

Faculty of Higher Education

Subject Code	FDS852
Subject Name	Transformations in Agriculture: Theory and Practice
Credit points	6
Study Level	Year 1
Delivery mode	On campus
Location	Melbourne
Prerequisites	None

Subject Coordinator
Dr Charles Massy
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Subject Overview	<p>This subject focuses on historical transformations in agriculture, with an emphasis on the emerging shift to agroecology and regenerative agriculture in recent decades. Agroecology, defined as ‘the application of ecological concepts and principles in the design and management of sustainable agroecosystems’ (Altieri, 1999), is widely claimed by many experts and practitioners as a sustainable pathway to feeding a rising human population as we enter the Anthropocene epoch. Students will engage with key texts on agroecology, describe its main dimensions, and compare and contrast agroecological (regenerative) approaches to food production with conventional industrial-productivist approaches. Students will also gain an understanding of how different knowledge cultures and paradigms shape land-use and consumption, and will be expected to gain a level of ecological literacy via studying the “five landscape functions model” (Massy, 2017). In the process, students will examine the capacity for transformation via a study of different regenerative agricultural innovators and their farming systems. The course will have a strong emphasis on excursions to farming operations at different scales.</p>
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Learning Outcomes	Critically analyse the key differences from an ecological, economic, ethical and cultural perspective between various agricultural practices and modes of farming.
	Analyse and assess the concept of ecological literacy through apprehending key elements of the “five landscape functions model” (Massy, 2017).
	Examine the role of humans and non-humans as agents of change in landscapes and food chains over short and long time scales.
	Critically evaluate alternatives to industrial food production, and what implications this has for managing transitions towards sustainable farming systems.
	Apply advanced analytical research and collaborative project skills

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Assessments	Details	Weighting
	Essay	40%
	Group Project	30%
	Reflection	30%

Graduate Attributes addressed in this subject	Preparedness
	Ethical and social understanding
	Systematic and coherent body of knowledge
	Cognitive skills to synthesise and consolidate knowledge
	Scholarly skills
	Interpersonal and Teamwork skills
	Communication skills