discussion of “the agrarian question”

**Tues. Feb. 9**: NO CLASS; CUNY IS ON A FRIDAY SCHEDULE

**Tues. Feb. 16**: Agrarian classes and sociopolitical outcomes

Moore, *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy*, read pp. xi-xix, 413-508 AND AT LEAST ONE CHAPTER EACH FROM PART ONE AND PART TWO.
Tues. Feb. 23: The differentiation debate and its consequences


Tues. March 1: After the biggest peasant revolution of the twentieth century


Tues. March 8: Agrarian reform debates, then and now


Tues. March 15: An anti-state perspective

ONE-PAGE PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Tues. March 22: Intensification of dispossession: land, seeds, water, universities’ complicity


Tues. March 29: Food regimes and industrial agriculture versus agroecology


**Tues. Apr. 5: Liberalization of the agricultural sector**


**Tues. Apr. 12: Contemporary peasant and farmer movements**


**Tues. Apr. 19: Peasants in the archives**


**Tues. Apr. 26: NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK.**

**Tues. May 3: Student presentations**

**Tues. May 10: Student presentations**

**Tues. May 17: NO CLASS**

**Tues. May 24 MAKE-UP CLASS Student presentations**

COURSE PAPERS DUE by 12 noon (via email submission)