

CES 199 or 699 Directed Study
Amanda McMillan
under supervision of Dr. Michael Bell
Fall 2012
Farm Transfer Syllabus

Dear team,

The goal of this directed study is two-fold: to give more productivity power to my master's research, and in the process, to introduce you to the experience of sociological research. Please find below our Syllabus-in-Progress. Right now, I have just four weeks' of readings uploaded for us to read and discuss together. After four weeks, I hope each of you will have a better sense of what your 'take-away' could be (a two-page research proposal, an oral presentation, or a short literature review, for example). We will design readings and discussions to further each of your learning goals. You will earn a letter grade for this directed study.

This directed study/assistantship is intended to provide experience and theoretical background for designing, implementing, and analyzing a qualitative/mixed methods research project. We will focus on theory building and methodological issues in the context of a project examining how economic pressures have impacted intergenerational land transfer expectations in Midwestern farming communities. Recasting Sonya Salamon's typology of German farming culture, my study aims to understand if values derived from ethnic heritage influence farmer decision-making in ways similar to Salamon's findings in the 1970s, even in the wake of the 1980s Farm Crisis and the economic changes of the past 30 years.

Tasks will include transcribing interviews, running basic analysis, and summarizing articles. In coordination with the prescribed research tasks, students will develop personal learning goals with me. Each week, I will assign one reading and one task related to the theory and methodology underlying this project. During our weekly meetings, each student will summarize their assigned article and provide a brief analysis relating the issues addressed in the article to the current project. Toward the end of the semester, students should draft a brief (2-page) research proposal on a topic of interest, the purpose of which is to facilitate the students' ability to conceptualize a research project from start to finish.

Schedule

Week 1 (week of 10/1)

Substance

Lobao, Linda. 1993. "Prairie Patrimony: Family, Farming, and Community in the Midwest by Sonya Salamon." *American Journal of Sociology* 99(3):784-786.

This is an excellent (short!) review of the study that I'm recasting for this master's research process. Please read closely.

Method

Morse, Janice M, and Juliet Corbin. 2003. "The Unstructured Interactive Interview : Issues of Reciprocity and Risks When Dealing With Sensitive Topics." *Qualitative Inquiry* 9(3):335-354.

A very readable assessment of my primary methodology; I suggest reading the introduction and conclusion closely, and skimming the rest. Particularly look at the helpful chart on p. 340.

Week 2 (week of 10/8)

Substance

Salamon, Sonya. 1980. "Ethnic Differences in Farm Family Land Transfers." *Rural Sociology* 45(2):290-308.

Read closely, and outline how this article works.

Theory

Gieryn, Thomas F. 2000. "A Space for Place in Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26(1):463-496.

This piece is a little heady, but important. Read less closely, and try to pull one or key ideas from the paper that you found compelling or confusing, to share when we meet next week.

Week 3 (week of 10/15)

Substance

Lobley, M., Baker, J., & Whitehead, I. 2012. *Keeping it in the family: international perspectives on succession and retirement on family farms.* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate. (only read chapter 1).

These guys are literally the experts in farmland transfers. Their first chapter is an easy read, so read it closely.

Theory

Bell, Michael. 1997. "Ghosts of Place." *Theory and Society* 26(6):813-836.

Method

Gillespie, Gilbert W, and Peter R Sinclair. 2000. "Shelves and Bins: Varieties of Qualitative Sociology in Rural Studies*." *Rural Sociology* 65(2):180-193.

Week 4 (week of 10/22)

Theory

Vaisey, Stephen. 2009. "Motivation and justification: a dual-process model of culture in action." *AJS; American journal of sociology* 114(6):1675-715.

This is loaded with references to sociological terms and people. Think of this heavyweight article as a time-saver... you get good summaries of a huge part of the field of cultural sociology in one, fell swoop! I want you to pay attention to his analysis of: Swidler and her Tool Kit theory, Bourdieu and habitus, p.1689, "let me summarize;" skip the examples (with the tables), and read the conclusion from p. 1706 on.

Week 5 (week of 10/29)

Substance/Theory

Lobao, Linda, and Katherine Meyer. 2001. "The Great Agricultural Transition: Crisis, Change, and Social Consequences of Twentieth Century US Farming." *Annual Review of Sociology*.

This was a keystone article in theories of change in rural life... read closely.

Methodology

Emerson et al., "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Meaning," pp. 142-168.

I will scan and upload the section for you to read. Literally, the textbook for fieldwork.

Week 6 (week of 11/5)

Methodology

Emerson et al., "Pursuing Members' Meanings," pp. 109-141

Another great chapter from Emerson; keep in mind the interviews you were just transcribing - how could you apply ways of interpretation to the stories you were listening to?

Task

Transcribe an entire interview

Weeks 7, 8, and 9 (11/12-26)

Theory + Methodology

Blee, K., & Currier, A. (2011). Ethics Beyond the IRB: An Introductory Essay. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34(3), 401-413.

Tasks

Transcribe an entire interview; propose coding and nodes in Nvivo and by hand

Weeks 10, 11, and 12 (12/3-17)

Tasks

Transcribe an entire interview

Final summary/reflect: 12/22/12 (last day of finals)