

Yale-NUS College

**YID3206 AGRARIAN CHANGE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS**
Semester 1, AY 2016-17
Course Syllabus

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Rural studies remain to be an important area of scholarship in the 21st century. Although the United Nations claim that we are now entering an era of rapid urbanisation, agrarian change and the associated environmental transformations will continue to spark interest among policymakers, academics, activists, and most importantly farmers. For one, rural population is still more than half of the total in South and Southeast Asia, and the circumstances of de-agrarianisation are still debated. More importantly, most of the resources consumed in urban areas are still produced in agrarian spaces and resource frontiers. Food production in rural areas, in particular, is expected to prevail and the pressure to produce biofuels on agrarian lands is ever present. Large tracts of rural lands in the ‘Global South’ are being acquired to ‘create’ new production spaces that cater to the growing consumer demands of wealthier countries (and their cities). Cases of state- and market-driven re-agrarianisation and re-peasantisation are being documented, allegedly in response to these growing resource demands. Meanwhile, agriculture continues to encroach on frontier lands to give way to agri-industrial crops, as evident in the case of massive deforestation in Indonesia and the Amazon. The haze that periodically choke us here in Singapore reminds us of the agrarian changes and environmental transformations happening at immense scales in communities elsewhere. The situation is much worse for those living in the hinterlands, uplands, and frontier lands—the peasants and indigenous farmers—who are vulnerable and directly exposed to the processes of agri-industrialisation.

This module will introduce students to the field of agrarian change and its intersections with environmental transformations. This body of literature draws primarily from critical agrarian studies (political economy and political ecology), with contributions from environmental studies, rural and environmental sociology, environmental history, cultural ecology, and Science, Technology, and Society. The module is organized around interactive lectures and intensive class discussions, with opportunities for students to

participate in an academic conference scheduled in November 2016. The expected learning outcomes for the students are as follows:



- 1) students will be familiar with historical and contemporary social, economic, political and cultural processes involved in agrarian-environmental changes in the lowlands and uplands, including marine and coastal environments. By the end of the semester, they will be knowledgeable of processes like rural-urban migration, de-agrarianisation, land control and exclusion, re-agrarianisation, among others;
- 2) students will be knowledgeable of concepts and theories useful to critically engage agrarian-environmental issues, such as commoditisation and commodification, primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession, territorialisation, conservation enclosures, intimate exclusions, environmental and agrarian governmentality, class differentiation, ethnic formations, gendered agrarian analysis, everyday forms of resistance, social and cultural remittances, co-production, among others;
- 3) students will be capable of drawing from, building on, and critiquing theories and concepts in examining the complexities and nuances of any case of interest in agrarian-environmental change; and
- 4) Lastly, students will have the competence to write pointed critical essays and an academic paper on agrarian change.

Readings:

Most of the readings will be derived from the following texts:

- Bernstein, H. 2010. Class dynamics of agrarian change. Fernwood: Nova Scotia, CA.
- Borras, S.M. Competing views and strategies on agrarian reform: International perspectives. Ateneo de Manila Press: Manila, Philippines.
- Hall, D., Hirsch, P., & Li, T.M., 2011. Powers of exclusion: Land dilemmas in Southeast Asia. NUS Press: Singapore.
- McMichael, P. 2013. Food regimes and agrarian questions. Fernwood: Nova Scotia, CA.
- Scott, J. 2008. The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia. Yale Press: New Haven, CT.
- Scott, J. 1985. Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance. Yale Press: New Haven, CT.
- Van der Ploeg, J.D. 2008. The new peasantries: Struggles for autonomy and sustainability in an era of empire and globalization. Earthscan: New York, NY.

Additional readings will include the following:

