HONS 380:01 (Sustainability Focused QEP course) Honors Colloquium: Values & Science of Sustainability in Agriculture
CofC, Fall, 2019

Location: RSS room 248, 1:40pm-2:55pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Credits: 3 Semester Hours

Instructor: Dr. Todd LeVasseur
Office: RELS 202, 4 Glebe Street, upstairs (also 14 Greenway at the Sustainability Literacy Institute, in the Center of Sustainability, room 202A)
Office Hours: T/TR, 12:45pm-1:30pm, or by appointment
Email: levasseurtj@cofc.edu (I typically respond to emails within 24 hours, but expect longer on weekends)
Phone: 953-3911 (email works better, as I rarely am in the office given my SLI/QEP duties)
*******Any student may email me for a copy of my teaching philosophy.***

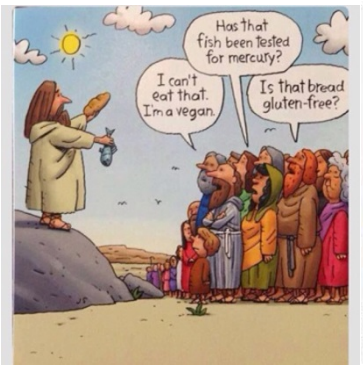
Instructor: Seth Pritchard
Office: RITA 247
Office Hours: TBA (by appointment until I set the schedule)
Email: pritchards@cofc.edu (I don't respond as fast as Todd because I am much, much older and am experiencing rapid mental decline…If I don't respond, please feel free to send a reminder!) [A note from Todd: Seth is afraid of the computer and has allergic reactions to emails. It's best to show up at his office, but he often hides.]
Phone: 953-5995 (email is most efficient, however)

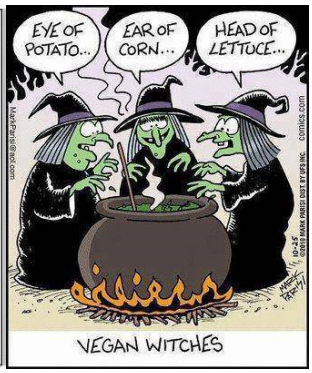
Course Description and Instructional Format: The focus of this course is "food security," focusing on issues of food production, food distribution, access to food, how food structures society, food politics, food marketing, food justice, and both criticisms of and alternatives to the industrial agriculture model.

This exploration will be undertaken within the context of contemporary issues surrounding anthropogenic climate change, sustainable agriculture, environmental racism, and food justice, such that we will examine the issue of sustainable and ethical food production and consumption from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The course is a seminar, so it will be discussion based, with students expected to offer insightful comments (reflections about, criticisms of, connections between) on assigned readings. The class will be augmented by lectures, youtube clips, documentaries, and site visits.

Course Goals and Objectives: Specific goals of the seminar are as follows:

1. To gain a critical understand of the historical origins of agriculture and the modern industrial food system.
2. To understand the current industrial system for producing food and the connections between this system and environmental integrity (air, water, soil and biodiversity).
3. To develop an appreciation for the myriad and often contentious views about food and food production present in U.S. and global politics and society.
4. To develop sophistication in looking at food production through an ethical lens.





Course Learning Outcomes:

1. To gain an appreciation for key concepts, including but not limited to: food security, food justice, food miles, food deserts, industrial agriculture, sustainable agriculture, agrarianism, permaculture.
2. To critically examine possible scenarios about the collapse of our food system, including issues of: climate change and resource scarcity.
3. To critically examine the marketing, distribution, and production of food.
4. To explore how various worldviews have and continue to grapple with social and environmental ethics in regards to food production and consumption, focusing especially on issues of agroecology, food justice, food security, and religious environmentalist discourses about sustainable food production.
5. To identify policies and practices that have led to unsustainability in the modern food system (QEP SLO 3).
6. To identify key ways to be more sustainable in terms of personal food choices (QEP SLO2).
7. To reflect on the narratives and claims made by those in both the industrial and sustainable food movements, endeavoring to evaluate their accuracy.
8. To gain an appreciation for food justice issues facing the Lowcountry and other parts of the world.
9. To gain an introduction to a few leading food justice/security activists, campaigners, scientists, and politicians.
10. To design a scaleable solution to helping create a resilient agri-culture system (QEP SLO 6).
11. Demonstrate the ability to create and communicate analytic arguments supported by evidence – (HONS Exploring Complexity and Diversity SLO 1).
12. Evaluate complex issues using an interdisciplinary perspective – (HONS Exploring Complexity and Diversity SLO 2).

13. Analyze and synthesize information within and/or across disciplines – (HONS Exploring Complexity and Diversity SLO 3).

Required Materials:

For Todd:

1) Wes Jackson, *Consulting the Genius of the Place: An Ecological Approach to a New Agriculture*
2) Wendell Berry, *The World-Ending Fire: The Essential Wendell Berry*
3) Leah Penniman, *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*
4) A variety of readings on OAKS that are to be brought to class for the day they are assigned

For Seth:

1) David Wolfe, *Tales From The Underground: A Natural History Of Subterranean Life*
2) Various miscellaneous readings that will be assigned during the semester.

Helpful websites:

- http://www.studyreligion.org/why/index.html
- http://usreligion.blogspot.com
- http://religionandpolitics.org
- http://www.religiondispatches.org
- http://religion.blogs.cnn.com
- http://religionnews.com/index.php?/rnsblog
- http://www.cornucopia.org/
- http://www.slowfood.com/
- http://www.fao.org/index_en.htm
- http://www.oxfam.org/
- http://www.heifer.org/
- http://www.farmsanctuary.org/
- http://www.acresusa.com/magazines/magazine.htm
- http://viacampesina.org/en/
- http://www.foodfirst.org/
- www.biodynamic.org.uk/
- http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/
- http://www.worldwatch.org/
- http://earthdevotion.org/
- http://www.arcworld.org/
    - http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.htm
- http://fore.research.yale.edu/

- www.religionandnature.com
- http://www.nrpe.org/ National Religious Partnership for the Environment
- http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateA&navID=NationalOrganicProgram&leftNav=NationalOrganicProgram&page=NOPNationalOrganicProgramHome&acct=AMSPW
- http://www.creationcare.org/
- Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS) http://www.food-culture.org/
- Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society (AFHVS) http://afhvs.org/
- European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe) http://www.eursafe.org/

Requirements, Expectations, and Resources:

1) *Assignments:* Your grade will be determined based on the performance you exhibit for the following:

a) *Class Participation*: Students are expected to come to class ready to actively discuss, criticize, and reflect upon the readings assigned for that week. **10% of grade**.
   a. This includes a mandatory site-visit to Earthaven Ecovillage over fall break (leaving at 7am Saturday and returning 4pm on Tuesday).

b) *Midterm and final examinations (mainly based on science content from Seth)*: Term exams—there will be a mid-term and a quasi-comprehensive final exam. Exams will be a mix of multiple choice, lists, matching, short answer, and essay questions. **16.5% each for a total of 33% of grade**

c) *Reading Responses/Summaries*: For **Todd's readings**, students are to bring to class printed-out reading summaries as described below. These summaries should provide evidence that the student read, and is thus able to participate in class and is working towards mastering the course goals and objectives. Your summaries should reflect that you have mastered the reading, and should include key quotes as needed from the readings. Summaries of a chapter/article are to be 300 words long, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12-font, and should include word count—this means you will have to practice concision!. For weeks with multiple readings, then each reading should be summarized. Summaries should include the following:

(a) What is the key argument? (i.e. Be able to summarize the key argument/s in two to three sentences using your own words, and write this in your first paragraph: "The argument of this reading is…") [2 sentences—be concise!]

(b) What evidence is presented by the author/s to make this argument? (What key facts, figures, studies, viewpoints, policy mechanisms/laws, economic data, etc. are used to support and justify the argument? Share only key data: "The evidence used to make this argument is…") [2 to 3 sentences]

(c) Why does this argument matter to the author/s? ("This argument matters for the author because…") [2 sentences—be concise!]

(d) 2 key quotes from the reading, with an explanation of why you feel that is an important quote (really long quotes from the reading do not count for your word count)

(e) How is the argument and evidence related to other readings/class discussion (including Seth's)? What body of knowledge is being developed, or what argument is being developed by the readings? ("Author X argued something similar/something different because…") [2 sentences]

(f) Your personal reflection on the reading—what thoughts or feelings were triggered by the reading? What did you learn that helped meet course goals and objectives? What disagreements did you have with the argument? [this is not included in the word count of 300 words]

29 summaries at 1% each, for 29%.

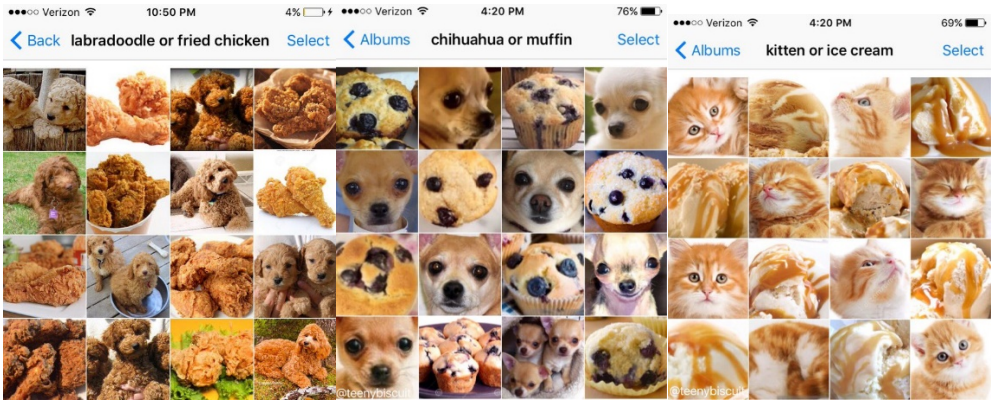
d) *Final paper:* Each student will write a paper that utilized UN Sustainable Development goals and course readings to organize a vision of a resilient agriculture that covers both cultural and scientific perspectives (**20% of grade**)

e) *Workshop*: all students are required to attend either a workshop at Fresh Future Farm, or an Introduction to Permaculture workshop. Students will write a 2-page summary of the experience, making explicit connections to course goals, lectures, and readings (**4% of grade**)
   a. *Permaculture workshop*: Sunday, November 10 and a bit more on Monday, November 11
   b. *Workshop at Fresh Future Farm:* November 16

f) *Food analysis*: students will analyze the production, distribution, marketing, and disposal of a key food item from your respective diets; due 9/21 in class (**4% of grade**)

g) *Extra Credit*: students may watch food related documentaries, attend public/campus talks on food issues, volunteer on a local farm or at the Food Bank or 180 place shelter, or analyze the politics of a contemporary (reported in the media) food security issue. These activities should be summarized and analyzed using tools gained from the course in about 300 words and are due by the last class meeting. .5 points per event, for a possible total of 2 points added to your final grade.

Grading Scale: A: 94-100; A-: 90-93; B+: 88-89; B: 83-87; B-: 80-82; C+: 78-79; C: 73-77; C-: 70-72; D+: 68-69; D: 63-67; D-: 61-62; F: 60.49 or below (all grades ending in .5 or higher are rounded up to the next point)



2) *Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each lecture. If you are more than 5 minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent for that day. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. Students are responsible for any missed content covered in class, as it is your responsibility to be present and to be to class on time. Only excused absences render the above moot—it is the student's responsibility to approach the Office of Student Affairs and present them with valid excuses for missing class, at which point the instructor receives an email that says either "documented" or "undocumented." Undocumented excuses count as an absence. After 2 unexcused absences, your grade drops by 1/3 letter (i.e. A to A-, C- to D+, etc.) for each successive absence. After 3 unexcused absences (i.e. your 4th absence), you will receive a WF and be dropped from the course. *Please observe the totality of this attendance policy*; because we meet only once a week, it is imperative you are present in class.

3) *Common Courtesy*: As stated by the Code of Conduct in the CofC Student Handbook, cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during the whole class period. Computers are in the classroom are only to be used for research purposes and accessing online readings. The instructors also reserve the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (i.e. whispering, reading a newspaper, texting messages, etc.) to leave the class. Repeated observations of students using computers for activities not related to the course, or of students texting, will result in a failing grade for the class participation component of the overall course grade. Please observe this policy with diligence.

