

Rural Politics in the United States

COURSE INFORMATION	<i>Term:</i> Spring 2021, Mod 2 <i>Level:</i> Intermediate Seminar <i>Meet:</i> Tuesday, 3-5 <i>Type:</i> Remote (<i>synchronous or asynchronous</i>) <i>Syllabus Revision:</i> November 9, 2023	<i>Instructor:</i> Jack Reilly <i>live text:</i> ncfpolgeo.slack.com <i>E-mail:</i> jreilly@ncf.edu <i>Office Hours:</i> Fridays, 9-11 <i>Appointments:</i> jackreilly.com/appointments
DESCRIPTION	This intermediate seminar examines the political context of rural America. While urban politics, suburban politics, and regional politics (especially southern politics) in the United States attracts frequent attention in academic circles, rural politics has no comparably significant literature, a gap that is increasingly striking and problematic as the rural and urban political divide increases with every passing year in American politics. In this course, we develop an understanding of the unique form, structure, and shape of rural politics, with an aim of gaining an appreciation for the unique contours of society, culture, policy, and public opinion in this increasingly overlooked segment of American life. Topics to be addressed include rural political behavior, ideology, voting, and partisanship; rural representation, resentment, and populism; rural demography; rural psychology, community structure, social cohesion, and identity; rural policy issues including public service provisions, farming, education, and the environment; and the reasons for the increasing political divide between rural America and the country's cities and suburbs.	
COURSE STRUCTURE	This course can be taken in one of two ways: as a remote synchronous discussion seminar, or as an asynchronous correspondence course. Students taking the course need to choose a track at the beginning and stick with it, as course requirements are slightly different in each track.	
SIBLING COURSES	This course is a mod2 course (a half semester course) with two sibling half-semester courses: <i>Political Geography</i> , a mod1 course taught in the same time slot as <i>Rural Politics</i> , but taking place in the first half of the semester, and <i>R for GIS and Political Geography</i> , a full term for mod credit course. Students looking for a whole course unit in political geography are encouraged to consider one or both of those courses in addition to this one.	
PREREQUISITES	<i>Required:</i> an introductory course in political science or geography. Second, third, or fourth-year status preferred. Enrollment is at the discretion of the instructor, who may waive pre-requisites in special circumstances.	

Materials

BOOKS	Required <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wuthnow, 2018. <i>The Left Behind: Decline and Rage in Small-Town America</i> Optional <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cramer, 2016. <i>The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker</i>
TECHNOLOGY	This is a remote course. As such, to successfully complete the course, you will need internet access and a device capable of running or accessing the following software: Canvas, Zoom, Google Drive, and Slack. You will also need the ability to play mp3 audio files and mp4 video files. You may find all electronic course resources linked from the course Canvas page or course

google drive folder.

For your class project, you will also need word processing software and the ability to conduct research over the internet. This is not a course on statistics or research design. If you have prior experience in statistics and data analysis, you may wish to conduct analysis with statistical software as part of your project, but this is not required.

Course Requirements

OVERVIEW

Satisfactory completion of the course requires completion of the following:

1. Weekly Reading & Preparation
2. Assignments
 - (a) Discussion Questions (3)
 - (b) Response Papers (1)
 - (c) Article Presentation
 - (d) Book Review Presentation
3. Self-Evaluation

SYNCHRONOUS/ ASYNCHRONOUS OPTION

This courses is available as either a synchronous remote course with video conference session or as an asynchronous remote course with no live conference requirements. Requirements for each "track" may be found below.

Requirement	Synchronous	Asynchronous
Response Papers	1	4
Discussion Questions	3	0
Zoom Seminars	6	0
Article Presentation	In-Class	Recorded
Book Review Presentation	In-Class	Recorded

GUIDANCE

Daily Participation and Reading: This is a discussion seminar class; informed class participation is expected and required each week.

Response Papers: Papers should be submitted to the whole class by noon the Monday before class (via slack), and should be read by other students in the class. As you are writing your reaction papers, you may wish to think of some of the following questions:

- *What is the primary argument of the readings for this week?*
- *How do these readings fit together? Do they agree? Disagree?*
- *How do these readings fit in with other readings from this class, or from other coursework you have taken?*
- *Do you buy what the author(s) is/are selling? Why or why not?*

Discussion Leadership: On the day you have a response paper due, you also lead off class discussion with the professor.

Discussion Questions: Submit discussion questions or points (broadly construed) to the class by 9 AM on the day of class in the course slack. (Note: on days you submit response papers, you don't have to submit discussion questions as well.) Feel free to respond to others comments and questions in the course slack as well as in class seminar!

