

Rutgers graduate planning studio on the American frontier, 14:970:511:01, which meets Tuesday, 1:10-3:50, in CSB, Room 243.

Instructor is Frank J. Popper, Civic Square Building, College Avenue Campus, fpopper@rutgers.edu, fpopper@princeton.edu, 848-932-2790. My website is [policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper](http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper), where you can find more copies of this syllabus.

The studio explores the modern American frontier and some of its many planning issues. The course's early sessions will look at the idea of the contemporary US frontier, a concept that I and my wife Deborah Popper, a geographer (Rutgers MA, 1987, PhD, 1992) at Princeton University, helped develop starting in the early 1980s. She's retired from the College of Staten Island/City University of New York. She may come to some class meetings.

The frontier idea links to but is separate from our joint work on the Great Plains' Buffalo Commons. The Great Plains/Buffalo Commons is Exhibit A of the modern frontier and especially its expansion. The ongoing enlargement comes as a surprise to many. I will send you Deborah's and my pieces about the frontier.

The seminar's work on the frontier will cover not just the Plains and the American West, but also such Eastern frontier places as northern New England, the upper Midwest, the South, and Appalachia.

Later sessions, beginning in early February, will work with the studio's client, the National Center for Frontier Communities, [frontierus.org](http://frontierus.org). NCFC is a New Mexico-based group that is the only national one focused on researching and advocating for the frontier, especially its small, isolated, politically underrepresented, often poor communities that, surprise, are losing population too.

Deborah and I are on its board. In 1997 Carol Miller founded it as the Frontier Education Center and was its executive director until 2011. Charlie Alfero succeeded her when it became part of the Center for Health Innovation, a division of Hidalgo Medical Services of New Mexico, an large impressive four-county community health center he runs in southwest New Mexico, headquartered in Silver City. Carol remains on the NCFC board.

Much of the group's work has always focused on health issues and Carol, a long-time New Mexico public figure, helped get serious frontier funding provisions put in the 2009 Obamacare legislation, but the group has long wanted to do more in related fields like food, economic development, and transportation. The class will discuss the possibilities with the group, probably by Skype. Deborah and I will go to the annual NCFC board meeting in Silver City in February and talk about the options with the full board.

To help class communications, I've set up a closed Facebook group, "Studio, American frontier, 2015, Popper," which you should join. Please note that this is the Facebook group from last year's frontier studio. I have left the group in place because lot of interesting and pertinent entries emerged on it, and you should look at them.

Other NCFC names in the Facebook group are Caroline Ford, the NCFC's board chair, recently retired from the University of Nevada-Reno's Medical School and a former long-serving head of the state's Office of Rural Health; Susan Wilger, the Center's director of projects, who will be our primary liaison with the Center; and Ben Rasmussen, who works with Susan.

Non-NCFCers in the Facebook group are Tim Evans, a Bloustein MCRP who is director of research at New Jersey Future; Joe Hagy, a retired University of Oklahoma System geographer and administrator; and Robert Lang, a Rutgers sociology PhD now at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and the Brookings Institution. All know about the frontier from different interesting angles. I will get everyone everyone else's contact information.

I'm in CSB, Room 356, 848-932-2790, [fpopper@rutgers.edu](mailto:fpopper@rutgers.edu), [fpopper@princeton.edu](mailto:fpopper@princeton.edu). My office hours are Thursday mornings, but I'm in my office more often than that. I'm not there on Wednesdays, when Deborah and I teach at Princeton. My website is [policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper](http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper), where more copies of this syllabus are available.

You should attend all classes. If you must miss one, please let me know.