4) ***Honor Code:*** **College of Charleston Honor Code and Academic Integrity** Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor. The complete course policy can be found on OAKS under "news item." Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at **http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php**

5) *Accommodation for Disabilities:* To request classroom accommodation, you must first register with the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. This office will provide you with documentation that you will then provide to us when you request accommodation. For more information, please see http://www.cof.cedu/~cds/index.htm

6) Counseling Resources, a writing lab, and a career resource center are all available to CofC students and are staffed with trained professionals. **Academic Support Services—The Center for Student Learning** The CSL, located on the first floor of the library, offers a wide variety of tutoring and other academic resources that support many courses offered at the College. Services include walk-in tutoring, by appointment tutoring, study strategies appointments, Peer Academic Coaching (PAC), and Supplemental Instruction (SI). All services are described and all lab schedules are posted on the CSL website http://csl.cofc.edu/ , or call 843.953.5635 for information.

7) *Financial Challenges*: If a student has difficulty affording groceries or getting sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, please contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify Professor ABCif you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable him to assist with identifying available resources.

8) *Weather:* If the College of Charleston closes and members of the community are evacuated due to inclement weather, students are responsible for taking course materials with them in order to continue with course assignments consistent with instructions provided by faculty. In cases of extended periods of institution-wide closure where students have relocated, instructors may articulate a plan that allows for supplemental academic engagement despite these circumstances.

Recipes

1. *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.* **Genesis 3:1-6**.
2. *Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, you, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!* **Matthew 7:9-11**
3. *"Eating is one of the important functions of life. It begins as a biological act, a means of satisfying hunger. When we invite a friend for dinner, a new dimension is added to eating; it becomes a social act. It helps to cement friendship. When a meal takes place in connection with the joy of observance of a commandment, it becomes a solemn act that helps add significance to an occasion. On the Sabbath, or even more, on Passover at the Seder, eating becomes a religious act, an act of worship, with the table becoming an altar of God."* **Rabbi Isaac Klein**
4. *"We are not obligated to complete the task; neither are we free to abstain from it."* –**Pirke Avot** 2:21

Course Schedule:

<u>Unit 1: The Science of Soil and Seed, and an Historical Perspective on our Current Context</u>

Tues 8/20: Pritchard: Origins and evolution of agriculture

Thurs 8/22: Pritchard: Environmental consequences of modern agriculture

Tues 8/27: LeVasseur: Agricultural Revolution

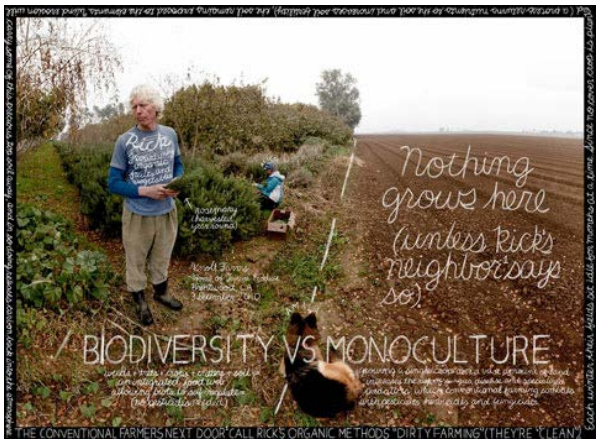
OAKS: Sale, chapter on "Intensification and Agriculture;" Quinn, selections from *Story of B*; Mason, "The Animal Question,"; Ingold, "From trust to domination" (4 separate summaries due)

Thrs 8/29: no reading—continue discussion from Tuesday, on same readings

****SustainFest—6pm in the Cistern, with Queen Quet and Germaine Jenkins speaking (extra credit worthy!)

Tues 9/3: Pritchard: Climate change and agriculture: physiological responses to warming and rising atmospheric CO2 concentrations.

and 9/5: Pritchard: Climate change continued.