- Altieri, M. Agroecology, small farms, and food sovereignty. *Monthly Review*, 61(3), 102-113.
- Baka, J. 2013. The political construction of wasteland: Governmentality, land acquisition and social inequality in South India. *Development and Change*, 44(2), 409-428.
- Borras, S.M., Edelman, M., & Kay, C. 2008. Transnational agrarian movements: origins and politics, campaigns and impact. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 8, 169-204.
- Dressler, W. 2014. Green governmentality and swidden decline on Palawan Island. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39, 250-264.
- Guo, X. 2001. 'It's all a matter of hats': Rural urbanization in South-West China. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 29(1), 109-128.
- Grainer, C., & Sakdapolrak, P. 2013. Rural-urban migration, agrarian change, and the environment in Kenya: a critical review of the literature. *Population and Environment*, 34(4), 524-553.
- Jackson, C. 2003. Gender analysis of land: Beyond land rights for women? *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3(4), 453-480.
- Jaffee, D., & Howard, P.H. Corporate cooptation of organic and fair trade standards. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 27(4), 387-399.
- Li, T.M. 2010. Indigeneity, capitalism, and the management of dispossession. *Current Anthropology*, 51(3), 385-400.
- Montefrio, M.J.F., Ortiga, Y.Y., & Josol, M.R.C. (2014). Inducing development: Social remittances and the expansion of oil palm. *International Migration Review*, 48(1), 216-242.
- Montefrio, M.J.F. 2016. Land control dynamics and socio-ecological transformations in upland Philippines. (revise and resubmit)
- Montefrio, M.J.F. (2016). Cooperation and resistance: Negotiating rubber in upland Philippines. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 46, 111-120.
- Peluso, N.L. 2009. Rubber erasures, rubber producing rights: Making racialized territories in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Development and Change*, 40(1), 47-80.
- Razavi, S. 2009. Engendering the political economy of agrarian change. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 197-226.
- Ribot, J. 2014. Cause and response: vulnerability and climate in the anthropocene. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(5), 667-705.
- Rigg, J. 2006. Land, farming, livelihoods, and poverty: Rethinking the links in the rural south. *World Development*, 34(1), 180-202.
- Scheidel, A., & Sorman, A.H. 2012. Energy transitions and the global land rush: Ultimate drivers and persistent consequences. *Global Environmental Change*, 22, 588-595.
- Sikor, T., & Vi, P.T.T. The dynamics of commoditization in Vietnamese uplands village, 1980-2000. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 5(3), 405-428.
- Taylor, M. 2014. The political ecology of climate change adaptations: Livelihoods, agrarian change and the conflicts of development. Routledge Press: New York.

Assignments and Grading

Class Participation (20%)

Students are expected to read all the assigned material prior to attending classes and to participate in all discussions. As Yale-NUS students, they are expected to not just be passive consumers of information; they are expected to *actively engage* with the readings and discussions. Class participation grade will be based on the contribution students make (i.e. the questions, comments, answers, and feedback given) towards the learning experience of their classmates.

Students will also be asked to lead and facilitate a class discussion. Facilitation does not mean just summarizing the readings and dominating class discussions. Students should assume that everyone has read all assigned articles before coming to class. Facilitation will be graded based on how well students are able to direct and elicit conversations and debates surrounding the main points of the assigned readings. Discussion should focus on the readings, with **minimal** digression to other topics. The use of innovative pedagogical methods is encouraged.

Critical Commentary Essays (35%)

Part of the learning outcomes for the course is for students to learn to critically engage concepts, theories and debates in agrarian and environmental studies. For this assignment, students will be required to write **five (5)** critical commentary essays: **one (1)** practice essay on the assigned readings for Week 3; **three (3)** essays on readings assigned for any of the topics discussed throughout the semester; and **one (1)** essay on any presentation given during the Agrarian and Food Studies Mini-conference. Each commentary essay will be no longer than 500 words and is expected to be pointed and well-argued, demonstrating strong understanding of relevant concepts and theories. Students are encouraged not just to merely use the concepts and theories, but to attempt to critically engage the readings/presentation by identifying gaps and weaknesses, adding nuances and complexity, combining with other concepts and theories, to name a few. The instructor's expectations for this particular requirement are high. Given that, students will be allowed to write additional essays should they wish to get higher marks. More details will be given on the first meeting in Week 1.

A Draft Manuscript (45%)

A draft manuscript is essentially a term paper, but with the added tone of "work in progress" to encourage students to continue working on their preliminary ideas in the future. The paper is an opportunity for students to go deeper into their exploration of particular substantive and theoretical areas discussed in class. Emphasis will be given on meaningful engagement with the literature, concepts, and theories, as they explore particular topics of interest. Essentially, the requirement will ask students to 1) provide an interesting, narrowly defined research question, puzzle, hunch or statement on any topic related to agrarian and environmental change, 2) locate these within a tightly reviewed literature, 3) provide preliminary analysis using evidence, broadly defined, and 4) recommend future directions for future inquiry. The concept paper should be no more than 3500 words. Students will be required to submit a manuscript proposal and an extended outline, which will help them build on their complete draft manuscript. More information will be given in Week 4.

