

CONS 305
Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture
Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Joel Gruver

Office: Knoblauch Hall 302

Office hours: M,W 9-10, Th 10-12

Phone: (309) 298 1215

E-mail: j-gruver@wiu.edu

Class meeting time and location: 1- 1:50 Knoblauch Hall 152

Course description: This course will begin with a discussion of what is meant by the term “sustainable agriculture” followed by an evaluation of the sustainability of the dominant agricultural practices today. Next, the historical roots of alternative forms of agriculture will be explored as a foundation for current efforts to improve agricultural sustainability through grass roots activism, on-farm innovation, government programs, and the greening of research and industry. The course will conclude with an intensive investigation of the present and future of “sustainable agriculture” from the perspective of innovative farmers, grass roots organizations, scientists and industry.

Text: No text but readings from a wide variety of sources will be assigned each week.

Term Project: Each student will complete 2 interview projects. One project will be a group investigation and will result in a group presentation and written report. In addition, each student will interview a sustainable ag practitioner (e.g., farmer, grass roots organizer, educator, research scientist, entrepreneur, or any other profession directly involved with improving agricultural sustainability) and present key findings in a short oral presentation.

Field Trips: Two field trips are planned. Attendance is *required for 1 field trip*.

Class format: Discussion/seminar format with some lectures.

Attendance: Because class discussion is a major component of this course, you are expected to attend every class and attendance will be monitored

Grading:

Attendance	10%
Reading questions	40%
Group interview project	20%
Individual interview project	10%
Take home final exam	20%

Class Schedule:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Class sessions</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	8/24, 8/26, nc	Why study “Sustainable Agriculture”?
2	8/31, 9/2, 9/4	Historical development of industrial agriculture
3	nc, 9/9, 9/11	Cracks in the wall, part I: Environmental challenges
4	9/14, 9/16, 9/18	Cracks in the wall, part II: Economic challenges
5	9/21, 9/23, 9/25	Cracks in the wall, part III: Social challenges
6	9/28, 9/30, 10/2	Historical development of alt. agriculture, part I.
7	10/5, 10/7, 10/9	Historical development of alt. agriculture, part II
8	10/12, 10/14, 10/16	Alternative agriculture in IL and the US today
9	10/19, 10/21, 10/23	International alternative agriculture today
10	10/26, 10/28, 10/30	USDA National Organic Program
11	11/2, 11/4, 11/6	USDA Conservation programs
12	11/9, 11/11, 11/13	Greening of agricultural research
13	11/16, 11/18, 11/20	Greening of industry
14	11/30, 12/2, 12/4	Careers in sustainable agriculture
15	12/7, 12/9, 12/11	Future challenges and opportunities
16	12/16	Take-home final is due (scheduled exam date).

nc = no class

Attendance and deadlines:

You are expected to attend every lecture and at least 1 field trip !!

All students that miss lectures or field trips (with or without advance notice) **must** schedule an appointment to discuss the material that they missed.

You are expected to turn in all assignments on designated due-dates !!

Students that do not submit assignments on time **must** schedule an appointment to discuss the assignment.

Academic honesty:

The WIU academic integrity policy will be strictly followed in this class.

<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.shtml>

NO CHEATING, PLAGIARISM, OR OTHER VIOLATIONS OF THE WIU ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY WILL BE TOLERATED.

Please talk to me if you have any questions about the WIU academic integrity policy.

All suspected violations of the WIU academic integrity policy will be addressed promptly and individually.