

University of Montana  
**ScholarWorks at University of Montana**

---

Syllabi

Course Syllabi

---

Spring 2-1-2016

# SOCI 346.01: Rural Sociology

Scott Byington

*The University Of Montana*, [scott.byington@umontana.edu](mailto:scott.byington@umontana.edu)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

---

## Recommended Citation

Byington, Scott, "SOCI 346.01: Rural Sociology" (2016). *Syllabi*. 7271.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/7271>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

## SOC 346 Rural Sociology

Spring 2016

T, Th 2:10 – 3:30 p.m.

LA 302

**INSTRUCTOR:** Scott Byington

- **Email:** scott.byington@umontana.edu
- **Mailbox:** SS 339
- **Office:** SS 319
- **Office Hours:** 11:30 - 12:30 T, Th or by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Across all societies, people understand that there is something socially unique about being “rural”. This course seeks to provide you with the analytical tools for understanding rural society and the socioeconomic changes rural areas have historically faced. The course is based on the assumption that almost every aspect of life in rural society, including the Rocky Mountain region and Montana, is influenced by globalization, postindustrialization, and other social changes—and the fact that rural life remains important and complex.

This course is designed to introduce you to key dimensions of contemporary rural society in developed countries with an emphasis on the United States. This is NOT to imply that the rural/urban differences in the rest of the world, particularly poor countries, is not important. However, our department curriculum is designed to cover those differences in other courses.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

1. Attend class and participate in classroom discussions.
2. Complete all reading assignments BEFORE the day they are listed on the course syllabus.
3. Complete writing assignments on time.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Reading about rural sociology is intensive—and socially relevant. You will need to plan on keeping up with the reading assignments, and maintaining a reading journal on every assigned reading.

1. Brown, David L. and Louis E. Swanson. 2003. *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
2. Carr, Patrick J. and Maria J. Kefalas. 2009. *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What it Means for America*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
3. Duncan, Cynthia M. 2014. **SECOND EDITION** (NOT the 2000 First Edition). *Worlds Apart: Poverty and Politics in Rural America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

This course meets only 2 days a week for 15 weeks for a total of 30 days (minus holidays). Therefore, I expect you to attend all class sessions on time with no late arrivals or early departures. Make-ups for university-approved absences can be arranged. Unforeseen emergencies will be dealt with on a case by case basis, but in general, you need to notify me *as soon as possible* ahead of any class(es) you may miss by e-mail so we can work out possible makeups.

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:**

Please refrain from talking, snoring, answering cell phones, loudly eating, or otherwise disrupting class. If you need to leave class early, please let me know before class begins. Note that we will be talking about some

sensitive and potentially controversial issues this term. Please treat each other and each other's ideas respectfully. Keep in mind that the University of Montana forbids discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review on-line.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by discussing accommodations with me at the beginning of the course. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students who have a documented disability. (If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243.) "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. Please notify me immediately following your first day in class (or shortly thereafter during office hours or by appointment) of any accommodations that you think you need for the course. Late notification may result in untimely delays in the requested accommodations. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Services for Students (DSS) in Lommasson Center 154 (243-2243). If you have any questions, please contact me via e-mail, speak with me after class, or visit me during my office hour. Communication is key—modifications will not be made nor grades changed retroactively.

### **GRADING:**

Your grade will be calculated on a straight percentage basis (**100% base of 280 points possible**). I will not give final letter grades with pluses or minuses: A (90%+); B (80%-89%); C (70%-79%); D (60%-69%); F (59% - below).

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**BOOK CRITIQUES (2 – 50 points each):** After reading the assigned book, you will write a critique containing four (4) sections, and should be 4 to 5 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 pt font, standard margins): 1.) *Description* – Provide a brief synopsis of the book; 2.) *Analysis* – Identify and discuss the major concepts and/or themes related to rural sociology exemplified in the book; 3.) *Evaluation* – Provide your own critique of the book. How well does the author support his/her claims? Do you agree or disagree with the stated claims?; 4.) List at least five (5) questions you now have after reading the book. These can be critical questions towards the book, or exploratory questions inspired by the text.

**VIDEO CRITIQUES (4 – 30 points each):** Similar to the book critiques, video critiques will have four (4) sections, and should be 2 to 3 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 pt font, standard margins): 1.) *Description* – Provide a brief synopsis of each film; 2.) *Analysis* – Identify and discuss the concepts and/or themes related to rural sociology exemplified in the films; 3.) *Evaluation* – State your own critique of the films; 4.) List at least three (3) questions you have from the viewing of the films.

**READING JOURNAL (3 updates – 20 points each):** Your reading journal is your space to have a conversation with the assigned texts in this course. What are the main concepts discussed in each text? Was a certain passage particularly interesting to you? Do you agree or disagree with what is discussed in the text? Engage with each assigned reading, and write down your thoughts in a notebook. Your journals will be checked periodically throughout the semester to make sure you remain on task.

