

GEOG/ ERS 461
Food Systems and Sustainability

Department of Geography & Environmental Management, Faculty of Environment
Winter 2015

Class time: Wed and Fri 1:00 – 2:20 PM in Hagey Hall 1102

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NB: *The guidelines in this syllabus are subject to minor change. Refer to the course website on **Learn** for updates, starting in January 2015*

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 technological changes and social justice issues in the food system; resource depletion and wider environmental impacts of the industrial food system; and policy-related, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to facilitate change towards more sustainable 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>

Course learning objectives

1. To gain critical understanding of some of the key political, economic, social, environmental and health challenges to food system sustainability at global and local scales
2. To gain critical awareness about current policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to improve food system sustainability
3. To develop familiarity with, and ability to assess, both academic literature and key public media in food studies and geographies of food.

Food system change is a topic of widespread debate, particularly in relation to balancing economic with environmental and health considerations. Understanding multiple sides of an issue places you in a stronger position to form your own ideas and pursue new directions. Moreover, many policies or practices in the food system, worldwide and locally, are having a significant impact on ‘marginalized’ groups. The course will allow you to become more familiar with the diverse perspectives that have emerged in food studies and geographies of food, and an opportunity for you to actively discuss and debate these with others.

You will not be graded on your knowledge of factoids or statistics – those are available on the internet. You will be assessed on your ability to engage with the multi-dimensional nature of food systems, to appreciate the geographic diversity of the issues, and to identify potentially sustainable solutions.

Required readings

Required book (available at UW bookstore): Koc, Sumner and Winson (2012) Critical Perspectives in Food Studies, Oxford University Press.

Additional required readings (outlined in the course schedule) are available on e-Reserve and/or through links provided on D2L.

Course content: see schedule on pages 3 and 4

Classes are held twice a week. Attendance will be taken. Classes (except for weeks #4, 8 and 12) will be structured as follows:

1. **Wednesday:** Lecture and video. Questions and comments are encouraged throughout. Each week, a new topic is introduced. **Three required readings** are given (see schedule and D2L) to illustrate that topic—you are expected to read them during the week and especially before the Friday class, where they (as well as lecture material and videos) will be discussed and debated. The readings will usually include a chapter from *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies* plus one journal article. As well, a media article or report will be assigned.
2. **Friday:** The class will focus on structured discussion with a set of questions related to each week's readings: small-group discussion/analysis and full-group debate/summarization of key points.
You are required to participate in all Friday discussions on the readings, *as important points will emerge at this class which will be reflected in the three short-answer tests.*

Assignments and deadlines

% of total mark

60 % Three in-class tests (short-answer format) based on lectures, videos and analysis of readings.

- 20%: **Test #1**, January 28
- 20%: **Test #2**, March 4
- 20%: **Test #3**, April 1

10 % **Outline and reference list for term paper** is due at **1:00 PM on Wednesday, February 4**. (*hard copy and on D2L*). Topic options and guidelines for the outline and paper will be provided in advance.

Meet as needed with the instructor regarding your progress on the term paper – make an appointment during office hours.

30 % **Term paper** (*hard copy and on D2L*) is due at **1:00 PM on Wednesday, March 25, 2015**.

Late submissions of term papers will be docked 5% per day and will not be accepted after 5 days late.

Expectations

- 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. You are required to complete the assigned readings in time, and to participate actively in class. You may use an electronic device during class to take notes; but checking email, browsing web sites, internet chatting, etc. during class time is not permitted.
- **Please check D2L regularly for updates, as well as your uwaterloo e-mail account** which will be used for all internal communication.

Course schedule, content and readings

| Week | Class Topic | | Readings to prepare for class discussion and analysis |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| #1 Jan 7 and 9 | Introduction to the food system; Discourses of food sustainability, food geographies | Wed -Class introduction -Lecture & video | <i>Critical Perspectives in Food Studies (CPFS)</i> 1. Chapter 6: Two Great Food Revolutions (Albritton) 2. Media article TBA |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis -Food System models - <i>The Food Machine</i> Re: reading from CPFS | |
| #2 Jan 14 and 16 | Sustainable food production & harvesting | Wed -Lecture & video -Prep for term paper topic | 1. CPFS Ch.10: Crisis in the food system: the farm crisis (Wiebe) 2. CPFS Ch. 11: Crisis in the Fishery: Canada in the Global Context (Sundar) 3. Media article TBA |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings and video | |
| #3 Jan 21 and 23 | Sustainable development & planning; local food systems | Wed -Lecture & video -e-library advanced search -referencing APA style | 1. CPFS Ch. 18: Municipal Governance and urban food systems (Mendes) 2. <i>A Food System Assessment and Action Plan for Calgary</i> (2012) Summary http://www.calgary.ca/CA/cmo/Pages/Calgary-Food-System-Assessment-and-Action-Plan.aspx 3. Media article TBA |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings and video | |
| #4 Jan 28 and 30 | Test #1 | Wed January 28 Test #1 (short answer) Worth 20% of final mark | Reading for Friday Jan 30: Levkoe,C.Z. (2011) Towards a transformative food politics, <i>Local Environment</i> , 16(7): 687-705 |
| | Fri: Local/alternative food politics | Fri discussion/analysis Re: Transformative food politics reading and video | |
| #5 Feb 4 and 6 | Sustainable livelihoods in the global South and North; citizen engagement; food sovereignty, land ownership | Wed February 4, 1:00 PM Term paper outline DUE (including references) Worth 10% of final mark | 1. CPFS Ch. 22: Building Food Sovereignty (Desmarais) 2. Donald,B.; Blay-Palmer,A. (2006) The urban creative-food economy: producing food for the urban elite or social inclusion opportunity? <i>Environment & Planning A</i> , 38(10): 1901-1920 3. Report or media article TBA |
| | | Wed: -Discuss results of Test #1 -Lecture & video Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings & video | |
| #6 Feb 11 and 13 | Sustainable consumption and health | Wed -Lecture & video | 1. CPFS Ch. 12: Spatial colonization of food environments by pseudo-food companies: Precursors of a Health Crisis (Winson) 2. Thow,A.M.; Hawkes,C. (2009) The implications of trade liberalization for diet and health: a case study from Central America. <i>Globalization and Health</i> 5(5):1-15 3. The Food Institute, U. of Guelph, <i>Food Price Report 2015</i> , pp. 1-16. (pdf) |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings & video <i>Feeding the Nine Billion</i> | |

Course schedule and readings, con't.

| Week | Class Topic | | Readings to prepare for discussion & analysis |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>Feb 16-19 Reading Week – no classes</i> | | | |
| #7 Feb 25 and 27 | Food Policy & governance | Wed -Guest lecture & video | 1. CPFS Ch. 19 : Food Policy for the Twenty-First Century (MacRae) 2. <i>Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada</i> http://peoplesfoodpolicy.ca 3. Journal article TBA |
| | Institutional food policy at UW | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings & video | |
| #8 Mar 4 and 6 | Test #2 and Economic issues in the global food system | Wed March 4 Test #2 (short answer) Worth 20% of final mark | Friday March 6 discussion: 1. CPFS Ch. 17 : Who governs global food prices? (Clapp) 2. Media article TBA |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings and video | |
| #9 Mar 11 and 13 | Social justice issues in the food system: Civic engagement, food insecurity, migrant workers | Wed -Discuss results of Test #2 -Lecture & video | 1. CPFS Ch. 14 : Food Security? Some contradictions associated with corporate Donations to Canada's Food Banks (Suschnigg) 2. Rios-Gonzalez, A. et al. (2013) Pesticide risk perceptions and the differences between farmers and extensionists: Towards a knowledge-in-context model. <i>Environmental Research</i> (in press) http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2013.03.006 3. Report or media article TBA |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings & video | |
| #10 Mar 18 and 20 | Environmental issues in the food system | Wed -Lecture and video -National Geographic: <i>The Future of Food</i> | 1. CPFS Ch. 7 : A political ecology approach to industrial food production (Weis) 2. Garnett, T. (2011) Where are the best opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the food system (including the food chain)? <i>Food Policy</i> 36: S23–S32. 3. Report or media article TBA |
| | | Fri discussion/analysis Re: readings & video | |
| #11 Mar 25 and 27 | The impacts of genetic engineering | Wed March 25, 1:00 PM Term paper DUE Worth 30% of final mark | 1. CPFS Ch. 16 : The Paradox of Governing Through the Courts: The Canadian GMO contamination debate (Abergel) 2. Goldberger, J.R. (2011) Conventionalization, civic engagement, and the sustainability of organic agriculture. <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i> , 27(3): 288-296 3. Media article TBA |
| | | Wed: -Guest lecture & video Fri discussion/analysis: Re: readings -Putting it all together: environmental, social justice, health, civic engagement and governance issues | |
| #12 April 1 | Wed April 1 | Test #3 (short answer) Worth 20% of final mark | |

Term paper (outline & references are worth 10%; paper is worth 30% of mark)

Most of the lectures and readings are concerned with the first objective of this course, namely the key political, economic, social, environmental and health challenges to food system sustainability. To balance this approach, your term paper for this course aims to fulfill the second objective: *to gain critical awareness about some key policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives or programs that aim to improve food system sustainability.*

- You will research and write an original term paper of 3,200 – 3,600 words (max.)
- You can **choose from a list of general topics representing alternative strategies and/or initiatives that aim to improve food system sustainability in various sectors of the food system.** This list will be provided at the first class.
- A detailed marking scheme for the paper will be provided in advance.
- You are encouraged to discuss draft(s) of your paper in advance with the instructor.

(a) Term paper outline and reference list - due Feb 4 at 1:00 PM - hard copy and on D2L

To encourage you to start early with your research for your term paper, you are required to submit an outline and reference list for your term paper (as a hard copy and on D2L). This outline must include:

- ◆ A tentative title
- ◆ The planned structure of your term paper, with headings and sub-headings, and a short paragraph describing the purpose and content of each heading
- ◆ A preliminary list of at least **10 articles from peer reviewed journals or book chapters** relevant to the topic. Additionally, relevant reports are encouraged.

(b) Term paper, final copy - due Wed., March 25 at 1:00 PM- hard copy and on D2L

Basic term paper components:

1. A general description and history of the chosen type of alternative strategy and/or initiative, and personal reason for this choice
2. Literature review on research on this topic – including at least 12 relevant articles from peer-reviewed journals or book chapters, as well as relevant reports (provide pdf link, with source and authors). Correct APA style must be used for references and citations—this will be explained in detail in class, and marks will be deducted for incorrect referencing.
3. Three geographically specific examples of this initiative, at least two of which should be Canadian, with benefits and challenges as documented in the literature;
4. Critiques and potential transformations of this strategy to improve food system sustainability, according to the categories in Levkoe (2011), the week #4 reading.
5. A discussion based on the overall findings from your study and your own reactions to and thoughts on these findings. A conclusion that suggests further research or evaluation that you think is needed.
6. Reference list at the end, using APA style.

Style guide and help with writing skills

For a fourth-year social science course, you are expected to have a high level of writing competency. To improve your skills, please consult the following two free online resources:

Writing Effective Essays and Reports, by Rob de Loe:

http://www.environment.uwaterloo.ca/u/rdeloe/writing_booklet/

Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing (Geography and Environmental Sciences), by Northey, M., Knight, D.B. and Draper, D. (Oxford University Press, 5th Edition 2012)

Improve your grammar: www.grammarbook.com

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 16** 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 offences 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 their time. E-mailed 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 email; make sure to include your full name in your message. Where possible, you must contact me 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.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course.

This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

For further information on UW's Turnitin guidelines, see:

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/home/guidelines-instructors>

LEARN: Users can login to LEARN: <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/> use WatIAM/Quest username & PW

Documentation is available at: http://av.uwaterloo.ca/uwace/training_documentation/index.html

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.html 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 offence, 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. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.html . For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.html

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