Grading Breakdown

Class Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly participation and attendance @ 10% • Discussion facilitation @ 10% 	20%
500-word critical commentary essays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 practice essay @ 5% (due on Aug 23, Tues) • 3 topical essays @ 7% each (rolling basis) • 1 mini-conference essay @ 9% (due on Nov 21, Mon) 	35%
Draft Manuscript <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-pages manuscript proposal @ 5% (due Sept 9, Fri) • Extended outline @ 10% (due Oct 21, Fri) • Complete draft @ 30% (due Dec 1, Fri) 	45%
TOTAL	100%

Course Policies

The teaching methods used in the course require full participation of students. Attendance is required; it is generally acceptable for a student to miss a class or two, but anything beyond that will reflect badly on the student's participation grade. Every student is also expected to participate fully in each class discussion. Therefore, students are expected to have done a generous reading of the course material ahead of time. They should also be prepared to engage in meaningful debates and conversations with their classmates and instructor. Dominating class discussions will have a negative impact on participation grade. The instructor will send feedback regarding the students' participation in class before the recess break.

The critical commentary essays, manuscript proposal, extended outline, and draft manuscript must be submitted electronically as an MS Word document via Canvas on the day they are due. Late assignments lose 5 percentage points for each day. Meaning, an assignment graded '90' at the outset will be marked down to '80' if submitted two days after the deadline. Critical essays will not be accepted if submitted after a class session.

Students must do the class facilitation on the day they are assigned. A score of zero will be given if a student is not prepared to do the facilitation on their assigned day. If they have a valid excuse (e.g. unavoidable work- or family-related conflict in schedule), students need to contact their instructor ASAP to discuss possible resolutions.

Other class policies (e.g. use of technology and proper decorum in class) will be negotiated on the first day.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic honesty is essential in upholding the integrity of knowledge production. Just as their instructors and academic mentors, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. Students should note that anything submitted for this class is expected to represent *original* work. Moreover, a work submitted for another class (either in part or whole) will not be accepted. If a student wishes to build on from previous work, he/she should make an arrangement to discuss the matter with the instructor. Proper citation and

referencing are expected. For this modules, students are required to use the APA format (see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for reference). It is the responsibility of the student to refer to the Yale-NUS College Handbook of Academic Integrity and the websites below if they are unclear of what constitutes academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

College policies on academic integrity:

<https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/policies/academic-integrity/>

Yale-NUS library information on plagiarism:

<http://library.yale-nus.edu.sg/plagiarism/>

The policies of the college require instructors to refer any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Integrity Committee for assessment and adjudication. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will lead to a course grade of F and other disciplinary actions.

Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignment

Date	Topic/Assignment
Week 1	
Aug 12 (Fri)	<p>Course Overview and Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Why study agrarian change today? • The ‘political economy’ traditions of studying agrarian change <p><u>Information on critical commentary essays to be given</u></p>
Week 2	The instructor will be on ‘paternal’ leave the whole week. A make-up class will be scheduled in November, while the other class will be in lieu of attendance to the Agrarian and Food Studies Mini-Conference on November 10, 2016.
Week 3	Historical Conditions
Aug 23 (Tues)	<p>Capitalism and Colonialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agrarian progression from early capitalism to colonial period <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Bernstein, H. 2010. <u>Class dynamics of agrarian change</u>. Fernwood: Nova Scotia, CA. Introduction and Chapters 2 and 3. McMichael, P. 2013. <u>Food regimes and agrarian questions</u>. Fernwood: Nova Scotia, CA. Chapter 2.</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Practice commentary essay</p>
Aug 26 (Fri)	<p>Neoliberalisation and Globalisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agrarian progression from colonial period to developmentalist era and to the neoliberal period <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Bernstein, H. 2010. <u>Class dynamics of agrarian change</u>. Fernwood: Nova</p>

