

Global Food and Agricultural Politics

ERS 462/GEOG462/PSCI488 – Syllabus

Fall 2019

Course Instructor: Phoebe Stephens, PhD Candidate, SERS

Class Time and Location: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 – 2:20 p.m. EV1 350

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Office: EV1-244B

Email: p2stephe@uwaterloo.ca

Calendar Description: This course examines the global food and agriculture system. Food and agriculture politics shape our daily lives and there is lively debate about how the production, distribution, and consumption of food should be organized. This course explores these debates with a specific focus on political and governance issues related to global food corporations, the Green Revolution, food aid, agricultural trade liberalization, international agricultural assistance, the global agro-chemical industry, and agricultural biotechnology. Finally, as a student, this course will help you build and improve your skills in academic research, critical thinking and writing, presentation skills as well as your intellectual practices.

Aims and Goals: By the end of the class you will have an understanding of the historical context of the industrial food system, and a deeper understanding of the major issue-areas of food politics through the lens of Global Political Economy. More specifically, students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the history of the industrialization of food and agriculture;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the main features of the issues and actors in global food politics from production to consumption;
3. Identify the main features and scales of food security and food sovereignty and explain how they are changing with reference to global politics and governance processes;
4. Assess the significance of global actors, and their impacts within specific issue-areas

Introduction: We will examine the various mechanisms that gave rise to our globalized food system and their impact on food security, the environment and farmers' livelihoods around the world. The current debate over how best to produce and distribute food is highly contested. Some actors argue that feeding the world sustainably will require more scientific and technical interventions in farming, and trade. Others point to alternative agricultural systems on a small and more local scale, which, they argue, are sufficient to meet the world's food needs and foster equity and justice in the food system. We will explore these debates in detail and come to understand well the roles of various actors shaping the food system, including states, corporations, philanthropies, multilateral institutions and social movements.

The course occurs twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Tuesday's class will be devoted to lecture and films. Thursday's class will be more participatory in nature, similar to a tutorial and will be divided into two sections of 45 minutes each. Students will sign up for a section at the beginning of term and will attend that section for the following classes.

Mark Distribution:

Weekly Summaries: 20%

Discussant: 15%
Participation: 10%
Test: 20%
Book Review: 30%
Peer Review: 5%

Description of course assessments

Weekly Summaries: You are expected to write 5 summaries of weekly readings of your choice. The summary for week 2 is mandatory, but may choose the others. In total, you have 10 weeks to choose from. You will retain your top 4 marks, the bottom mark will be dropped.

A weekly summary involves outlining the following components for each article or chapter assigned for that week's readings.

1. A list of key concepts and terms with definitions (five to seven in total).
2. A summary of the author's main argument(s) (four sentences maximum) stated in your own words (for each reading that week).
3. One or two questions total (or a comment) about the readings that can prompt or spark a discussion.

The weekly summaries are intended to help students understand the readings well. Critical analysis of the readings will follow in class during discussions. **The weekly summary must be submitted on LEARN (to the appropriate dropbox) by Wednesday evening (11:59 p.m.) prior to Thursday's class.** Late submissions will not be credited. Students should also bring their summaries to class.

Discussants: Each week two students will have the opportunity to act as discussants in the Thursday tutorial. This means that they will summarize and synthesize the readings and run a discussion with their peers. Discussants will have 15 minutes max to briefly summarize the readings' main messages and their contribution. This may involve describing unique aspects of the papers, simplifying any technical elements of the papers and asking provocative questions to spark discussion. As the discussion unfolds, the discussants will be responsible for synthesizing points made by their peers and steering the discussion in a fruitful manner.

Class Participation: You are expected to be present and to participate in all class sessions. A mark out of 10 will be given for attendance and participation in discussions. Good participation involves contributions that demonstrate strong engagement and connection with the course materials, and/or current events. This includes discussing how the content and ideas in the readings are helpful to your understandings of the global food system, what information you agree with or take issue with and why, and how new concepts or ideas make you think about food politics in a different way. Each week, you are expected to come prepared to discuss your thoughts and ideas with your classmates in a constructive and respectful manner.

Test: A midterm test will be administered prior to the Fall Reading Week on **October 10th, 2019**. It will be based on material covered in lecture, through the assigned readings and films screened in class from weeks 1-5. It will incorporate a combination of multiple choice and short-answers aimed at testing the breadth and depth of understanding you have acquired throughout the first part of the course.

Book Review: You are to write a review of one of the books on the list posted on LEARN. The first section of the review (must be no more than one third of the length of the essay) should describe the key ideas or central argument(s) of the book. The remainder of the essay should assess the book's arguments in the context of the readings and discussions in this course (which should be properly cited). This assignment should be approximately 2500-3000 words in length (excluding references).

A first draft of your book review is due on November 20, 2019 11:59 p.m. During the class on November 21, 2019 you will have the opportunity to review another peer's work and provide valuable feedback. This peer review exercise is worth 5% of your mark.

The due date for the final Book Review is Thursday November 28, 2019 (Day, 11:59 p.m.), and must be submitted on LEARN. There will be a 5% penalty per day for late submissions.

Course Materials and Communication

Text Book: Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. *Food*. Second Edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press [available at the UW bookstore; also on Course Reserves via the library]

Readings: The required readings for this course are all freely available via the library or online. Assigned readings should be read *before* the relevant classes.

Questions regarding course materials are best answered during office hours or in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Thursday September 5, 2019

State of the Global Food System: Introduction to the Course

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. “Unpacking the World Food Economy”. *Food*. Chapter 1.
- Lappé, Frances M. and Joseph Collins. 2015. “World Hunger: Ten Myths” Food First, Backgrounder: <https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Summer-2015-Backgrounder-10-Myths.pdf>

Film: *The Global Banquet: Politics of Food* (50 minutes)

Week 2: Week of September 9

The Rise of a Global Food System: A History

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. “The Rise of a Global Industrial Food Market.” *Food*. Chapter 2.
- Magnan, Andre. 2012. Food Regimes. *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*. Online publications.

Optional

- Boyd-Orr, John. 1943. “Food and the People”, in *Food and the people: Target for Tomorrow*. London: Pilot Press.
- Friedmann, Harriet, and Philip McMichael. 1989. “Agriculture and the State System: The Rise and Decline of National Agricultures, 1870 to the Present.” *Sociologia Ruralis* 29(2): 93-117.

Film: *80/20: The Developing World* (128 minutes – we’ll only see a portion)

Week 3: Week of September 16

Agricultural Trade and Markets

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. “Agricultural Trade Liberalization” *Food*. Chapter 3.
- Clapp, Jennifer. 2017. “Food Self-sufficiency: Making sense of it, and when it makes sense.” *Food Policy*, 66: 88-96.
- Raynolds, Laura T. 2012. “Fair Trade: Social Regulation in Global Food Markets” *Journal of Rural Studies*, 28: 276-287.

Week 4: Week of September 23

Corporate Role in Food and Agriculture

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. “Transnational Corporations.” *Food*. Chapter 4.
- McKeon, Nora. 2017. “Are Equity and Sustainability a Likely Outcome When Foxes and Chickens Share the Same Coop? Critiquing the Concept of Multistakeholder Governance of Food Security.” *Globalizations* 14 (3): 379-98.
- ETC Group. 2015. “Breaking Bad: Big Ag Mega-Mergers in Play: Dow + DuPont in the Pocket? Next: D Monsanto?”
- Neslen, A. May 25, 2018. “Monsanto and Bayer Are Set to Merge. Here’s Why You Should Care.” *Huffington Post* https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/monsanto-bayer-merge_n_5afeef96e4b07309e0578b5e

Week 5: Week of September 30

The New Green Revolution and Small-Scale Producers

- Pingali, Prabhu L. 2012. "Green Revolution: Impacts, Limits, and the Path Ahead." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 109, no. 31, 12302–12308.
- Shiva, Vandana. 1993. "Monocultures of the Mind," in *Monocultures of the Mind*. London, New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.
- Glover, D. 2010. "The Corporate Shaping of GM crops as a technology for the poor." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(1), 67-90.

Film: *Sowing for Need, Sowing for Greed* (58 minutes)

Week 6: Week of October 7 **TEST**

Food Sovereignty and Resistance

- McMichael, Phillip. 2014. "Historicizing Food Sovereignty." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 41:6, 933-957.
- Wittman, Hannah, Annette Desmarais and Nettie Wiebe. 2010. "Origins and Potential of Food Sovereignty". In Desmarais, A., Wiebe, N., and Wittman, H. *Food Sovereignty Reconnecting Food, Nature and Community*. Fahamu Books.
- Agarwal, Bina. 2014. "Food Sovereignty, Food Security Democratic Choice: Critical Contradictions, Difficult Conciliations." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 41(6), 1247-1268.
- Cadieux, Kirsten Valentine, and Rachel Slocum. 2015. "What Does it Mean to Do Food Justice?" *Journal of Political Ecology* 22 (1): 1.

Optional:

- Reese, Ashante M. 2018. "We Will Not Perish; We're Going to Keep Flourishing: Race, Food, Access, and Geographies of Self-Reliance." *Antipode* 50(2): 407-24.

Film: *Growing Change: A Journey Inside Venezuela's Food Revolution* (60 minutes)

Week of October 14 – Fall Reading Week!

Week 7: Week of October 21

Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Security

- Cote, Charlotte. 2016. "Indigenizing' Food Sovereignty. Revitalizing Indigenous Food Practices and Ecological Knowledges in Canada and the United States." *Humanities* 5(3): 57.
- Soper, Rachel. 2016. "Local is Not Fair: Indigenous Peasant Farmer Preference for Export Markets." *Agriculture and Human Values* 33 (3): 537-48.

Film: *No Land, No Food, No Life* (75 minutes – we'll only see a portion)

Week 8: Week of October 28

Global Politics of Diet

- Herrero, M., Wirseniuss, S., Henderson B., et al. 2015. “Livestock and the Environment: What Have We Learned in the Past Decade?” *The Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 40: 177-202.
- Weis, Tony. 2013. “The Meat of the Global Food Crisis.” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 40(1): 65-85.
- Soil Association. 2010. “Telling Porkies: The Big Fat Lie about Doubling Food Production.” https://www.soilassociation.org/media/4906/policy_telling_porkies.pdf Marion Nestle.

Optional

- Scott, C. 2018. “Sustainably Sourced Junk Food? Big Food and the Challenge of Sustainable Diets.” *Global Environmental Politics* 18(1): 93-113.

Film: *Cowspiracy* (90 minutes – we’ll only see a portion)

Week 9: Week of November 4 Financialization in the Food System

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. “Financialization in the Food System.” *Food*. Chapter 5.
- Isakson, S. Ryan. 2014. “Food and Finance: The Financial Transformation of Agro-Food Supply Chains.” *Journal of Peasant Studies* Vol. 41, No. 5, 749-775.
- Ghosh, Jayati. 2010. “The Unnatural Coupling: Food and Global Finance.” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 10(1): 72-86.

Week 10: Week of November 11 Transforming the Food System 1: Sustainable Practices

- Clapp, Jennifer. 2016. “Can the World Food Economy be Transformed?” *Food*. Chapter 6.
- Godfray, Charles & Garnett, Tara. 2014. “Food Security and Sustainable Intensification.” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society: Biological Sciences* 369(1639), 20120273.
- Nyeleni (Declaration of) (2015) “Declaration of the Forum for Agroecology”, <http://ag-transition.org/3663/declaration-of-the-forum-for-agroecology/>

Film: *Seed – The Untold Story* (90 minutes – we’ll only see portion)

Week 11: Week of November 18 Transforming the Food System 2: Governance Reform

- Barling, David & Jessica Duncan. 2015. “The Dynamics of the Contemporary Governance of the World’s Food Supply and the Challenges of Policy Redirection.” *Food Security* 7: 415-424.
- McKeon, Nora. 2015. “Building a Better Food System from the Top Reaching Downwards” in *Food security governance: Empowering communities, regulating corporations*. London: Routledge.
- Newell, Peter, Olivia Taylor, and Charles Touni. 2018. “Governing Food and Agriculture in a Warming World.” *Global Environmental Politics* 18(2): 53-71.

Week 12: Week of November 25

What Way Forward for the Global Food System? Book Review Discussions

Course and University Policies:

Academic Integrity: 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. Refer to Academic Integrity website (<https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>) for details.

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, (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>) Read Policy 70 Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g. plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>) Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties>).

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.html

Note for students with disabilities: The AccessAbility Office, 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 AccessAbility Office at the beginning of each academic term. Once registered with AccessAbility, please meet with the professor, in confidence, during office hours to discuss your needs.

Religious Observances: Please 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.

Mental Health: The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. Please note that help is available. Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services (www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services) is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They

offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

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](#).