

Community and Environmental Sociology 500

CAPSTONE SEMINAR

Applied Research in the History of Agriculture: Black Farmer Settlement of Pleasant Ridge, Wisconsin

> Fall Semester 2013 (3 Credits) Tuesday 2:30-3:45 Nancy Nicholas Hall 1300 Linden Drive LEC 001 Room: 1125

Professor Monica M. White

Assistant Professor of Environmental Justice
Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
Department of Community and Environmental Sociology
Office Hours: 1-2:15 or by appointment
311 Agricultural Hall
Tel. (608) 263-3064
mmwhite3@wisc.edu

Charity Schmidt
Teaching Assistant
Department of Community and Environmental Sociology
Office Hours: W 1-3 and Th 1:30-3:30 or by appointment
308F Agricultural Hall
charitysociology@gmail.com

Course Description:

This course is centered around several fundamental questions: What do we know about the history of African Americans in Wisconsin and the communities they built? How can we investigate and understand agriculture as a strategy by which residents engage in an effort to build community? Who were they? What brought them here? How did they get here? What are the social institutions they built? How did they feel about life in Wisconsin? Where did they go? How do we go about telling the story of families who built communities and the role and significance of growing food?

In this capstone course, students will have a hands-on experience of conducting research while learning about Pleasant Ridge, Wisconsin, a historic Black farmer settlement community that was established in 1850. Using research skills learned from an academic career of educational courses and experiences, students will apply what they have learned in the classroom in an effort to identify a research question specifically related either to the history of Black farmers overall, or the Pleasant Ridge community, more specifically.

This course includes a trip to Pleasant Ridge where we will actually walk the land and attempt to imagine what life was like in the early 19th century. We will go to the museum to visit the artifacts of family members and will meet with residents of Pleasant Ridge who remember when Black farmers lived there.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course you will:

- understand the relevance of a sociological approach to research
- be able to answer a question using archival documents and artifacts
- be able to develop research questions, identify best methods to examine these questions and identify relevant previous literature on the topic
- gain an understanding of the importance of the historical method for understanding community, agriculture and the environment.
- walk through the research process from the beginning of an idea to presenting findings
- experience Pleasant Ridge, Wisconsin

Trip:

Students are required to participate in a field trip to Pleasant Ridge to meet community members, view the Black farmer settlement and visit the museum that houses collections from the farm families who once lived there. You will need to come equipped with a notebook and a pen or something for taking notes. There will be no need for individual video cameras, the event will be taped.

Required Readings:

1. Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). The craft of research. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2. Learning to Do Historical Research: William Cronon http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm

Assignments:

There will be several assignments that are required for the class that are the various components of a research project.

Descriptions for assignments will be detailed in class. Due dates are listed on the course schedule below.

Methods of Evaluation:

Research Question Literature Review Research Methods Findings/Conclusion	10%		
	20% 10% 20%		
		Participation and Peer Review	20%
		PowerPoint presentation	20%
Total Points	100%		

By participation I mean your active engagement in the course, which would include coming to class prepared, having read the assignments, asking and responding to questions, offering thoughts, insights and ideas and listening to others. In the peer review process, students will be paired with another member of the class. You will review each other's assignments and offer support, feedback and evaluation of your partner's assignments. Each peer partner will submit a grade for their peer partner at the conclusion of the course.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Each student will present their research project in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. You will have 15 minutes to offer a shortened version of your project and will submit an extended version as your final assignment. This is an opportunity for you to be creative, use music, video, interesting graphs, etc.

Disclaimer: Any and all assignments subject to change. Students are responsible for knowing about such changes.

Course Schedule:

Week 1--Introduction

Introduction to the Course

Course overview and syllabus review

Who are you and what do you love about your major?

http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=176 (Shepard's papers)

http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/41833

http://images.library.wisc.edu/WI/EFacs/wipionexp/Shepard3a/reference/wi.shepard3a.i0039.pdf

Week 2--Research BCW: 1 & 2 due

What is research? What is a research question? How do you develop a research question? How do you begin the research process?

http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/questions.htm

Week 3—So What? BCW: 3 & 4 due

Assignment: Submit Research Question to Peer Partner

Sociological significance or the statement of the problem

Who cares? Who is impacted? Why does it matter? How do you develop a statement of the problem? What is the sociological significance? What is the 'So What?'

http://www.academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/academic-writing-blog/ivapproach-the-so-what-question/

Week 4—Starting a search

BCW: 5 due

Assignment: Submit Research Question to Us

How do you conduct a literature search? What is an academic source? When should it be used?

Week 5—What do we know?

BCW: 6 due

Bring in examples of articles and a pair of scissors

How do you create a literature review?

Foss and Waters, pp. 75-92

http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/documents.htm

Week 6—Archival research (Meet at Wisconsin Historical Society for class time) Assignment: Literature Review due to Peer Partner

http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/searching.htm

Week 7—What have I found?

BCW: 7 & 8 due

Assignment: Literature Review due to Us

What are findings? What do they mean? Have I found the answers to my questions?

Week 8—Trip to Pleasant Ridge

Week 9—Reasons, Evidence, Arguments and Responses

BCW: 9 & 10 due

Assignment: Methods due to Peer Partner

What do I do with what I have found?

Week 10—Writing it all up

BCW: 13 & 15 due

Assignment: Methods due to Us

Week 11—How do you create a PowerPoint presentation for your research project?

Assignment: Findings/Conclusions due to Peer Partner

http://getalifephd.blogspot.com/2012/08/how-to-create-power-point-presentation.html http://imaginelayout.com

Week 12—Individual meetings

Assignment: Findings/Conclusions due to Us

Week 13—No Class

Week 14—Presentations

Week 15—Presentations

Week 16—Final Session