



**GEOG 474/ERS 473**

**Sustainable Food: Regional Case Study**

**Department of Geography & Environmental Management  
Faculty of Environment  
Fall 2018**

**Course instructor**

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**Class time:** Mon & Wed 2:30-3:50 in EV1-132

Office: EV1 114

Office hours: Tues 10:30-11:30am or by appointment

Note: *Refer to the course website regularly for updates.*

With gratitude, we acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. The [Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre](#) facilitates the sharing of Indigenous knowledge and provides culturally relevant information and support services for all members of the University of Waterloo community, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff, and faculty.

**Course description**

Industrial agriculture has destabilized the Earth's ecosystems at the planetary scale. Ecological as well as socio-cultural, economic, and political factors shape the sustainability and resilience of our food system. This seminar course takes a regional focus to ground our discussions of pertinent concepts, challenges, and opportunities. The course examines regional issues and initiatives linked to food security, food sovereignty, resilient agriculture and agro-ecology, the energy-water-food nexus, food policy, food supply chains, urban food systems, alternative food initiatives, sustainable diets, and food waste reduction—all within the context of the case study region.

**Detailed description**

In this course, we draw on environmental, economic, socio-cultural, health, and political perspectives to examine the challenges and successes of the food system in the world's most populous country: China. We cover the history and geography of food security in China; debates over feeding the most populous nation on earth; and threats to soil fertility, clean water, and farmland loss. The bulk of the course then focuses on alternatives: what initiatives are underway to strengthen sustainable agriculture, agroecology, and 'alternative food networks,' such as community supported agriculture and ecological farmers' markets? Who are the key players? What role is technology and the internet playing in all this, for consumers, and for farmers? We review 'grassroots', private sector, and state policy initiatives to promote a 'sustainable' food system in urban and rural areas of China, and assess their relative

successes and their domestic and global implications. We explore food security, meat consumption, food waste, China's rapidly expanding organic sector (certified and uncertified), and the associated revolution that is happening in ecological, healthy, safe food and ethical eating in China's cities.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, student should have acquired the following:

- Current knowledge of the case study region's food and agriculture system, its resources, demographic and economic shifts, governance approaches, and key challenges and opportunities
- Understanding of contemporary principles and approaches to sustainable food systems, and how they apply to the case study region
- Skills and knowledge needed to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of current and emerging approaches to dealing with food system challenges in the case study region
- Improved research, oral and written communication, teamwork, and critical thinking skills

Teamwork is crucial to achieving change. Thus, this course offers you the opportunity to work in groups to research an issue and present your research output.

The format for the 80-minute classes will be a combination of seminar discussions, lectures, guest speakers, videos, and student presentations.

### **Intended learning outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able **critically analyze and explain...**

1. the historical development of China's contemporary food system, and associated key concepts
2. some key environmental, economic, social, and political challenges to food system sustainability in China
3. some significant policy (state-led), market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to improve food system sustainability

### **Course content**

A list of required readings will be available on the first day of the class.

#### **Week 1. Overview and food systems introduction**

**Weeks 1-2. 'Who will feed China': History and geography of food security and agrarian change in the world's most populous country**

**Week 3. Soil, water, oceans, forests, and climate: connections to food**

**Week 4. Market reforms, urbanization and the countryside in China**

**Week 5. Changing diets, dairy & meatification: environmental and health outcomes**

**Week 6. Food safety, the crisis of trust, and the quest for quality food**

**Week 7. Alternative Food Networks and social movements**

**Week 8. Practices of 'original' and 'new' farmers in producing sustainable food**

**Week 9. The role of technology & the internet in sustainable food in China**

**Week 10. Urban planning, urban agriculture, street food**

**Week 11. Food waste, from farm to consumer**

**Week 12. Conclusions: What can Canada learn from China, and what can China learn from Canada, about sustainable food?**

## **Assessment of learning & due dates**

Unless otherwise specified, due dates are 11:59pm on the date indicated.

		<b>Due dates</b>
• Online discussion of readings (using <a href="#">Perusall</a> platform)	20 %	
• In class participation	10 %	
• Midterm test	10 %	
• Take-home test	15 %	
<b>Term project – in groups: (40% + 5%)</b>		
• Project proposal	5 %	
• Group contract	--	
• Oral presentation of project	10 %	
• Project - draft version (required in order for final version to be marked)	1 %	
• Peer review of one project	5 %	
• Project – final version	24 %	
• Group self-assessment (required for your proposal grade) – in PEAR website	--	

## Term project

The project should be oriented to a specific audience: e.g., academic readers, a magazine (for the general public), a policy brief for government, a funding agency (e.g., for an NGO), or students (e.g., as an online case study such as the ones [here](#)). Speak to the instructor if you would prefer to prepare your project in the form of a video.

You are encouraged to work in groups to complete the project. The length should be 1600-2000 **words per person** times the number of people in your group. However, the final project should be jointly written by all group members. If you prefer to complete the project on your own, the length should be 2500-3000 words.

## Submission of assignments

Assignments only need to be submitted on Learn, not in hard copy.

For citing references in your assignments, please use **APA style** or another standard referencing format. Single or 1.5 spacing is preferred.

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

- You have properly referenced all ideas, words or other intellectual property from other sources used in the completion of this assignment.
- You have included a proper reference list, 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.

**Late policy:** You are expected to take account of the possibility of computer or printer failure in planning your time. Emailed 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.*

**Waterloo Learn** (course website): 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 submissions, discussion boards, course e-mail, etc.), and provide feedback (grades, 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.

## UW Writing and Communication Centre

The Writing and Communication Centre (WCC) works with students as they develop their ideas, draft, and revise. Writing and communication specialists offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or you can drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 25- or 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit [uwaterloo.ca/wcc](http://uwaterloo.ca/wcc). Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

### Strongly recommended sources on writing skills

For a fourth-year human geography course, you are expected to have a high level of writing competency. To further hone your skills, consider reviewing the sources below:

*Writing Effective Essays and Reports*, by Rob de Loe (free online resource):

[http://www.environment.uwaterloo.ca/u/rdeloe/writing\\_booklet/](http://www.environment.uwaterloo.ca/u/rdeloe/writing_booklet/)

*Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* by Joseph Williams (free PDF online, or in the library).

## Email

Check the 'Announcements' tool in Learn for updates regarding the course. Subscribe to receive email notifications.

Please direct course-related questions to me through Learn. **Put Geog 474** (or ERS 473) **in the subject line** of your email. Remind me after three days if I haven't replied, in case your message got overlooked.

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. 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

### ◆ Intellectual Property:

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructors and/or the University of Waterloo. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials, and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

#### ◆ **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. The University's guiding principles on academic integrity can be found here: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity>. ENV students are strongly encouraged to review the material provided by the university's Academic Integrity office specifically for students: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html>

Students are also expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need 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. Students may also complete the following tutorial: <https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial>

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: <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly

penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>

◆ **Note for students with disabilities:** [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, 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 [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

◆ **Mental Health:** The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments/Schools 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 <http://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.

◆ **Religious Observances:** Students need 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. See Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

◆ **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](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

◆ **Turnitin:** Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, and are subject to the USA PATRIOT ACT, 2001; therefore, students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography) if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.