

**Course title:** *Rural Transformations and Social Movements in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
(7.5 ECTS)

**Course organizers:**

- Dept. of Human Geography, Lund University (Mads Barbesgaard)
- Dept. of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University (Don Mitchell)

Sub-organizers and contributing teachers:

- LU Centre for Sustainability Studies (Chad Boda)
- LU Department of Economic History (Turaj Faran)
- Sam Moyo African Institute of Agrarian Studies, Zimbabwe (Walter Chambati)
- Right Livelihood Foundation (intl. contact person Alex Repenning)

**Course description:**

The objective of this course is to facilitate critical reflection on two interrelated processes. The first is that of transformation in rural areas, particularly in relation to access to and control over resources. The second is that of the political responses by diverse rural peoples instigated by these transformations. As such, the course draws on two bodies of literature that have, perhaps surprisingly, sometimes remained at arm's length from each other 1) agrarian change and 2) social movements. The course will bring this literature into constructive dialogue and relate it to student research in a variety of ways, including pre- and post-course assignments, academic and social movement guest lecturers, and a field excursion in southern Sweden. The course will provide the theoretical and empirical basis for students to grapple with the complexity of rural change and popular struggles across the global North and South.

While the agrarian question (or questions as Akram-Lodhi & Kay (2010) argued) remains central in discussions of rural transformations, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the rural is arguably increasingly decoupled from purely agrarian dynamics (e.g. the expansion of extractive industries, conservation, etc.). Moreover, with the "rural" in this course, we also wish to address common misconceptions by emphasizing the impacts on and agency of people in rural areas that have historically not been central in strictly agrarian studies, including agro-foresters, pastoralists and fishers. Our intention generally follows Bernstein's (2010, 111) point regarding the reality faced by contemporary classes of labour in much of the global South, namely the compulsion to piece together ones livelihood in a wide variety of "sites of the social division of labour: urban and rural, agricultural and non-agricultural, wage-employment and marginal self-employment". From this, the central question driving this course is whether and how rural "working people" (as Issa Shivji puts it) are exercising their agency through social movements, in light of contemporary rural transformations they face.

The course will offer a structured over-view of different paradigms in 1) theories of agrarian change, and 2) social movement theory. From this foundation, the course will proceed to examine whether and how these bodies of theory interact and speak to each other. This will be achieved through a series of current case studies from the global North and South, introduced through guest lectures with extensive experience in the case study and related social movement, either through direct participation or research. The two theory blocks are approached so as to cover different dominant paradigms, primarily covering in 1) Marxist agrarian political economy, agrarian populists and neo-institutional economics, and in 2) resource mobilization theory, the cognitive approach and political

process theory. The course will trace debates from early pioneers of the agrarian question and social movement studies through to more contemporary iterations coming from a growing and exciting group of researchers across the global South and North. The case studies are a crucial component of this course, as they provide the means to make the paradigmatic survey block of the course concrete and operational.

The course will have a physical meeting portion for one and a half week at Lund University in April 2023. Building on pre-reading and a pre-course assignment, the physical meeting will involve intensive lectures and discussion workshops, combined with an optional one-day field excursion to examine contemporary agrarian change issues in Southern Sweden. Examination takes place through the handing in of a paper at the end of the course (see below overview of course events).

#### **Overview of course events:**

The course runs from the beginning of February to the end of May 2023

- February: Pre-course reading begins
- March: Pre-course assignment submission, involving a short paper outlining intentions and interests in the course (for details see below)
- April: Week and a half (12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>) of intensive in-person lectures , seminars and an optional one-day excursion – hosted by Lund University (for details see below)
- April-May: Students engage in peer-review of their developing course papers.
- End of May: Final paper submission

#### **Indicative literature list (a full and annotated literature list will be shared with course participants)**

- Akram-Lodhi, A. & C. Kay 2010. Surveying the agrarian question (part 1 and 2). *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37 (1-2), 177-202
- *Handbook of Critical Agrarian Studies*, Edited by Akram-Lodhi, A., K. Dietz, B. Engels & B.M. McKay (2021)
- Bernstein, H. & T.J. Byres 2001. From Peasant Studies to Agrarian Change, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1 (1), 1-56
- Ian Scoones (2021) Pastoralists and peasants: perspectives on agrarian change, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 48:1, 1-47
- *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, Edited by Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani. (2015)
- *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N Zald (1996)

#### **Application for the course (the course is limited to 20 participants):**

- Please send an expression of interest of around 300 words explaining why you are interested in the course. Send to [mads.barbesgaard.2321@keg.lu.se](mailto:mads.barbesgaard.2321@keg.lu.se) by the end of 25<sup>th</sup> November. Accepted participants will be notified the following week.

### Outline of schedule for in-person part of the course:

Course participants will convene for an intensive series of in-person lectures and seminars from 12<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> April at Lund University in Lund, Sweden. The in-person series will be divided in two blocks: Foundations and Case Studies.

In the Foundations block (April 12-14), we introduce different paradigmatic approaches to the relationship between agriculture, society (herein economic development) and collective agency. In particular, we will discuss the different concrete and divergent forms that “agrarian questions” have taken across the global North and global South. We then will introduce key concepts from social movement theory useful for understanding collective agency in these contexts. In this manner, the first three days introduce competing approaches to the “agrarian question”, while emphasizing the structural differences in this question in different historical moments and geographical locations. It concludes with introducing a conceptual framework for understanding collective agency, in particular how social movements can influence the process and outcomes of rural development.

In the Case Studies block (April 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>), we will be introduced to a variety of in-depth case study lectures and seminars. Each of these case studies will articulate the discussions raised in the first block in a more concrete manner by going into depth in a particular place and time. The cases covered seek to span diverse geographies across global North and South.

Detailed schedule:

<b>Wednesday 12th</b>	Activity
09.00-10.30	Introduction: welcome, name and interest-round, intro to logic of the course
11.00-12.00	Introductory lecture: the central role of agriculture for economic and social change
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Lecture: Agricultural transformation in the global North and South: Economics and politics
<b>Thursday 13th</b>	Activity
10.00-12.00	Lecture: Social movement theory and agricultural transformation
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Seminar: Reflecting on the agrarian question(s) in the global North and South
<b>Friday 14th</b>	Activity
10.00-12.00	Lecture: Social movements and agrarian questions today
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Seminar: Summary - reflecting on social movements and the role of agricultural transformation research
<b>Saturday 15th</b>	Activity
10.00-17.00	Optional field-trip

<b>Monday 17th</b>	Activity
10.00-12.00	Lecture: Zimbabwe
12.00-13.00	
13.00-15.00	Seminar
<b>Tuesday 18th</b>	
	Activity
10.00-12.00	Lecture: USA
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Seminar
<b>Wednesday 19th</b>	
	Activity
10.00-12.00	Lecture: Brazil
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Seminar
<b>Thursday 20th</b>	
	Activity
10.00-12.00	Lecture: Philippines/Myanmar (TBC)
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Seminar
<b>Friday 21st</b>	
	Activity
10.00-12.00	Seminar: Reflection and discussion of own research projects
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Seminar: Reflection and discussion of own research projects
15.00 - 16.00	Course wrap-up