<u>Unit 2: Intersectional Views of Agriculture</u>

Tuesday 9/10: LeVasseur: Melanie Harris reading on ecowomanism (OAKS); *Farming While Black (FWB)* Intro, Chapter 1, Chapter 3 (4 summaries due)

Thrs 9/12: FWB—chapters 11 and 14 (2 summaries due)

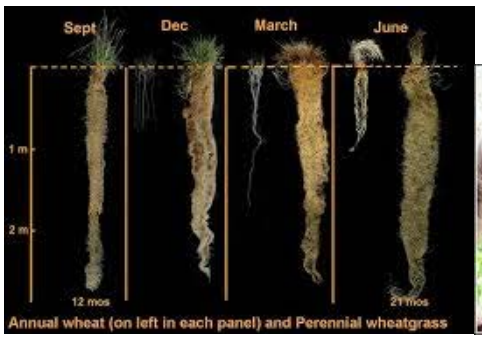
Tuesday 9/17: FW—Chapt 15, chpt 16; OAKS: Queer Farmers (3 summaries due)

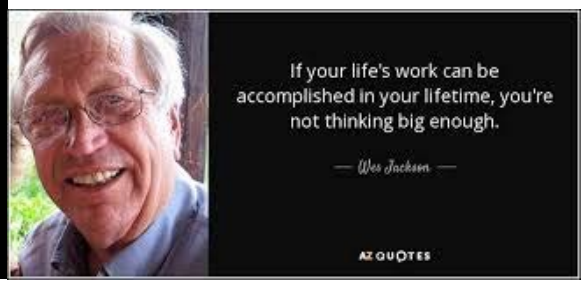
Thrs 9/19: Pritchard: Crop water use and irrigation;

Tuesday 9/21: Pritchard: Crop biodiversity, genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs); Paper #1 due

Thrs: 9/23: Pritchard: GMO discussion (BRIAN WARD visit?)

<u>Unit 3: Agrarianism and Sustainable Agriculture</u>



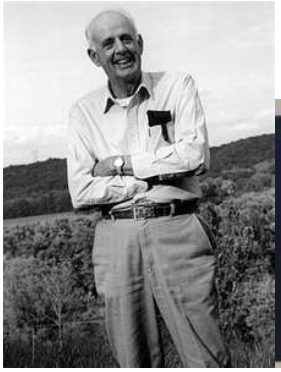


Tuesday 9/28: LeVasseur: Wes Jackson's book: pgs. ix-176. Summarize the preface and then Part I (chapters 1 to 5) together in a 750 word summary; and Part II (chapters 6 through 9) and chapter 10 together in a 750 word summary, for 2 summaries.

Thrs 9/30: LeVasseur: Agrarianism—finish Jackson's book. Summary on Chapters 11-13; 14 through Coda (each 750 words for 2 summaries);

Tues 10/1: catch-up; discuss final paper and work on group proposals for Changemaker Challenge that feeds into your paper

Thrs 10/3: Seth's mid-term



Tues 10/8: Todd--OAKS: reading on climate change; reading on Earthaven (2 summaries)

Thrs 10/10: Pritchard: Fertilizers, symbionts and soil quality

Fall Break trip to Earthaven!!!!

<u>Unit 4: Agri-cultural futures</u>

Thrs. 10/17: reflection on trip; hang out; work on Changemaker Proposals and paper research

Tues 10/22: Todd—Wendell Berry, "Damage" and "The Work of Local Culture" (2 summaries)

Thrs 10/24: Todd—Wendell Berry, "The Unsettling of America" (trigger warning—he uses the "n" word) and "The Agrarian Standard" (2 summaries)

Tues 10/29: Pritchard: Agricultural policy (food for fuel, government subsidies etc.)

Thrs 10/31: Pritchard: Human population growth and implications for food production

Tues 11/5: Pritchard: Eating animals, thermodynamics, and the future of agriculture

Thrs 11/7—Todd: Wendell Berry, “Why I am not going to buy a computer” and “Feminism, the Body, and the Machine” (2 summaries)

Tues 11/12: Todd: Wendell Berry, “Nature as Measure” and “The Total Economy” (2 summaries)

Tues 11/26: Todd: OAKS--David James Duncan essay; Freeman House selections (2 summaries)

FINAL EXAM: