Course description

This course examines dimensions of food systems sustainability and food security, from production to consumption, from local to global scales, in the global north and south. Specific themes covered in the course include resource depletion and wider environmental impacts of the industrial food system, technological and genetic change in food production, and policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to bring about change in the food system, including organic production and localizing food systems.

This course is recognized as a PACS Content Course that fulfills requirements in the interdisciplinary Peace and Conflict Studies plan. For information about doing a PACS concentration (Major, Minor or Option) visit: http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/undergrad/pacs/plans.shtml.

Intended learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you should be able critically analyze and explain
1. some of the key political, economic, social, and environmental challenges to food system sustainability at global and local scales
2. some key policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to improve food system sustainability

The course also develops your familiarity with academic literature in food studies and geographies of food.

Required readings

Required readings (outlined in the course schedule below) are available via the internet or e-Reserve. One short book will be required and is available for purchase in the bookstore.

Creating a positive learning environment: Mutual expectations

What you can expect of me, and the course format: Your learning is my priority, and I recognize that teaching does not necessarily imply learning. To cater to diverse learning styles, my course exposes you to ideas in different formats (readings, seminar discussions, lectures, videos, real world experience from guest speakers) and encourages you to engage with the material through reflective writing, class presentations, interaction with peers and the instructor, and a research project.
I welcome your participation, comments, and questions, since I believe that your participation contributes to a much more interesting class and valuable learning experience for all. My teaching style is interactive. At some points I will lecture, in order to provide background information and concepts that I think are important for developing effective knowledge of development processes. Complementing this, however, most classes will engage you in large or small group discussions.

**What I expect of you:** You are expected to arrive on time, attend all classes, and invest on average 8-10 hours per week in this course, in and outside of class. Since class discussions and assignments will require you to apply information obtained from the readings, you are expected to complete the assigned readings, and to participate actively and consistently in class. (I recognize that not everyone will feel comfortable speaking out in a large seminar class, but you can make up for this by participating actively in small group discussions when appropriate.)

You are expected to leave your laptop off during class unless you need to access to course materials. Checking email, browsing web sites, internet chatting, etc. during class time is disruptive and will not be permitted. Please also mute your mobile phone before class.

**Course schedule, content, and readings**
The format for our seminar classes will usually be student presentations, discussion of weekly readings, and instructor-led presentations on Tuesdays, and a guest speaker or video and subsequent small- and large-group discussion on Thursdays.

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**Week 1 (Jan 7/9) Course introduction: Crises in the food system**

1. Read syllabus and potential projects list, and review resources posted on Learn (course website).
2. Post a bio/intro about yourself on the Learn discussion board, tell us what one of your favourite foods is, and comment on your interests related to this course (e.g., are you more interested in the cultural, economic, political, or environmental aspects of food systems, or all of these? Why?).
3. Before Jan 14, indicate your interest on Learn in one or more potential research project topics.

**Jan 9:** Guest speaker: Lexi Salt, Ontario Campus Food Systems Project: Building Local and Sustainable Food Systems at UW

**Week 2 (Jan 14/16) Bringing it home: Food system context & sustainability in Waterloo Region**

Baker, Lauren. 2010. *Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario*. Toronto: Metcalf Foundation. [Executive Summary & Appendix 1; skim over 2-3 ideas that you feel could be most relevant to your potential research project]


**Jan 13:** First reading log due

**Jan 16:** Guest speaker - TBC: Michelle Coyne (Second Harvest, Toronto): Food waste: Broad-based solutions

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**Week 3 (Jan 21/23) The high cost of cheap food**


**Jan 21:** Meeting with Steffanie & Jenelle re. proposal for term projects

**Jan 23:** Information Literacy session: Sarah Brown (Librarian Liaison)
Week 4 (Jan 28/30) Food sovereignty, overcoming hunger, and the food movement

Jan 28: Doing community-based and participatory research & How to do advocacy
Jan 30: Video: Food Fight: A Story Of Culinary Revolt

Jan 28: Research proposal due

Week 5 (Feb 4/6) Energy, food-fuel debates, and optimizing food systems
Tara Garnett. 2011. “Where are the best opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the food system (including the food chain)?” Food Policy, 36(Supplement 1): S23-S32.

Guest speaker - TBC: Theresa Schumilas: rural-urban connections for food justice & farm viability

Week 6 (Feb 11/13) Rethinking food security


Local government roles in rebuilding sustainable local food systems

Donald, B. 2009. “From Kraft to Craft: innovation and creativity in Ontario's Food Economy.” Working paper published by the Martin Prosperity Institute, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.


Video: Short version of: King Corn: You Are What You Eat (2007, 50’)

Feb 13: Draft interview/survey questions for research ethics review due

READING WEEK: no classes on Feb 18/20

Week 7 (Feb 25/27) Food quality certification
Suh, Jeongwook and Alan MacPherson. 2007. “The impact of geographical indication on the revitalisation of a


**Feb 27:** Guest speaker - TBC: Erin Nelson (postdoctoral fellow, School of Environmental Design & Rural Development, University of Guelph): Sustainable food systems in Latin America: contrasting the conventional model with sustainable alternatives

*Begin data collection for research project*

**Week 8 (Mar 4/6) Seeds, biodiversity, agricultural research, and GMOs**


**Mar 4:** Guest speaker - TBC: Bob Wildfong (Seeds of Diversity): Seed genetic diversity and pollination sustainability within our food system

**Week 9 (Mar 11/13) Social justice in local food systems: seasonal agricultural workers**


**Guest speaker/video:** Placing migrant farmworkers in local/ethical food systems

**Mar 11:** Meetings with Steffanie & Jenelle re. your research projects

**Week 10 (Mar 18/20) Food service providers and institutional procurement**


**Mar 18:** Guest speaker - TBC: Taarini Chopra / Ellen Desjardins / Angie Koch

**Week 11 (Mar 25/27) Research project presentations**

**Week 12 (Apr 1/3) Research project presentations**
Assignments and deadlines

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date indicated.

20% • Weekly responses (due on Learn by 11:59pm on Monday each week)
10% • Op-ed or policy brief
  -- • Meeting with instructor re. proposal for research project – Jan 21
5% • Proposal for research project (hard copy & on Learn) – 4pm on Jan 28
  -- • Research ethics review application (list of potential respondents & tentative list of interview or survey questions) (hard copy & on Learn) – Feb 13
  -- • Week of Feb 24 (Week 7) – start data collection for research project
  -- • Meeting with instructor re. research project progress – Mar 11
10% • Presentation of research project – Weeks 11 & 12
35% • Research project report (hard copy & on Learn) – 4pm on Apr 4
  -- • Group self-assessment for research project group (due Apr 7)
20% • Final exam (during exam period)

Weekly reading logs

To reinforce the linkages between the course learning outcomes and the weekly readings, each week you are required to submit three comments, criticisms, or questions on the current week’s readings and one comment, criticism or question on the class content (video, guest speaker or student presentations) from the previous week. These four points (please number them) should be about two-thirds of a page of text (275-325 words) in total. They are to be submitted on Learn by 11:59pm on Monday of each week, starting in Week 2. Late submissions will not be accepted.

For your three comments/criticisms/questions on the readings, do not merely summarize points raised by the authors, but instead address the implications of these points. In at least some of your comments, try to engage with the key arguments that the authors are making, rather than focusing on minor details. As a suggestion, discuss first what information, ideas, or content in the readings you found helpful or useful to your thinking about food system issues, and in what way? (Did the readings provide new information or concepts that made you think about these issues in a different way? Or did they reinforce your thinking on that topic? How did they relate to issues covered in earlier weeks of this course?) Second, what information, ideas or content in the readings did you disagree with or take issue with, and why? These responses are assessed based on the quality and depth of your engagement (thoughtful, constructive, creative) with the authors’ main arguments and their implications. When there are more than one reading assigned each week, be sure to provide at least one comment on each reading.

Op-ed piece (newspaper editorial) or policy brief

In order to enhance your knowledge about specific debates about food system issues, you are asked to complete an op-ed piece that could hypothetically be submitted to a newspaper’s editorial section. Detailed guidelines for this 750-word piece are provided on Learn.

Guidelines for the policy brief option are also on Learn.

The research project

For the term project, you are asked to define, describe, and analyze a problem relevant to issues raised in the course, and an initiative to address the problem. The research project encourages you to pursue in-depth knowledge and understanding of that topic, but it is also an exercise of documentary and original research, analysis, synthesis, argumentation, and communication. You are encouraged to work in groups of three to
complete the research project. A selection of research topics is provided for you to choose from, but if you feel strongly about pursuing a topic not covered in the list, see me to discuss this.

The length of the final report should be about 2500-3500 words per group member, but the report should be compiled as a collective report by the group (like the format for a journal article). The marking rubric, listing specific points for evaluation, is on Learn. Include copies of your introduction letters and consent forms (for research ethics) in an appendix with your final research reports. Your final project should include a literature review section (give it a thematic name, such as ‘indigenous food security and sovereignty’), which reviews at least five sources times the number of group members. This section should be written in an integrated and coherent fashion, not as separate annotations. The report structure is flexible, but typically includes an introduction, lit review, and methods section, followed by a presentation and discussion of findings, and conclusion.

**Written proposal for research project**

Each project team will meet with the instructor and/or TA twice during the term for about 10 minutes to discuss their proposal and research progress. A few days after the first meeting, your team will submit in writing a proposal of your research project. This should include the following:

- A tentative title
- A couple of paragraphs situating the topic in terms of global food system concerns. In writing this, use standard citations, as you would for a term paper
- A short contextualization of the topic in terms of global food system concerns. A good way to do this could be to link the topic to issues raised within the 21 articles that comprise “Food Security: Feeding the world in 2050,” a special issue from 2010 of *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* available at [http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/365/1554.toc](http://rstb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/365/1554.toc).
- A clear statement of the research question to be explored
- An explanation of the sources of original data to be used and/or methods used to gather the data. For example, interviews or a survey (with what kind of respondents?); existing databases of statistics (from where; what kind of statistical data will you use?)
- A tentative structure of the research report, with clear titles for headings and sub-headings, and a short paragraph describing the purpose and content of each heading
- A preliminary list of at least eight references. Include at least some peer-reviewed publications; this can be combined with NGO/government/business reports. Include at least two sources from the ‘additional readings’ list provided on Learn.

**Research ethics review application**

The University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty that involves humans as participants (e.g., through interviews or surveys) to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics. The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office’s Guidelines for Research with Human Participants as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures that are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.). See [http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/human/](http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/human/) for more information.

Each group must submit a list of potential research participants and tentative interview or survey questions for your proposed study. I will provide you with templates of letters of introduction and written consent forms. If recruitment and the interview are conducted via phone, verbal consent can be obtained. You should record the date and time of consent in your notes. Making audio recordings of phone conversations must be done with the participants’ knowledge and consent. Digital audio recorders can be borrowed from the Dept of Geography.
Presentation of term project

Each team will make a 15-minute presentation of their research project during the final two weeks of class. Feedback from the class will be encouraged to enable the group to improve their analysis before submitting the final written version.

Do all of the team members have to participate in the presentation? This is up to each group to decide. When you complete your group process self-evaluations, you can include members’ contributions to the presentation preparation and delivery as well as the final report. If you have concerns about uneven contributions by group members, this will hopefully be addressed through the group self-evaluations.

Strongly recommended sources on writing skills

For this and other undergraduate geography courses, you are expected to have a high level of writing competency. To further hone your skills, I strongly recommend the two sources below to all students.

*Writing Effective Essays and Reports*, by Rob de Loe (free online resource):
http://www.environment.uwaterloo.ca/u/rdeloe/writing_booklet/

Improve your grammar (free online resource): www.grammarbook.com

Two of my pet peeves are the use of term ‘the locals’ (in place of ‘local people’) and the incorrect use of ‘however’, as in the following sentence: “You have found good sources to draw on, however, they were not referenced properly.” (It should be broken into two sentences.)

I suggest you review the sources above for tips on addressing grammar issues such as this one, as well as many other helpful hints to improve your writing—and your grades.

Submission of assignments

By submitting an assignment for this course, you are agreeing to the following:

- You have properly referenced and footnoted all ideas, words or other intellectual property from other sources used in the completion of this assignment.
- You have included a proper bibliography, which includes acknowledgement of all sources used to complete this assignment.
- The assignment was completed by your own efforts. You did not collaborate with any other person for ideas or answers (with the exception of group projects)
- This is the first time you have submitted this assignment or essay (either partially or entirely) for academic evaluation.

**Turnitin:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course for proper citation, referencing and instances of plagiarism. This is being done both as an educational activity for you and to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. You will be able to submit your assignments to Turnitin multiple times so that you can see how the software has analyzed your writing, and so that you can make adjustments if portions of your text are flagged as being problematic. If you have objections to having your work submitted to Turnitin, please inform me by Jan 17 to discuss alternative arrangements.

**Academic Integrity & Plagiarism:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Please familiarize yourself with the University of Waterloo’s policy dealing with plagiarism. Be especially careful when using materials obtained from the internet, and be aware that software available to instructors can be used to check student submissions for plagiarism (e.g. www.Turnitin.com). Plagiarism offices are treated seriously by the University and can result in significant penalties being assessed (e.g. failing grade on an assignment, repeating a course, suspension or expulsion).

Definition of Plagiarism: “The act of presenting the ideas, words or other intellectual property of another as one's own.” Source: University of Waterloo, Policy 71.
To Avoid Plagiarism: The use of other people's work must be properly acknowledged and referenced in all written material such as take-home examinations, essays, laboratory reports, work-term reports, design projects, statistical data, computer programs and research results. The properly acknowledged use of sources is an accepted and important part of scholarship. Use of such material without complete and unambiguous acknowledgement, however, is an offence under policy 71.

Please visit the on-line tutorial at http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/. See ‘Check your understanding’ to learn more about what constitutes an academic offence.

Late policy: You are expected to take account of the possibility of computer or printer failure in planning your time. Emailed or faxed assignments will not be accepted. The penalty for late assignments is 5% of the total possible mark per day, including weekends and holidays. I will not accept assignments more than 5 days after the due date unless we have a prior arrangement.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement Due to Illness or Other Reasons: There will be no unpenalized extensions on assignments except for illness, severe personal extenuating circumstances, or weather emergencies. When you find yourself unable to meet a course requirement because of medical, compassionate or other reasons, please advise me in writing by LEARN email; make sure to include your full name in your message. Where possible, you must contact the instructor in advance of the assignment due date, but otherwise as soon as possible after the due date. As a rule, you must provide appropriate documentation, for example, a note from your doctor indicating the dates during which you were ill, and describing the severity of your illness. Manage your time carefully. Pressure of work alone is not an acceptable reason for seeking an extension without penalty.

Information for Students Using Waterloo Learn (course website for Geog 203): Waterloo Learn is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (posting of lecture notes etc.), interact with their students (drop boxes for student submissions, on-line quizzes, discussion boards, course e-mail etc.), and provide feedback (grades, assignment comments etc.).

Logging Into Waterloo Learn: Users can login to Learn via: http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/. Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password. If you still cannot get on after checking your password, please confirm with your instructor that you are on the class roster. Getting Help: A D2L student guide can be found at: http://av.uwaterloo.ca/uwace/training_documentation/student_index.html

Missed tests

The mid-term test is mandatory, and thus, every effort should be made to attend. The only exceptions to this are those students who have a valid medical reason, personal or family emergency, etc.:

- Valid medical reason such as illness or accident (appropriate proof such as a Doctor’s note is required);
- Significant personal or family emergency, death in the family, etc. (with suitable proof where possible);
- Other valid reasons beyond the control of the student (to be approved on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the instructor). If you know in advance that you will not be able to make a test, please contact the instructor as far in advance as possible to discuss alternatives.

If you miss a test for any reason:

1. Communicate to the instructor the reason you missed the test.
2. IMPORTANT! As soon as possible, please obtain a valid medical, counselor’s or other ‘proof of absence’ note explaining the reason for your absence, degree of incapacitation, dates covered by the note, etc. Please make a copy of this note and give the copy to your instructor by hand or scan and sent this by email (email to sdscott@uwaterloo.ca).
3. Due to the time consuming nature of creating a make up test, tests can only be written on the day originally scheduled. Do NOT assume a make up test is possible.

If you miss a test but do NOT have a doctor’s/counselor’s note or other valid explanation for your absence, explain the reason for your absence to the instructor (ideally during office hours or by email). The instructor will determine on a case-by-case basis whether an alternative arrangement can be made, or whether to assign a ‘zero’ on the test.
Email policy
If you’d like to contact me outside of my scheduled office hours, please direct all course-related questions to me by email, putting Geog 461 in the subject line. I will respond to your emails as promptly as possible. However, please be advised that I usually receive 50 or more emails per day that require a response. Therefore, it may take me a day or two to reply to your message. When sending an email, it is courteous to include your name at the bottom of the email, and to address me as Steffanie or Dr Scott, rather than “Hey prof”.

Note that email is the official channel of communication between the University and its students. You are required to check your uwaterloo.ca email account regularly; I recommend that you check for course-related emails at least twice a week. If you use another email service (e.g., gmail), it is your responsibility to ensure that mail sent to your uwaterloo.ca account is forwarded to your other account.

University policies
Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in Quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW’s confidential shredding procedures.

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious Observances: Student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. Within ENV, those committing academic offences (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) will be placed on disciplinary probation and will be subject to penalties that may include a grade of 0 on affected course elements, 0 on the course, suspension, and expulsion.

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm