

# Overseas Development

or "What I wish I'd known before I went off to the Peace Corps"

Thursdays 4 to 7 PM

Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro

**Instructor:** Nathan McClintock

home 919 542 1847 work 919 513 2707 cell 919 444 9141

nathan\_mcclintock@ncsu.edu

**Overview:** This goal of this course is to prepare students for grassroots development work in less-industrialized/agrarian (so-called "developing") countries. Our goals are two-fold. First, during daylight hours, we'll get our hands dirty in the Land Lab, focusing on training in "appropriate technology," ie, ag techniques appropriate to the socio-economic and environmental constraints of the host community. Second, once it gets dark, we'll go inside to discuss the controversies surrounding development and most importantly to learn participatory methods to use during work with individual farmers and groups. Far too often in development, decisions are made without the input of the people actually affected by the project—the farmers themselves. By working with farmers to conduct baseline surveys, needs assessment, project planning, and experimentation, agricultural improvements are more likely to be adopted and sustained.

Emphasis will be placed on semi-arid West Africa, as that is where I have the most experience, but the AT and participatory methods we'll be covering should be applicable to diverse agroecosystems. In order to better visualize how to plan small-scale sustainable ag development projects and select AT suitable for the region, each student will research a farming systems in an agroecosystem of interest (not just a country, but a specific zone within that country or region, eg, home gardens in urban India, hillside farming in Nepal, integrated rangeland and cropping in Tanzania, cassava intercropping in Honduras).

Like ag work in a village, this class will be participatory and organic, and largely molded to the needs and interests of the students. Class discussion will be based on selected readings and whatever questions, ideas, and arguments that you raise.

**Required Text:** *Two Ears of Corn: A Guide to People-Centered Agricultural Improvement* by Roland Bunch, World Neighbors, ISBN 0-942716-03-5, \$10

**Assignments:** Since this is a continuing ed course, there will be no grades. However, the class's success depends on active participation from the students. Just like grassroots development. Assigned readings will help to introduce ideas to the class and stimulate discussion. *Two Ears of Corn* is a quick and easy read, and reading fifty pages of it over a week should require very little time. I will also assign some photocopied handouts or websites to expose you to various farming systems and appropriate technologies.

**Project:** The project is intended to get you thinking about a particular agroecosystem and the farming systems practiced therein. If you are headed off to the Peace Corps, have a volunteer job lined up somewhere, or plan to go traveling and are thinking of sticking around in a particular place for a while, I would suggest picking that region. You'll end up better prepared than most of your fellow volunteers. Once you've selected a particular zone and farming system, think about how to apply what we talk about in class to your zone. For example, cover cropping may be an excellent idea in temperate zones, but impossible in semi-arid farming systems with a short rainy season. I'll ask you early on what farming system you want to study, and hand out a project outline to help guide your research. The last couple of indoor classes will be devoted to presentations and discussion.

**Field Trips:** We'll take one or two field trips to local farms practicing agroforestry and other AT. We'll also charter a flight to Uzbekistan to develop an irrigation scheme for a walnut plantation. Ha ha, wishful thinking. But maybe next year...

**Class Outline:** Please note that this is flexible, depending on students' interests, field trip schedules, holidays, droughts, landslides, and pestilence...

Date	Hands-On	Classroom	Assignments due
2/5		Intro to "development"—what is it, bad or good, what is our role, who decides?	
2/12	Transect walks Mapping	Participatory methods in development Baseline surveys & needs assessment	pp. 2-54
3/4	Contour measures	Erosion control & soil conservation Program planning	pp. 56-66, 72-80
3/11		NO CLASS	
3/18	Terracing	Appropriate technology (AT)—what is it, how do we decide what is appropriate?	pp. 82-136
3/25	Terracing	Small scale experimentation	pp. 138-146
4/1	Seed nurseries/ Tree planting	Intercropping, Land Equivalency Ratios Agroforestry	p.128
4/8	Composting	Integrating livestock Composting	LER calculation pp.128-131
4/18	Prepping beds Planting	Teaching AT	pp.148-166
4/22		FIELD TRIP	
4/29	Drip irrigation	Irrigation Presentations	Projects due
5/6	Solar dryers	Presentations	Projects due
5/13	Harvest measures	Presentations Project monitoring, evaluation, phase-out	Projects due pp. 66-70, pp. 189-192