Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change York University

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: EU/ENVS 4351 M 3.0 credits

Peasant Studies in the Global South: Peasants, Food, Nature, and Wellbeing

Term: Winter 2024

Calendar Description

In this course we will study peasants historically, from Feudalism and the dawn of Capitalism to the era of Globalization and the Digital Revolution, exploring their political, economic, social, and environmental roles from diverse theoretical perspectives, analyzing their resistance/resilience, their social movements, their potential regarding food security and food sovereignty, and their proposals confronting the multiple crises of Capitalism and the Anthropocene.

Prerequisite(s)

Fourth year standing or permission of the Course Director

Course Director

Professor Dr. Felipe Montoya

https://yorku.zoom.us/j/96868251807?pwd=S2w1Q2E0cXlQcEdKVWJxeEkyeWhzZz09

Course consultation hours: Tuesday, 5:30-7:30 pm (EST)

https://yorku.zoom.us/j/96868251807?pwd=S2w1Q2E0cXlQcEdKVWJxeEkyeWhzZz09

EcoCampus, Costa Rica fmontoya@yorku.ca

Other Course Instructors

N/A

Teaching Assistants

Simon Addison

Course consultation hours (TBD)

Zoom link (TBD)

Email: sdadd@yorku.ca

Course Management

Please note that this course depends on remote teaching and learning. Unless otherwise specified, there will be no in-person interactions or activities on campus.

The *Course Lectures* will be offered synchronously on Zoom as a virtual format every Tuesday from 2:30 to 4:30pm (EST). During this time the Course Director will provide an overview and

wrap-up of each week's major topics after the Student Presentations. The Teaching Assistant will be assisting with additional coverage of the weekly topics and addressing student questions during the second half of the session. The Course Director and Teaching Assistant will both be present during the entire session every week. Students are required to attend and participate in the discussions of the synchronous sessions. Zoom cameras must be turned on in order to account for student participation.

The Teaching Assistant will have *Course Tutorials/Consultation Hours* via Zoom every Tuesday from 4:30 to 5:30 pm (EST). Note that TAs have been directed **not** to accept students into a tutorial unless they have formally registered in that section. In exceptional circumstances, the Course Director will consider recommending to the Undergraduate Program Director that a student be permitted to change tutorial group enrolment; a written request detailing the reasons why a change is being requested and the choice of alternative tutorials must be submitted **by the student** to the Course Director prior to the first tutorial session.

Time and Location

Tue.	2:30 – 4:30 pm	Synchronous Virtual Lectures will always be held on Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:30 pm. We will always meet as a group during this time to discuss the readings through a live Zoom session. https://yorku.zoom.us/j/96868251807?pwd=S2w1Q2E0cXlQcEdKVWJxeEkyeWhzZz0
Tue.	4:30 – 5:30 pm	TA Course Tutorials/Consultation Hours will be held from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm on Tuesdays. Access will be through the following zoom link: (TBD)
Tue.	5:30 – 7:30 pm	Course Director Virtual Office Hours will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 pm on Tuesdays with previous appointment. Access will be through the following zoom link: https://yorku.zoom.us/j/96868251807?pwd=S2w1Q2E0cXlQcEdKVWJxeEkyeWhzZz09

Purpose and Objectives of the Course

The purpose of this course is to explore peasant issues from historical, social, economic, political, and environmental perspectives, to gain a general understanding of their strategies of resilience and their relationships with capitalism, food, and the environment.

Leaning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should have a working knowledge of:

- The historical debates around peasant persistence, productivity, and revolutionary potential.
- The fundamental differences between agro-industrial and peasant methods of production.
- The configurations of the New Peasantry and their social movements.
- The potential of the peasantry to deal with climate change and to feed the world.

• The current struggles and demands of peasants.

Experiential Education

This course will provide the opportunity to engage in experiential learning through the final research assignment that may require primary field research with peasants, farmers, or cultivators.

Organization of the Course

This course will run synchronously every Tuesday from 2:30pm to 5:30pm for 12 weeks, starting Tuesday, January 9th, 2024. Several platforms will be used in this course (Zoom, E-Class, WhatsApp) through which students will interact with the course materials, the Course Director / TA, as well as with one another.

The required readings are central to the course. Students will be expected to have read the weekly assigned readings and participated in student-led discussion forums before attending the course lectures, and be prepared to answer questions on weekly quizzes. In addition to completing course readings, students may also be asked to view films, TED talks, listen to podcasts, or attend seminars or other relevant events to prepare for class discussions. The lectures and Student Presentations will serve to enrich, clarify, and illustrate crucial issues from the assigned readings. Readings listed under a date are assigned for class discussion for that week.