	<p>Scotia, CA. Introduction and Chapters 4 and 5. McMichael, P. 2013. <u>Food regimes and agrarian questions</u>. Fernwood: Nova Scotia, CA. Chapter 3.</p>
Week 4	Broader Agrarian Transitions
Aug 30 (Tues)	<p>De-agrarianisation and Rural Urbanisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General tendencies for urbanisation of agrarian spaces • The case of rural urbanisation in China <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Guo, X. 2001. 'It's all a matter of hats': Rural urbanisation in South-West China. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, 29(1), 109-128. Rigg, J. 2006. Land, farming, livelihoods, and poverty: Rethinking the links in the rural south. <i>World Development</i>, 34(1), 180-202.</p> <p><u>Supplementary:</u> Zhan, S. 2015. From local state corporatism to land revenue regime: Urbanization and the recent transition of rural industry in China. <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 15(3), 413-432.</p>
Sep 2 (Fri)	<p>21st Century Land Grabbing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global land grabbing as a new form of land accumulation • The global land rush as driven by neoliberal globalisation <p><u>Required Readings:</u> http://www.circleofblue.org/LAND.html Borras, S.M., Franco, J.C. 2012. Global land grabbing and trajectories of agrarian change: A preliminary analysis. <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 12(1), 34-59. Zoomers, A. 2010. Globalisation and the foreignisation of space: seven processes driving the current global land grab. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, 37(2), 429-447.</p> <p><u>Information on draft manuscript requirements to be given</u></p>
Week 5	Theory Part 1: From Markets to States to New Networks
Sep 6 (Tues)	<p>Markets and Commoditisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commodity markets and their role in agrarian change. • Commodity potential and the process of commoditisation <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Nevins, J., Peluso, N.L. 2008. <u>Taking Southeast Asia to market: commodities, nature, and people in the neoliberal age</u>. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. Chapter 1 and 9. Manno, J. 2010. Introduction to the special issue on commoditization. <i>Bulletin of Science, Technology, and Society</i>, 32(3), 3-6.</p>

	<p><u>Supplementary:</u> Montefrio, M.J.F. 2013. Privileged biofuels, marginalized indigenous peoples: The coevolution of biofuels development in the tropics. <i>Bulletin of Science, Technology, and Society</i>, 32(1), 41-55.</p>
Sep 9 (Fri)	<p>State Territorialisation and Enclosures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State or internal territorialisation and the practice of enclosures • Role of territorialisation in agricultural expansion <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Vandergeest, P., Peluso, N. 1995. Territorialisation and state power in Thailand. <i>Theory and Society</i>, 24 (3), 385–426. Brad, A., Schaffartzik, A., Pichler, M., Plank, C. 2015. Contested territorialisation and biophysical expansion of oil palm plantations in Indonesia. <i>Geoforum</i>, 64, 100-111.</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Manuscript proposal</p>
Week 6	Theory Part 2: Overt vs. Diffused Power
Sep 13 (Tues)	<p>Violence and Militarisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence and threats of violence <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Peluso, N.L., & Watts, M. 2001. <i>Violent environments</i>. Cornell Press: Ithaca, NY. Chapter on violence and shrimp farming. Woods, K. 2011. Ceasefire capitalism: military-private partnerships, resource concessions and military-state building in the Burma-China borderlands. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, 38(4), 747-770.</p>
Sep 16 (Fri)	<p>Governmentality and Subject Formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foucault's governmentality and the production of environmental and agrarian subjects <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Baka, J. 2013. The political construction of wasteland: Governmentality, land acquisition and social inequality in South India. <i>Development and Change</i>, 44(2), 409-428. Dressler, W. 2014. Green governmentality and swidden decline on Palawan Island. <i>Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers</i>, 39, 250-264.</p>
Sep 17 - 25	RECESS WEEK
Week 7	Theory Part 3: Refocusing on Farmer Maneuvers
Sep 27 (Tues)	<p>State Evasion and State Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agriculture of escape and keeping the state from a distance

	<p><u>Required Readings:</u> Scott, J. 2008. <u>The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia</u>. Yale Press: New Haven, CT. Chapters 5&6</p>
Sep 30 (Fri)	<p>The Role of Smallholder Farmers in Exclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallholders as agents of the powers of exclusion • Intimate exclusions <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Hall, D., Hirsch, P., & Li, T.M. 2011. <u>Powers of exclusion: Land dilemmas in Southeast Asia</u>. NUS Press: Singapore. Chapters 1 and 6.</p>
Week 8	Theory Part 4: Social Identity Dynamics
Oct 4 (Tues)	<p>Class and Agrarian Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class formation and differentiation in rural areas <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Bernstein, H. 2010. <u>Class dynamics of agrarian change</u>. Fernwood: Nova Scotia, CA. Chapters 7 and 8. Sikor, T., Vi, P.T.T. The dynamics of commoditization in Vietnamese uplands village, 1980-2000. <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 5(3), 405-428.</p>
Oct 7 (Fri)	<p>Gender and Agrarian Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions of feminist scholars to agrarian studies • Gender analysis of land <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Jackson, C. 2003. Gender analysis of land: Beyond land rights for women? <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 3(4), 453-480. Razavi, S. 2009. Engendering the political economy of agrarian change. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, 36(1), 197-226.</p>
Make-up class to be scheduled	<p>Ethnicity, Race, and Agrarian Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic dynamics in relation to land control • Complicating “indigeneity” and collective land tenure regimes <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Peluso, N.L. 2009. Rubber erasures, rubber producing rights: Making racialized territories in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. <i>Development and Change</i>, 40(1), 47-80. Li, T.M. 2010. Indigeneity, capitalism, and the management of dispossession. <i>Current Anthropology</i>, 51(3), 385-400.</p>
Week 9	Complexities of Agrarian Change
Oct 11 (Tues)	<p>Migration of Farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and international migration of smallholder farmers and the development and land-use implications in sending communities

	<p><u>Required Readings:</u> Grainer, C., Sakdapolrak, P. 2013. Rural-urban migration, agrarian change, and the environment in Kenya: a critical review of the literature. <i>Population and Environment</i>, 34(4), 524-553. Montefrio, M.J.F., Ortega, Y.Y., & Josol, M.R.C. (2014). Inducing development: Social remittances and the expansion of oil palm. <i>International Migration Review</i>, 48(1), 216-242.</p>
Oct 14 (Fri)	<p>Re-agrarianisation and Re-peasantisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is de-agrarianisation inevitable? • The manifestations of re-agrarianisation and re-peasantisation in today's agrarian complex <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Van der Ploeg, J.D. 2008. <u>The new peasantries: Struggles for autonomy and sustainability in an era of empire and globalization</u>. Earthscan: New York, NY. Chapter 3. TBD</p>
Week 10	Environmental Change
Oct 18 (Tues)	<p>Environmental Change as Driver?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly, agrarian change has environmental implications. But how does environmental change influence agrarian dynamics? <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Montefrio, M.J.F. 2016. Land control dynamics and socio-ecological transformations in upland Philippines. (revise and resubmit) Scheidel, A., Sorman, A.H. 2012. Energy transitions and the global land rush: Ultimate drivers and persistent consequences. <i>Global Environmental Change</i>, 22, 588-595.</p>
Oct 21 (Fri)	<p>The Case of Climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and agrarian dynamics <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Ribot, J. 2014. Cause and response: vulnerability and climate in the anthropocene. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i>, 41(5), 667-705. Taylor, M. 2014. <u>The political ecology of climate change adaptations: Livelihoods, agrarian change and the conflicts of development</u>. Routledge Press: New York. Chater 4 or 5 (to be confirmed)</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Extended outline of manuscript</p>
Week 11	Resistance and Reform
Oct 25 (Tues)	<p>Movements and Resistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political mobilization of peasants • Everyday forms of peasant resistance

	<p><u>Required Readings:</u> Borras, S.M., Edelman, M., Kay, C. 2008. Transnational agrarian movements: origins and politics, campaigns and impact. <i>Journal of Agrarian Change</i>, 8, 169-204. Scott, J. 1985. <u>Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance</u>. Yale Press: New Haven, CT.</p> <p><u>Supplemental:</u> Montefrio, M.J.F. (2016). Cooperation and resistance: Negotiating rubber in upland Philippines. <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i>, 46, 111-120.</p>
Oct 28 (Fri)	<p>Agrarian Reform</p> <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Borras, S.M. <u>Competing views and strategies on agrarian reform: International perspectives</u>. Ateneo de Manila Press: Manila, Philippines.</p>
Week 12	
Nov 1 (Tues)	<p>“Alternative” Agriculture Movements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agroecology and food sovereignty movement <p><u>Required Readings:</u> Altieri, M. Agroecology, small farms, and food sovereignty. <i>Monthly Review</i>, 61(3), 102-113. Jaffee, D., Howard, P.H. Corporate cooptation of organic and fair trade standards. <i>Agriculture and Human Values</i>, 27(4), 387-399.</p>
Nov 4 (Fri)	<p>New Directions in Agrarian Studies 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions of Science, Technology, and Society <p><u>Required Readings:</u> TBD</p>
Week 13	
Nov 8 (Tues)	<p>New Directions in Agrarian Studies 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible contributions of cultural politics <p><u>Required Readings:</u> TBD</p>
Nov 10 (Thurs)	<p>Agrarian and Food Studies Mini-Conference</p>
Nov 11 (Fri)	<p>Wrap-up and Synthesis</p>

Nov 14 - 18	READING WEEK
Nov 21 - Dec 3	<u>Due on November 21 (Mon):</u> Mini-conference essay <u>Due on November 30 (Wed):</u> Complete draft manuscript