1. Course Information

This course emphasizes the diversity of rural people and places in regions in U.S., Colorado, and tribal lands. We apply perspectives from multiple disciplines such as landscape architecture, geography, economics, public health, and sociology to understand critical issues for planning and design in rural, small, and low-density places.

We begin with the history of rural development and demographic change, dealing with issues of regions, globalization, and natural resources as commodities and recreational amenities. Next, we consider both the “state of the art” and “state of practice” in planning for rural, small, and low-density places, including poverty, economic development, tourism, gentrification, segregation, accessibility, and environmental protection. In the final section, we focus on the landscapes, policy issues, and politics at the urban-rural edge and re-think the meaning of the constructs “rural” and “urban” in planning for contemporary regions.

The course is an interactive seminar. We use class sessions to discuss readings, do in-class exercises, review class projects, to engage with one another to develop a deeper understanding of planning and design in rural, small, and low-density places. Assignments exercise skills in reading, writing, quantitative and other forms of analysis, research, and graphical representation of data. One assignment includes fieldwork, and there is one midterm exam.

This is a graduate-level course with no prerequisites. You should be ready to engage with concepts and methods from a variety of disciplines.