Course Expectations

- ETIQUETTE** Course participants must be courteous to the professor and fellow students. Attend class on time, listen to fellow students when they talk, disagree (or agree) with others' arguments professionally. Remote instruction presents unique challenges to seminar classes, but the principles remain the same: when you are in seminar, attend and focus on the class and your fellow students' discussion and contributions.
- SYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION** I encourage you to come by my virtual Zoom student hours at any point if you have questions about the course, the readings, school, etc. To set up a zoom meeting, just schedule time here: <http://jacklireilly.com/appointments> or email me!
- ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION** Students can generally expect a response to all e-mails within 36 hours, excepting weekends. (And typically more quickly - I check email daily.) In addition to email, I encourage you to come to the course slack channel to ask questions or discuss questions outside of regular zoom meeting times.
- A NOTE ON WRITING** Clear writing and argumentation is a critical element to success in this class. I strongly recommend exploring the options for writing (and revising!) assistance at the Writing Resource Center. You can schedule an appointment through the writing center here: <https://ncf.mywconline.com>

Class Schedule

TOPICS OUTLINE (*Subject to change*)

W	Topic	Actual Class Date
1	Introduction: What is Rural Place and Space?	March 23
2	Foundations of Rural Politics	March 30
	BREAK DAY	April 6
3	Rural Culture & Society	April 13
4	Place-Based Threat, Immigration, and Race	April 20
	BACC DAY	April 27
	CLASS POSTPONED	May 4
5	Rural Competitiveness	May 11
6	<i>Student Book Review Presentations</i>	May 18 (<i>Finals Week</i>)

- PODCAST** Each week, we listen to an episode of the podcast, *To See Each Other*, focused on Rural America. All episodes can be found [at this link](#) (or just search in your podcast player). When listening, be sure to listen critically: what is the podcast attempting to show, and how is it doing so? Each week, think: the podcast is explicitly making the argument that Democrats can be competitive in rural America. Based on the nature of Republican strength in rural America, can they?
- REACTION PAPERS, ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS** Note that each week of the class (not including the introductory day and final book review presentation day) there are reaction papers due and article presentations due. Make sure to be aware of which days you have a reaction paper due, as opposed to discussion questions. (And keep track of your an article presentation day!) The schedule for both can be found in a separate document in the logistics folder of the course google drive.

Course Agenda

WEEK 1

Introduction (March 23)

1. Watch: Meet the rural Americans who fear they're being forgotten
2. Listen: To See Each Other, Pt 1: Complicating the Narrative (Podcast)
3. Read:
 - "Out here, its just me": In the medical desert of rural America, one doctor for 11,000 square miles (Washington Post)
 - Syllabus
4. Attend: Class, Tuesday 3 PM (zoom)

WEEK 2

Foundations of Rural Politics (March 30)

1. Read
 - Cramer Walsh, "Putting Inequality in Its Place", *American Political Science Review*
 - Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, ch 1, 9
 - Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy*, Introduction, ch 1, Conclusion
 - Monnat and Brown, "More than a Rural Revolt: Landscapes of Despair and the 2016 Presidential Election", *Journal of Rural Studies*
2. Listen: To See Each Other, Pt 2: Michigan (Podcast)
3. Submit: Response Paper *or* Discussion Questions, depending on your assignment for the week
4. Attend: Class, Tuesday 3 PM (zoom)

WEEK 3

Rural Culture & Society (April 13)

1. Read: Wuthnow, *The Left Behind* (Introduction, ch. 1-5)
 - *Optional*: Beggs, Haines, and Hurlburt. 1996. Revisiting the Rural-Urban Contrast: Personal Networks in Nonmetropolitan and Metropolitan Settings. *Rural Sociology*.
2. Listen: To See Each Other, Pt 3: Iowa (Podcast)
3. Submit: Response Paper *or* Discussion Questions
4. Attend: Class, Tuesday 3 PM (zoom)

WEEK 4

Place-Based Threat, Health, Economics, and Race (April 20)

1. Read
 - Wuthnow, ch 6 ("Bigotry"). *Also reflect on Wuthnow, ch 2 ("Present Dangers")*
 - Sherman, "Coping with Rural Poverty: Economic Survival and Moral Capital in Rural America" *Social Forces*

- Gest et al, "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain" *Comparative Political Studies*
- Lichter, "Immigration and the New Racial Diversity in Rural America" *Rural Sociology*

2. Listen: To See Each Other, Pt 4: New Jersey (Podcast)

3. Submit: Response Paper *or* Discussion Questions

4. Attend: Class, Tuesday 3 PM (zoom)

5. Note: You need to identify your book for the book review by next week! (*April 27*)

WEEK 5

Rural Competitiveness (May 11)

1. Read

- Wuthnow, epilogue
- Burton et al, "Inequality, Family Processes, and Health in the New Rural America" *American Behavioral Scientist*
- Scala et al, "Red rural, blue rural? Presidential voting patterns in a changing rural America" *Political Geography*
- Kleeb, *Harvest the Vote*, selections

2. Listen: To See Each Other, Pt 5: North Carolina (Podcast)

3. Submit: Response Paper *or* Discussion Questions

4. Attend: Class, Tuesday 3 PM (zoom)

WEEK 6

Presentations (May 18)

1. Prepare & Deliver: book review presentations

2. Listen: To See Each Other, Pt 6: Indiana (Podcast)

3. Attend: Class, Tuesday 3 PM (zoom)