Evaluation

Participation:	10%	DETERMINED THROUGHOUT TERM
Student Presentation:	30%	DUE TBD BY TUESDAY, JANUARY 16 TH , 2024
Commentary on Readings #1:	15%	DUE TBD BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24 TH , 2024
(Final Course Drop Day		MARCH 15 TH , 2024)
Final Research Project:		DUE TBD FRIDAY, MARCH 22 nd , 2024
Commentary on Readings #2:	15%	DUE TBD TUESDAY, APRIL 9 TH, 2024

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles. Graduate and undergraduate students are required to complete the same assignments, but graduate students are held to higher standards.

Brief descriptions of each assignment:

1. Participation (10%). Participation assessment will be based on degree of attendance, quality of discussion in the student-led discussion forums and in class, and results in weekly quizzes. Your participation grade will be assigned by the Course Director based on assessment of these factors. Attendance will be taken automatically via zoom, so please ensure that if you are using a different name to log on, the course director is made aware of this discrepancy. Students will be expected to have read the weekly assigned readings and participated in student-led discussion forums before attending the course lectures and be prepared to contribute with questions and comments during the virtual class sessions. [ASSESSMENT IS DETERMINED THROUGHOUT THE TERM]

- 2. Student Presentation (30%). On the first day of class eight (8) student groups will be created to organize the Student Presentations. The Student Presentations will be on the weekly topic, based on the weekly readings and additional sources. Each student group will organize a student Discussion Forum a week in advance of the Student Presentation where all students are expected to participate. The Student Group Presentation will introduce the weekly topic, include additional sources to complement the assigned readings, and include a summary of the discussion forum in the presentation. This assignment will be assessed on a) grasp of the material, b) clarity of the presentation, and c) originality and capacity to engage the audience, and d) quality of the discussion forum. Length: 45 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for discussion. [DUE BY TUESDAY, JANUARY 9th, 2024] The topics of the student presentations are determined by the general topic of the week. But the presentations can include case studies of diverse geographical regions, always looking to identify links with course contents. The schedule for student presentations will be determined in the first week of the course.
- 3. Commentaries on the readings in essay format #1 (15%). These commentaries will be in the format of a TWEET (280 characters max.) for each reading. Assessment will be based on the capacity to articulate original insights or generate new questions based on a clear grasp of the mandatory material covered until the due date. Length: 280 characters per assigned reading. [DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9th, 2024]
- 4. Final Research Project (30%). The Final Research Project will be a group project. The format is open to written or audiovisual presentations (Photo essays, podcast, posters, video, audiovisual documentary, etc.) The Final Research Project will be assessed according to a) articulation of a clear and relevant research question or documentary topic, b) demonstrated understanding and representation of the topic, c) articulation of original insights around the research topic, d) thorough consultation of a pertinent and timely literature, and e) quality and clarity of writing or audiovisual production. Length (Paper): Undergraduates 2000 words; Graduates 4000 words. Length (Audiovisual Documentary/Podcast): 6-10 minutes. [DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 22nd, 2024]
- 5. Commentaries on the readings in essay format #2 (15%). These commentaries will be in the format of a TWEET (280 characters max.) for each reading. Assessment will be based on the capacity to articulate original insights or generate new questions based on a clear grasp of the mandatory material covered until the due date. Length: 280 characters per assigned reading. [DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 5TH, 2024]

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

Required Readings

The following articles are required reading for the course:

•Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon and Kay, Cristóbal. (2010a). Surveying the agrarian question (part 1):

