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 and genetic change in food production, resource depletion and wider environmental impacts of the industrial food system, and policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to bring about change in the food system, including organic production and localizing food systems.

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 some key policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to improve food system sustainability
3. To develop familiarity with the academic literature in food studies and geographies of food.

Required readings


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

1. Each week, a new topic is introduced at the Tuesday evening lecture.
2. Two required readings are given to expand on that topic, which you are expected to read during the week after the class (usually a chapter in the Critical Perspectives in Food Studies book plus one journal article or report). You are required to comment on these readings in a weekly submission on D2L, due the following Monday – see course requirements.
3. Class discussion on these readings will be the first item at the next lecture.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Readings for:</th>
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<tr>
<td>#1 Sept 11-17</td>
<td>-Introduction to the food system; Discourses of food sustainability, food geographies -Using D2L -Class activities &amp; assignments -Class introductions &amp; interests</td>
<td>-written commentary (submit) -next class discussion (participate)</td>
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<td>#2 Sept 18-24</td>
<td>Sustainable food production &amp; harvesting</td>
<td>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)</td>
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<td>#3 Sept 25 – Oct 1</td>
<td>Sustainable development &amp; planning; local food systems</td>
<td>1. CPFS Ch. 18: Municipal Governance and urban food systems (Mendes) 2. Levkoe,C.Z. (2011) Towards a transformative food politics, Local Environment, 16(7): 687-705</td>
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<td>#6 Oct 16 - 22</td>
<td>[World Food Day] Food Policy &amp; governance</td>
<td>1. CPFS Ch. 19: Food Policy for the Twenty-First Century (MacRae) 2. Resetting the Table: A People’s Food Policy for Canada <a href="http://peoplesfoodpolicy.ca">http://peoplesfoodpolicy.ca</a></td>
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<td>#8 Oct 30 – Nov 5</td>
<td>Social justice issues in the food system: Civic engagement, food insecurity, migrant workers</td>
<td>1. CPFS Ch. 14: Food Security? Some contradictions associated with corporate Donations to Canada’s Food Banks (Suschnigg) 2. Das et al. (2001) OR Murphy &amp; Leip (2002) – Migrant farm workers &amp; pesticide exposure in the USA</td>
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<td>#9 Nov 6 - 12</td>
<td>Environmental issues in the food system</td>
<td>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)? OR Harvey,M.&amp; Pilgrim,S.(2011) The new competition for land: Food, energy and climate change. Food Policy, 36(suppl 1) 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>#11 Nov 20</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>#12 Nov 27</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
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Each class is 2 hours and 50 minutes long, with a 10 minute break midway. Attendance will be taken.

Classes # 2 to #10 will be structured as follows:
1. Class discussion related to previous weeks readings.
2. Lecture and video on new topic. (Questions and comments are encouraged throughout, and discussion follows).

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 expected to complete the assigned readings, and to participate actively and consistently in class. Please leave your laptop off during class unless you need to access 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. Thank you!
- Please check D2L regularly for updates, as well as your uwaterloo e-mail account which will be used for all internal communication.

Assignments and deadlines

% of total mark

40 %  • Weekly commentaries on readings, 10 in total, are due on D2L by midnight each Monday, starting from Sept 17 to November 19. Each commentary is marked out of 10 and is worth maximum 4 marks towards the final mark. (each 500-600 words, 1.5 spaced, Times Roman 12 font)
  Late submissions of weekly commentaries will not be accepted and will be marked “0”.

10 %  • Outline for term paper and reference list is due at 4 PM, Tuesday October 9 (hard copy and on D2L).
  Guidelines for the paper will be provided in advance.
  --  • Meeting with instructor re progress on term paper and plans for presentations – make appointment for Oct 29, Oct 30, Nov 5 or Nov 6

20 %  • Presentations based on term papers, 12-minutes long (in groups of 3 with the same topic) will take place on November 20 and 27.
  • Submit your power point presentation (as a pdf document) for your group on D2L on the previous Friday to your presentation (December 17 or 24)

30 %  • Term paper (hard copy and on D2L) is due at 4pm, Tuesday December 4.
  Late submissions of term papers will be docked 5% per day and will not be accepted after 5 days late.
1. Weekly comments on readings  (10 comments, total 40% of mark)

To encourage continuous personal engagement with the course, you are given two readings each week to read and reflect upon and to create a meaningful 500 – 600 word commentary on what you found most important in those readings.

Guidelines for Comments on Readings:

1. When you read each chapter, article or report, determine for yourself the main points or arguments that the author(s) make. Do not summarize or describe these points in your commentary, however.

   In your commentary, state what information, ideas, or content in the reading stood out for you, to help you understand food system issues. Was there an “a-ha” for you? Did the reading 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? Are some issues problematic or contestable in your opinion?