## Course Schedule (*subject to change*)

Note: Assigned readings should be done *before* the day scheduled below

| Date   | Topic, Readings & Assignments   |
|--|---|
| <b>Week 1</b><br>T, Jan 26<br><br>Th, Jan 28 | <p><b>Course overview</b></p> <p><b>What is Rural: Conceptualizing Rurality</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell (2007). "The two-ness of rural life and the ends of rural scholarship"</li> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. "Introduction"</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 2</b><br>T, Feb 2<br><br>Th, Feb 4   | <p><b>Measuring Rurality</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What is Rural?</b> <a href="http://www.raconline.org/info_guides/ruraldef/">http://www.raconline.org/info_guides/ruraldef/</a></li> <li>• <b>Am I Rural?</b> <a href="https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural">https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Rurality in American West</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walker (2003). "Reconsidering 'regional' political ecologies: toward a political ecology of the rural American West"</li> </ul>         |
| <b>Week 3</b><br>T, Feb 9<br><br>Th, Feb 11  | <p><b>Rural Population Changes – Video #1</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 1 &amp; Ch. 2</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Carr &amp; Kefalas. "Introduction"</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Rural Population Changes – In-class discussion</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 3 &amp; Ch. 4</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Carr &amp; Kefalas. "Chapter 1: The Achievers"</i></li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 4</b><br>T, Feb 16<br><br>Th, Feb 18 | <p><b>Reshuffling and Remaking Rural Families</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 5 &amp; Ch. 7</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Carr &amp; Kefalas. "Chapter 2: The Stayers"</i></li> </ul> <p><b><i>DUE: Video Critique #1 (30 points)</i></b></p> <p><b>Reshuffling and Remaking Rural Families</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 8 &amp; Ch. 9</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Carr &amp; Kefalas. "Chapter 3: The Seekers"</i></li> </ul> <p><b><i>DUE: Reading journal update #1 (20 points)</i></b></p> |
| <b>Week 5</b><br>T, Feb 23                   | <p><b>Transformed Rural Economy</b><br/> <b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 10</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Carr &amp; Kefalas. "Chapter 4: "The Returners"</i></li> </ul>  |

| Date  | Topic, Readings & Assignments  |
|---|--|
| Th, Feb 25                                    | <b>Rural Economic Restructuring</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 11 &amp; Ch. 14</li> <li><i>Recommended: Carr &amp; Kefalas. "Conclusion"</i></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 6</b><br>T, Mar 1<br><br>Th, Mar 3    | <b>Transformation of the U.S. Agro-Food System</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 13</li> </ul> <b>Hollowing Out the Middle – In-class discussion</b><br><b><i>DUE: Book analysis #1 due (50 points)</i></b>  |
| <b>Week 7</b><br>T, Mar 8<br><br>Th, Mar 10   | <b>Transformation of the U.S. Agro-Food System, cont. - Video #2</b><br><br><b>Next Gen of Food - In-class discussion</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Geographic. "The Next Green Revolution."<br/> <a href="http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/green-revolution/">http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/green-revolution/</a></li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 8</b><br>T, Mar 15<br><br>Th, Mar 17  | <b>Rural Community &amp; Social Capital</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 15 &amp; Ch. 16</li> </ul> <b><i>DUE: Video Critique #2 (30 points)</i></b><br><br><b>Civic Community &amp; Rural Protest</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woods (2003). "Deconstructing Rural Protest"</li> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 17</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 9</b><br>T, Mar 22<br><br>Th, Mar 24  | <b>Reproducing Rural</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 18</li> </ul> <b>Reproducing Rural</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 20 &amp; Ch. 21</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 10</b><br>T, Mar 29<br><br>Th, Mar 31 | <b>People &amp; the Environment</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 23</li> <li>Sheridan (2007). "Embattled Ranchers, Endangered Species, &amp; Urban Sprawl."</li> </ul> <b>People &amp; the Environment</b><br><b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 25</li> <li>Robbins &amp; Luginbuhl (2007). "The Last Enclosure."</li> </ul> <b><i>Reading journal update #2 (20 points)</i></b> |
| <b>Week 11</b><br>T, Apr 5<br>Th, Apr 7       | <b>Spring Break!</b>   |

| Date  | Topic, Readings & Assignments  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Week 12</b><br/>T, Apr 12</p> <p>Th, Apr 14</p> | <p><b>Rural Communities &amp; Resource Extraction - Video #3</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 24</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Duncan. "Chapter 1: Blackwell"</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Rural Communities &amp; Resource Extraction – In-class discussion</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Atlantic. "A North Dakota Oil Boom Goes Bust."</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Duncan. "Chapter 2: Dahlia"</i></li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Week 13</b><br/>T, Apr 19</p> <p>Th, Apr 21</p> | <p><b>Local Economic Development</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA. "Creating Rural Wealth."<br/><a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2012-september/creating-rural-wealth.aspx">http://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2012-september/creating-rural-wealth.aspx</a></li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Duncan. "Chapter 3: Gray Mountain"</i></li> </ul> <p><b>DUE: Video Critique #3 (30 points)</b></p> <p><b>Local Economic Development</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 26 &amp; 30</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Duncan. "Chapter 4: Social Change and Social Policy"</i></li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Week 14</b><br/>T, Apr 26</p> <p>Th, Apr 28</p> | <p><b>Global Economy on Rural America</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. Ch. 29</li> </ul> <p><b>Worlds Apart – In-class discussion</b><br/><b>DUE: Book analysis #2 (50 points)</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Week 15</b><br/>T, May 3</p> <p>Th, May 5</p>   | <p><b>Rich Hill - Video #4</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown &amp; Swanson. "Conclusion."</li> <li>• Read/watch/listen "Shortage in Rich Land." [<a href="http://digital.kbia.org/shortage-in-rich-land">http://digital.kbia.org/shortage-in-rich-land</a>]</li> </ul> <p><b>Rich Hill – In-class discussion</b><br/><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putnam interview. "Why You Should Care About Other People's Kids."</li> <li>• Rich Hill updates. Explore the website [<a href="http://www.richhillfilm.com">http://www.richhillfilm.com</a>].</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading journal update #3 (20 points)</b></p>    |
| <p><b>Week 16</b></p>                                 | <p><b>No final but . . . DUE: Video Critique #4 (30 points) by end of scheduled final</b></p>  |