

# Sustainable Agriculture – Food, Farming, and the Future

## PLSCS 1900 – Syllabus – Fall 2018

Lectures Tuesday and Thursday 10:10 to 11:00 am (101 Bradfield Hall)

Labs Wednesday or Thursday 1:25 to 4:25 pm (135 Emerson Hall)

---

### Contact Information and Office Hours

---

#### Primary Instructor

Matthew Ryan  
Assistant Professor  
[mrr232@cornell.edu](mailto:mrr232@cornell.edu)  
(607) 255-4964  
515 Bradfield Hall  
Available Wed 9-11 am or by appt.

#### Graduate Teaching Assistant

Taylor Cyle  
PhD Candidate  
[ktc35@cornell.edu](mailto:ktc35@cornell.edu)  
(404) 697-4196  
908 Bradfield Hall  
Available Tue 11-12 or by appt.

#### Undergraduate Teaching Assistant

Nina Sannes ([ns749@cornell.edu](mailto:ns749@cornell.edu))

#### Mann Library Support Instructors

Ashley Shea  
Food & Agriculture Librarian  
[ald52@cornell.edu](mailto:ald52@cornell.edu)  
(607) 255-0133  
170 Albert R. Mann Library

Camille Andrews  
Emerging Literacies Librarian  
[ca92@cornell.edu](mailto:ca92@cornell.edu)  
(607) 255-8673  
173 Mann Library

#### Laboratory Assistant

Kathy Howard  
[kch3@cornell.edu](mailto:kch3@cornell.edu)  
(607) 227-0421  
G19 Bradfield Hall

---

### Course Overview

---

An introduction to agriculture and an exploration of the environmental, economic, and social issues that affect sustainability. Students participate in experiential learning activities and discussions about farming and food systems.

#### In this course, you will:

- Visit local farms, talk with famers, and document the management practices and strategies they are using to improve their operations.
- Compare different methods of crop and livestock production in terms of environmental, economic, and social factors.
- Grow cover crops, measure production, and evaluate the costs and potential benefits they provide.
- Examine the food system and quantify differences between purchasing food from farmer markets and grocery stores.
- Create presentations and a short film about sustainable agriculture using videography equipment and software.

**By the end of this course, you will be able to:**

- Define *sustainable agriculture* and explain what the term means.
- Describe the dominant types of agriculture in the region.
- Provide examples of common sustainable management practices.
- Interpret data presented in a variety of formats, including radar and forest plots.
- Identify components of a well-supported, articulate argument.
- Synthesize information from diverse sources and assess accuracy and source credibility.

**Student expectations:**

- Arrive on-time and attend lectures and labs for the full duration
- Participate in class discussions!
- Use course Blackboard for accessing materials and submitting assignments
- Read assigned material before lecture and lab (see Blackboard 'Assignments' folder)
- Report on news at the start of lecture (see instructions below)
- Take notes during field trips, videos, and other lab activities
- Work outside of class and lab periods
- Be creative and thoughtful with assignments
- Turn in assignments on-time; late assignments will lose 10% of their points per day
- Use Qualtrics and other on-line tools for submitting answers and data
- Provide appropriate and constructive feedback to other students
- Be respectful to others and open-minded about new perspectives

**Course grade will be based on:**

- Participation (2%)
- News report (5%)
- Dilmun Hill Assignment (8%)
- Ithaca Farmers Market Assignment (10%)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Cover Crop Assignment (10%)
- Field Trip Assignment (10%)
- Film Festival Assignment (15%)
- Final Exam (20%)

| Score  | Grade |
|--------|-------|
| 98-100 | A+    |
| 94-97  | A     |
| 90-93  | A-    |
| 88-89  | B+    |
| 84-87  | B     |
| 80-83  | B-    |
| 78-79  | C+    |
| 74-77  | C     |
| 70-73  | C-    |
| 68-69  | D+    |
| 64-67  | D     |
| 60-63  | D-    |
| 0-59   | F     |

**Academic integrity:** Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Any fraudulent act by a student to advance his or her academic status merits a severe penalty. A document titled the Code of Academic Integrity is available from the office of the dean of faculty, and at <https://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>.