2. Make connections: In what way did the readings relate to issues covered in class?

3. Pick one journal-based reference from one of the two readings. Access the on-line UW library site for that journal, and browse through recent articles. Find and name one other article that is relevant to food systems issues, or that interests you in particular (briefly state why). Use proper citation method.

4. At the end of each commentary, reflect briefly on your own personal evolution of thinking about the food system at that point of the course. Be specific about what matters to you and/or your learning process.

Late submissions of weekly commentaries will not be accepted. There is ample time to get this done.

- The commentaries will be reviewed by a TA and by me on a weekly basis and given a mark out of 10, which you will see on D2L. They are assessed based on the quality and depth of your comments and reflections (thoughtful, constructive, creative) on the authors’ arguments and their implications. They will also be assessed week by week according to your response to previous suggestions for improvement.
- If you want to discuss your commentaries, please see me during office hours.

2. 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 research paper for this course aims to fulfill the second objective: to gain critical awareness about some key policy, market-oriented, and civil society initiatives to improve food system sustainability. The topics for the research paper, therefore, cover various alternative strategies to the dominant food system, or those that aim to improve food system sustainability. You will learn from your own chosen topic for your paper, and from others in the class as they present during the final two classes.
Term Paper, con’t.

• You will research and write your own term paper of 4,800 - 5,000 words (max.)
• You can choose from a list of general topics related to alternative food strategies, which will be provided at the first class.
• The detailed marking scheme for the paper will be provided well in advance.

Basic term paper components:

1. General description and history of the chosen type of alternative strategy, and personal reason for this choice
2. Literature review on research on this topic – at least 12 relevant journal articles, peer-reviewed reports/evaluations (pdf, with source and authors) or book chapters
   (NB: websites do NOT count as references);
3. Three geographically specific examples of this strategy, including a local Waterloo Region or Ontario strategy if possible, 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) (readings, Week 3)
5. Conclusion based on the overall findings from your paper and on your own reactions to and thoughts on these findings
6. Proper citations throughout the paper and a reference list at the end.

(a) Term paper outline and reference list  -  due Oct 9

To encourage you to start early with your research for your term paper, you are required to submit, on October 9 no later than 4 PM, the outline for your term paper on D2L. This outline should include:

• A tentative title
• A tentative structure of the term paper, 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 12 references relevant to the topic, including journal articles, book chapters and peer-reviewed reports.

(b) Meeting with professor  -  Oct 29, Oct 30, Nov 5 or Nov 6

- You will meet with the instructor once during the term to discuss your progress with, and questions about, your term paper.
- At this time, you will also be able to name your two presentation partners and discuss the content of your joint presentation at the end of the course. We will also discuss your ability to prepare a Power Point presentation, your plans to work in a group of three, and your ideas for what key content can feasibly be presented in no more than 12 minutes. We will determine which date you will present.
- A marking scheme for the presentation will be given to you well in advance, to guide you in your presentation development.
(c) Term paper, final copy, is due on Tuesday, December 4 at 4:00 PM.

You must submit it BOTH to D2L and as a hard copy to the Geography Department, EV1 Room 115.

3. Presentation on paper topic in groups of 3 (total 20% of mark)

(a) Submit your Power Point slides for your group presentation (as PDF) to D2L on the Friday before your talk (Choose the D2L username of one of the 3 partners to submit the ppt) -- so either on November 17 or 24.

(b) Class presentations - November 20 or 27

- For the class presentation, you will work with two other students who have written on the same topic, and prepare a joint 12-minute presentation. The groups will be organized early on, as soon as topics are chosen. Each group can decide how to organize their presentation.

- Your presentation will include ppt slides, and you are encouraged to be creative in getting your point across about a type of sustainability-inducing strategy in the food system that you all have researched. Do not get bogged down with a lot of content on the slides, because there is no time for that. Impress upon your audience (the rest of the class) what is exciting and novel and challenging about your collective strategy. Use photos or even short video-clips in your power point if you like. Make clear, lively, succinct points that your audience will remember and be inspired by. Think geographically, and be clear how the strategies you highlight are linked with place.

- Come up at the end with a discussion question at the end that can inspire a very brief 2-minute discussion (which can be pursued later out of class time if the 15-minute total time for each presentation is over).

- Tight time limits will be enforced to ensure that every group has time to present within the class hours.

- A group self-evaluation will be used to ensure the fairness of the grading of the group presentation by assessing each person’s contribution. Guidelines for this are posted on D2L. 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.

- All students must attend both final classes of presentations, regardless if they present or not. Attendance will be taken.

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Style guide and sources on 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/


Improve your grammar: www.grammarbook.com

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://uwwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/home/guidelines-instructors

“LEARN: Users can login to LEARN via: http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/
use your WatIAM/Quest username and password

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.

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. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/

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