- unearthing foundations, exploring diversity. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2010, 177–202.
- •Altieri, Miguel A. and Toledo, Victor Manuel. (2011). The agroecological revolution in Latin America: rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty, and empowering peasants. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 3, (July): 587–612.
- •Bernstein, Henry et al. (2018). Forum: Fifty years of debate on peasantries, 1966–2016. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 689–714.
- •Chaves, Martha et al. (2018). Radical ruralities in practice: Negotiating buen vivir in a Colombian network of sustainability. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 59: 153-162.
- •Edelman, Marc. (2013). What is a peasant? What are peasantries? A briefing paper on issues of definition. Prepared for the first session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on a United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, Geneva, 15-19 July 2013. Pp. 1-18.
- •Hebinck, Paul. (2018). Editorial. De-/Re-Agrarianization: Global Perspectives. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 61(2018): 227-235.
- •Holt Giménez, Eric and Shattuck, Annie. (2011). Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, January 2011, 109–144.
- •Kerssen, Tanya. (2014). Five Global Threats to the Survival of Family Farms in the International Year of Family Farming. *Institute for Food and Development Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Special Issue):1-8.
- •Martinez-Torres, María Elena and Rosset, Peter. (2010). La Vía Campesina: the birth and evolution of a transnational social movement. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2010, 149–175.
- •McCune, Nils et al. (2017). The Long Road: Rural Youth, Farming and Agroecological Formación in Central America. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 1-17.
- •Patel, K., Gartaula, H., Johnson, D., and Karthikeyan, M. (2015). The interplay between household food security and wellbeing among small-scale farmers in the context of rapid agrarian change in India. *Agriculture & Food Security*, (2015) 4:1-16.
- •SinghaRoy, Debal. (2005). Peasant Movements in Contemporary India: Emerging Forms of Domination and Resistance. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 52 (Dec. 24-30): 5505-5513.
- •Van der Ploeg, J. (2010). The peasantries of the twenty-first century: the commoditization debate revisited. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2010, 1–30.

Additional required readings for graduate students; optional for undergraduate students:

- •*Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon and Kay, Cristóbal. (2010b). Surveying the agrarian question (part 2): current debates and beyond. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, April 2010, 255–284.
- •*Calvario, Rita. (2017). Food sovereignty and new peasantries: on re-peasantization and counter-hegemonic contestations in the Basque territory. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 402–420.
- •*Claeys, Priscilla. (2014). The Right to Land and Territory: New Human Right and Collective

- Action Frame. Contribution to the International Conference "Property from Below" organized at MIT on March 1, 2014.
- •*Dale, Bryan. (2019). Alliances for agroecology: from climate change to food system change. Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 3-24.
- •*Hart, Abigail. (2015). Multi-functional landscapes from the grassroots? The role of rural producer movements. *Agriculture and Human Values*, Journal of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer): 1-20.
- •*McMichael, Philip. (2016). Bernstein-McMichael-Friedmann Dialogue on Food Regimes. Commentary: Food regime for thought. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 648–670.
- •*Patel, R. (2012). The Long Green Revolution. The Journal of Peasant Studies, 40:1, 1-63.
- •*Shiva, Vandana. (2009). Women and the Gendered Politics of Food. *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 37, No. 2(Fall):17-32.
- •*Sugimura, Kazuhiko. (2007). African Peasants and Moral Economy. PEKEA Newsletter (Japan), No. 9 (Jan-Mar):1-6.
- •*Tornaghi, Chiara & Dehaene, Michiel. (2019). The prefigurative power of urban political agroecology: rethinking the urbanisms of agroecological transitions for food system transformation, *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 1-18.

Supplementary Reading

In addition to the readings provided, there are many excellent sources that deal with the general issues covered in this course, as well as particular topics. Among these are:

- •Altieri, Miguel. 2009. Agroecology, small farms, and food sovereignty. *Monthly Review*, 61(3):102/113.
- •Brass, Tom. (editor). (2003). Latin American Peasants. Frank Cass Publishers, London.
- •Carlson, Chris. 2018. Rethinking the agrarian question: Agriculture and underdevelopment in the Global South. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18:703–721.
- •Chayanov, Alexander V. 1966 [1925]. "Peasant Farm Organization." In A.V.Chayanov: *The Theory of Peasant Economy*, edited by D. Thorner, et al., 29–269. Homewood, Ill: American Economic Association [orig. Moscow: The Co-operative Publishing House, 1925].
- •Clark, Patrick. 2017. Neo-developmentalism and a "vía campesina" for rural development: Unreconciled projects in Ecuador's Citizen's Revolution. *Journal of Agrarian Change*. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12203
- •Courtheyn, Christopher. 2018. Territories of peace: alter-territorialities in Colombia's San José de Apartadó Peace Community. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 7, 1432–1459. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1312353
- •Day, Alexander F. (2013). *The Peasant in Postsocialist China: History, Politics, and Capitalism*. Cambridge University Press, UK.
- •Desmarais, Annette. 2007. La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants. University of Chicago Press. Chicago.
- •Edelman, Marc and James, Carwil. 2011. Peasants' rights and the UN system: quixotic struggle?

- Or emancipatory idea whose time has come? *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, January, 81–108.
- •Edelman, Marc. (2005). Bringing the Moral Economy back in to the Study of 21st-Century Transnational Peasant Movements. *American Anthropologist*. Vol. 107, Issue 3, pp. 331–345.
- •Engels, F. (1950). *The peasant question in France and Germany*. In: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected works, vol. 2. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. 420–40. First published in 1894.
- •ETC Group. 2009. Who will feed us? Questions for the food and climate crisis. *ETC Group Communiqué*, 102:1/34.
- •Hinton, William. (1966). Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village. Random House, NY.
- •Jansen, K. 2015. Commentary: Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue: The debate on food sovereignty theory: agrarian capitalism, dispossession and agroecology. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42(1): 213–232.
- •Kalindi, K. (2002). Moved by Love: The Memoirs of Vinoba Bhave. Manuscript.
- •Kautsky, K. (1988). The agrarian question. London: Zwan Publications. First published in 1899.
- •Lenin, V. I. (1964). *The development of capitalism in Russia*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. First published in 1899.
- •Marx, Karl. (1975) [1869]. *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Second Edition*. NY: International Publishers.
- •Scott, James (1986) Everyday forms of peasant resistance, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13:2, 5-35, DOI: 10.1080/03066158608438289
- •van der Ploeg, J.D. 2014. Peasant-driven agricultural growth and food sovereignty. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(6):999-1030.
- •Veltmeyer, Henry and Petras, James. (2008). Peasants in an Era of Neoliberal Globalization: Latin America on the move. *Revista Theomai*, 18(Second Semester):4-29.
- •Wolf, Eric. (1983). Europe and the People Without History. CA: UC Press.
- •Wolf, Eric. (1969). Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century. NY: Harper & Row.
- •Wolf, Eric. 1966. Peasants. NY: Prentice-Hall

The following journals contain many articles that are directly related to this course.

Agriculture & Food Security
Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems
Journal of Agrarian Change
Journal of Rural Studies
The Journal of Peasant Studies

Schedule of Topics and Readings by week

The following list of lecture topics and readings is subject to change. Remember that the readings listed under each date are assigned for the synchronous course session during that week.

Wk	Date	Topics/Readings	Assignments
1	Tue 1-9	Course Introduction: Contents and MethodologyMontoya, F. (2023). Peasant Studies Syllabus.	Form Student Groups and Select week and topic for student presentations
2	Tue 1-16	 Who are the peasants? Edelman, Marc. (2013). What is a peasant? What are peasantries? A briefing paper on issues of definition. Prepared for the first session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on a United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, Geneva, 15-19 July 2013. Pp. 1-18. Montoya, Felipe (Director). (2022). Buried Seeds (Semillas en la tierra). Grounded Project, EUC-Health, York University. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlWwzguffRo 	
3	Tue 1-23	•Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon and Kay, Cristóbal. (2010a). Surveying the agrarian question (part 1): unearthing foundations, exploring diversity. <i>The Journal of Peasant Studies</i> , Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2010, 177–202. •*Akram-Lodhi, A. Haroon and Kay, Cristóbal. (2010b). Surveying the agrarian question (part 2): current debates and beyond. <i>The Journal of Peasant Studies</i> , Vol. 37, No. 2, April 2010, 255–284.	
4	Tue 1-30	 Patel, Raj. (2012). The Green Revolution. Edible Education. University of California, Berkeley. December 4, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zE7PUy8gJco&t=656s *Patel, R. (2012). The Long Green Revolution. The Journal of Peasant Studies, 40:1, 1-63. 	Student Presentations #1

5	Tue 2-06	 *Holt Giménez, Eric and Shattuck, Annie. (2011). Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? <i>The Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, Vol. 38, No. 1, January 2011, 109–144. *McMichael, Philip. (2016). Bernstein-McMichael-Friedmann Dialogue on Food Regimes. Commentary: Food regime for thought. <i>The Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, Vol. 43, No. 3, 648–670. 	Student Presentations #2
6	Tue 2-13	 Martinez-Torres, María Elena and Rosset, Peter. (2010). La Vía Campesina: the birth and evolution of a transnational social movement. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2010, 149–175. *SinghaRoy, Debal. (2005). Peasant Movements in Contemporary India: Emerging Forms of Domination and Resistance. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 40, No. 52 (Dec. 24-30): 5505-5513. *Hart, Abigail. (2015). Multi-functional landscapes from the grassroots? The role of rural producer movements. Agriculture and Human Values, Journal of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer): 1-20. *Sugimura, Kazuhiko. (2007). African Peasants and Moral Economy. PEKEA Newsletter (Japan), No. 9 (Jan-Mar):1-6. READING WEEK (FEB 17-23) 	Student Presentations #3
	2-20	READING WEEK (FEB 17-23)	
	Fri 2-23		Commentary on Readings #1 DUE
7	Tue 2-27	 Agroecology and Food Sovereignty Altieri, Miguel A. and Toledo, Victor Manuel. (2011). The agroecological revolution in Latin America: rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty and empowering peasants. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 38, No. 3, (July): 587–612. *Dale, Bryan. (2019). Alliances for agroecology: from climate change to food system change. Agroecology and Sustainable Food 	Student Presentations #4

		Systems, 3-24.	
		•*Tornaghi, Chiara & Dehaene, Michiel. (2019). The prefigurative	
		power of urban political agroecology: rethinking the urbanisms of agroecological transitions for food system transformation, Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 1-18.	
8	Tue	New Peasants	Student
	3-05	•Van der Ploeg, J. (2010). The peasantries of the twenty-first century: the commoditization debate revisited. <i>The Journal of Peasant Studies</i> , Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2010, 1–30.	Presentations #5
		•*Calvario, Rita. (2017). Food sovereignty and new peasantries: on repeasantization and counter-hegemonic contestations in the Basque territory. <i>The Journal of Peasant Studies</i> , Vol. 44, No. 2, 402–420.	
9	Tue	Family Farming, Peasant Livelihoods and Wellbeing	Student
	3-12	•Hebinck, P. (2018). Editorial. De-/Re-Agrarianization: Global Perspectives. <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i> , 61(2018): 227-235.	Presentations #6
		•Kerssen, Tanya. (2014). Five Global Threats to the Survival of Family Farms in the International Year of Family Farming. <i>Institute for Food and Development Policy</i> , Vol. 19, No. 4 (Special Issue):1-8.	
		•BBC News. (2018). 'Seed Mother': The woman protecting India's indigenous crops. https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-india-46324264	
		•*Patel, R. et al. (2015). The interplay between household food security and wellbeing among small-scale farmers in the context of rapid agrarian change in India. <i>Agriculture & Food Security</i> , (2015) 4:1-16.	
10	Tue	Peasant Rights and Buen Vivir	Student
	3-19	•Chaves, Martha et al. (2018). Radical ruralities in practice: Negotiating buen vivir in a Colombian network of sustainability. <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i> , 59: 153-162.	Presentations #7
		•*Claeys, Priscilla. (2014). The Right to Land and Territory: New Human Right and Collective Action Frame. Contribution to the International Conference "Property from Below" organized at MIT on	

		March 1, 2014.	
	Fri 3-22		Final Research Project DUE
11	Tue 3-26	 Peasant Youth and Women McCune, Nils et al. (2017). The Long Road: Rural Youth, Farming and Agroecological Formación in Central America. Mind, Culture, and Activity, 1-17. BBC News. (2020). The woman farmer who beat debt and stigma. https://mail.google.com/mail/u/o/#inbox/FMfcgxwJZJPVbzvtSwKMFlHRwXVxhWJH *Shiva, Vandana. (2009). Women and the Gendered Politics of Food. https://mail.google.com/mail/u/o/#inbox/FMfcgxwJZJPVbzvtSwKMFlHRwXVxhWJH *Shiva, Vandana. (2009). Women and the Gendered Politics of Food. https://philosophical.com/mail/u/o/#inbox/FMfcgxwJZJPVbzvtSwKMFlHRwXVxhWJH 	Student Presentations #8
12	Apr 4-02	Peasant Studies Review •Bernstein, H. et al. (2018). Forum: Fifty years of debate on peasantries, 1966–2016. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 45, No. 4, 689–714.	Screening of Student Videos
	Fri 4-05		Commentary on Readings #2 DUE

(Readings marked * are optional for undergraduates and additionally required for graduate students)

For details on Grading Schemes, Assignment submissions, Lateness Penalties, Missed Tests, Group Work, Inclusivity in EUC, Religious Observance Days, Academic Honesty, Intellectual Property Notice, Student Conduct, Student Support and Student Accessibility Services. See https://euc.yorku.ca/academic-policies-procedures-petitions/ and go to "Undergraduate Courses Common Instructions".

(Draft 2023-11-08)