January 2019

ApEc 5711 - Agricultural and Environmental Policy
(Prerequisites: ApEc 3001 or Econ 3101)

C. Ford Runge
Distinguished McKnight Professor of Applied Economics and Law
Department of Applied Economics
Room 332K Ruttan Hall
612-625-9208 / frunge@umn.edu

Class held in: Room B30 Ruttan Hall
Class day/time: M/W, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Office Hours: M/W, 12:30 – 1:00 p.m. by appointment

Class Summary

This is a topics course which changes from year to year. This year we will consider the relationship between famines and armed conflict. The general supposition (conventional wisdom) is that famines are the result of the forces of nature – floods, droughts, and earthquakes. In fact, the evidence supports the argument that famines result from the actions of man to do harm to others. We will consider a variety of cases including the Irish Famine of the 19th Century, the hunger after the conclusion of World War II, and the Bengal Famine of 1948.

Class Format

The class will be structured around discussion. Each class will have an assigned student discussion leader, whose job it will be to present the main points in the reading for that class. For the first several weeks, we will consider and debate the political economy of famine and armed conflict. Subsequently, students will write reviews of our texts as a basis of evaluation.

Class Objectives

The basic objective is to disentangle the various economic and political factors affecting famine especially in periods of armed conflict. Although a course is applied economics, the learning objective is to understand the politics behind the economics of famines, and the role of man as well as nature in their determination. The essays that form the basis of grading will all involve coming to terms with the balance of political and economic forces in episodes of widespread hunger.

Exams and Grading


All books may be purchased, or they will be available on a 2-hour reserve in Waite Library in Ruttan Hall. *Also*, two of the books, A.K. Sen, *Poverty and Famines*, and Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire*, are available for free by e-book, which will be available to you on the class Canvas site.

Grades will be based on the two in-semester essays (30 percent each) and the take-home final (40 percent).

**Required Policy Statements**

The University of Minnesota requires that syllabi include references to the policies on student conduct; use of personal electronic devices in the classroom; scholastic dishonesty; makeup work for legitimate absences; appropriate student use of class notes and course materials; grading and transcripts; sexual harassment; equity diversity, equal opportunity and affirmative action; disability accommodations; mental health and stress management; and academic freedom and responsibility. Please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/education/syllabusrequirements-appa](http://policy.umn.edu/education/syllabusrequirements-appa)

**Course Calendar**

January 23: Introduction and overview: assignment of class discussion leaders

January 28: Discussion of what we will be reading, its relation to economics

January 30: Discussion of Waal, 184-195

February 4: Discussion of Nunn and Qian, pgs. 593-650

February 6: Discussion of Sen, Chapters 1 and 2

February 11: Discussion of Sen, Chapters 3 and 4

February 13: Discussion of Sen, Chapters 5 and 6

February 18: Discussion of Sen, Chapters 7 and 8

February 20: Discussion of Sen, Chapters 9 and 10

February 25: Discussion of Sen – book review


March 4: Students read their own review essays to class
March 6: Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire*, Preface and Chapter 1; discussion
March 11: Tharoor, Chapters 2 and 3; discussion
March 13: Tharoor, Chapter 4; discussion
March 18-22: SPRING BREAK
March 25: Tharoor, Chapter 5; discussion
March 27: Review of Tharoor to the end of Chapter 4
April 1: Tharoor, Chapter 6
April 3: Tharoor, Chapter 7
April 8: Tharoor, Chapter 8
April 10: Summary discussion of Tharoor
April 17: Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War*, Chapters 1-3; discussion
April 22: Collingham, Chapters 4-6; discussion
April 24: Collingham, Chapters 7-9; discussion
April 29: Collingham, Chapters 10-13; discussion
May 1: Collingham, Chapters 14-16; discussion
May 6: Collingham, Chapters 17-19; discussion

May 14 Final Take Home on Lizzie Collingham due: “A review of Collingham, *The Taste of War.*” Economics or Politics?