NOTE to prospective students: This syllabus is intended to provide students who are considering taking this course an idea of what they will be learning. A more detailed syllabus will be available on the course Blackboard site for enrolled students and may be more current than this sample syllabus.

Subject & Course: SOC 475/575 Rural Sociology
Credits: 4
Instructor's name: Roger B. Hammer
Instructor's email and/or phone: rhammer@oregonstate.edu 541-760-1009
- Link to instructor's on-line bio/website: http://oregonstate.edu/cla/sociology/rogerhammer
- Syllabus effective for term(s):

OSU catalog course description, including pre-requisites/co-requisites:
Helps students understand the rich diversity in rural society, with an emphasis on the interdependencies between urban and rural contexts. Current issues and social problems experienced by rural populations and how sociology is used to understand and address issues affecting rural communities are explored. PREREQS: (SOC 204 or SOC 204H)

This course explores social life along the rural-urban continuum, especially toward the rural end. We will examine differences and similarities in social behavior, organization and ecology. An overview of social science perspectives pertaining to the interaction between human behavior, social organization, and various dimensions of both natural and "built" environments will be provided. Upon developing a sociological understanding of rural, we will consider topical issues that often transcend the rural-urban continuum. In examining these and other related issues, we will attempt to go beyond a simple description of ecological and social relationships and consider the practical implications of such phenomena for planning and policy making. We will also consider how these processes may vary across different cultural settings. Students completing the course should leave with an enhanced awareness of how humans interface with their environments, and why planned development efforts need to consider that interface in order to maximize the degree of congruence between environmental conditions and the needs and preferences of humans who live and work in those environments.

The potential topics for this class are quite extensive and far too numerous to cover in a ten week term. There is no single textbook that provides adequate or complete coverage of the broad range of issues considered in this class. To facilitate class discussions, we will have selected readings (see blackboard). However, discussions may take slight detours depending upon current events. Regardless of whether or not a specific reading is discussed, students will be responsible for having read the material.
Week 1: Defining Rural  
Week 2: Agriculture  
Week 3: Poverty and Inequality  
Week 4: Migration and Exurbanization  
Week 5: Health  
Week 6: Education  
Week 7: Natural Resources/Disasters  
Week 8: Culture  
Week 9: Water/Klamath River  
Week 10: Public Policy

**Blackboard** — This course will be delivered via Blackboard, your online learning community, where you will interact with your classmates and with me. Within the course Blackboard site you will access the learning materials, tutorials, and syllabus; discuss issues; submit assignments; take quizzes; email other students and the instructor; participate in online activities; and display your projects. To preview how an online course works, visit the Ecampus Course Demo. For technical assistance, Blackboard and otherwise, see [http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/technical-help.htm](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/technical-help.htm).

* Measurable student learning outcomes:

**Undergraduate Student (475) Learning Outcomes**: As a result of taking this course, students will have gained a social science understanding of rural issues. Students will be able to: (1) demonstrate critical thinking through oral and written formats, (2) assess the complexity of rural issues, and (3) apply sociological theories and methodologies to the study of rural issues.

**Graduate Student (575) Learning Outcomes**: In addition to the objectives outlined for undergraduate students, it is expected that graduate students will 1) apply an advanced level of critical thinking and synthesis regarding rural issues, 2) be able to apply sociological theories and methods to rural issues, and 3) illustrate their advanced understanding through written assignments and interactive discussions.

* Learning resources: [Textbooks, lab kits, streaming media, course packets, etc.]

Readings and streaming videos will be available in Blackboard or on Netflix.

**Textbook Information**: NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website ([http://www.osubeaverstore.com/](http://www.osubeaverstore.com/)). Sample syllabi may not have the most up to date textbook information!

* Evaluation of student performance:

**Three Writing Assignments (25 pts. each; 75 pts. total)**: These will be questions based on readings, class discussion, and reviewing websites. Assignments will be posted on Blackboard.
Group Research Paper (25 pts.) and Presentation (15 pts.): Instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

Discussion Participation (20 pts.) and Weekly Reading Reviews (35 pts.): Since this class is a combination lecture/discussion, your participation is necessary. I will attempt to create an opportunity for discussion of concepts, theories, and applications through the use of examples -- both yours and mine. The degree to which you engage in this exercise will reflect your currency in readings and assignments. It is imperative that you come to each class prepared (i.e., having read the assigned material ahead of time).

To encourage such preparation, for each week’s readings, you will be responsible for a 2 page (double-spaced) synthesis of the readings (e.g., key points, themes, etc.). Do not merely repeat what is in the abstract!

Reading Reviews:

Some general guidelines for evaluating writing assignments:

D-C -- the author fails to directly answer the questions, demonstrates a weak command of issues, or the paper is difficult to read

C-B -- the author minimally addresses all aspects of the writing assignment

B-A -- the author exceeds minimal expectations, uses a wide variety of resources, demonstrates a synthesis of ideas and readings and critical thought, and is written clearly

Note: Your execution of written assignments is central in this course. I place great weight on the quality of such material. These efforts need to be well organized, clearly written, and reflective of original and critical thought. Merely indicating what others have found or said is inadequate. Rather, the written assignments will allow you to critique and apply what you have learned. Plagiarism will NOT be tolerated! Check with the Writing Center if you are uncertain about what and when to cite material.

Course Policies:

- Incompletes — Take this course only if you plan to finish it in a timely manner (during this term). I assign an "I" or incomplete only when there is a strong and compelling case for doing so (e.g., health reasons, military commitment). I will not consider assigning an incomplete unless the individual has completed over 50% of the course tasks. Please note that students receiving incompletes are subject to assignment weight reduction (and consequently may not be eligible for A or A-grades) because some of their work will be submitted late. If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don’t wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.
* Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities:
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS), with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

* Expectations for Student Conduct:
Student conduct is governed by the university’s policies, as explained in the Office of Student Conduct: information and regulations.

In an academic community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity and respect. Disruption of teaching, administration, research, and other institutional activities is prohibited by Oregon Administrative Rule 576-015-0015 (1) and (2) and is subject to sanctions under university policies, OSU Office of Student Conduct.

Academic Integrity — Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty, defined as: An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work. For further information, visit Avoiding Academic Dishonesty, or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

Conduct in this online classroom — Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university’s regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules Division 015 Student Conduct Regulations.

(Adapted from statements provided by Becky Warner, SOC)

Communications:

- **Ground Rules for Online Communication & Participation:**
  - *Online threaded discussions* are public messages, and all writings in this area will be viewable by the entire class or assigned group members. If you prefer that only the instructor sees your communication, send it to me by email, and be sure to identify yourself and the class.
• Posting of personal contact information is discouraged (e.g. telephone numbers, address, personal website address).
• **Online Instructor Response Policy:** I will check email frequently and will respond to course-related questions within 24 hours.
• **Observation of “Netiquette”:** All your online communications need to be composed with fairness, honesty and tact. Spelling and grammar are very important in an online course. What you put into an online course reflects on your level of professionalism. Here are a couple of references that discuss
  o writing online: [http://goto.intwg.com/](http://goto.intwg.com/)
• Please check the Announcements area and the course syllabus before you ask general course "housekeeping" questions (i.e. how do I submit assignment 3?). If you don't see your answer there, then please contact me.
  (Adapted from Jean Mandernach, PSY)

• **Guidelines for a productive and effective online classroom**
  • The discussion board is your space to interact with your colleagues related to current topics or responses to your colleague’s statements. It is expected that each student will participate in a mature and respectful fashion.
  • Participate actively in the discussions, having completed the readings and thought about the issues.
  • Pay close attention to what your classmates write in their online comments. Ask clarifying questions, when appropriate. These questions are meant to probe and shed new light, not to minimize or devalue comments.
  • Think through and reread your comments before you post them.
  • Assume the best of others in the class and expect the best from them.
  • Value the diversity of the class. Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to class.
  • Disagree with ideas, but do not make personal attacks. Do not demean or embarrass others. Do not make sexist, racist, homophobic, or victim-blaming comments at all.
  • Be open to be challenged or confronted on your ideas or prejudices.
  (Adapted from a statement provided by Susan Shaw, WS)

**Student Assistance:**
• **Contacting the instructor** — Please post questions about the course and course content in the General Discussion Forum rather than emailing the instructor. Reserve email for questions of a personal nature.

• **Technical Assistance** — If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the [OSU Computer Helpdesk](http://www.oregonstate.edu/helpdesk) online.
- **Tutoring** — Effective fall term 2009 we went to a new Online Tutoring Service - NetTutor to meet the needs of Ecampus students.

NetTutor is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Students connect to live tutors from any computer that has Internet access. NetTutor provides a virtual whiteboard that allows tutors and students to work on problems in a real time environment. They also have an online writing lab where tutors critique and return essays within 24 to 48 hours.

**Course Evaluation:** [Some instructors provide a discussion board for ongoing student comments and suggestions during the term. Often they choose to allow anonymous posts. Soliciting input from students about the course during the term is valued by students and gives instructors the opportunity to deal with problems while the current batch of students can still benefit.]

**OSU Student Evaluation of Teaching** — Course evaluation results are extremely important and are used to help me improve this course and the learning experience of future students. Results from the 19 multiple choice questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and department heads. Student comments on the open-ended questions are compiled and confidentially forwarded to each instructor, per OSU procedures. The online Student Evaluation of Teaching form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions through ONID. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.