Course instructor: Dr Theresa Schumilas  
Class time: Wednesdays, 11:30 – 2:30  
E-mail: tschumilas@rogers.com  
Office hours: 30 minutes before and after class, or by appointment

Note: The guidelines in this syllabus are subject to change. Refer to the course website on Learn for updates.

We would like to 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.

Course Description
For the first time in history more people around the world live in urban areas than rural ones. This has been the case in the global North since rapid urbanization started in the 19th century. But increasingly these same urbanization trends are evident throughout the global South. Is this degree of urbanization sustainable? Sustainable development rests on the balance between social, economic and environmental priorities from the local to the global scale, both currently and in the future.

Food and food systems offer a useful way of understanding and acting on some of the most pressing sustainability issues in cities. Cities are demanding greater supplies of food, and these demands are increasingly stressing surrounding ecology. Globalized, centralized food distribution systems are resulting in unsustainable fuel use & associated climate change, urban sprawl and loss of foodlands, contamination of soil, air and water, both under nutrition (hunger) and over nutrition (obesity), and marginalization of both urban and rural dwellers.

But cities are not only hubs of unsustainable and destructive consumption. Around the world cities are starting to see food and food systems as drivers for other sustainable urbanization practices and policies. In this course you are invited to re-think the sustainability of cities through the lens of food systems and emerging sustainable food initiatives evolving around the world.

We take a global and interdisciplinary perspective on cities and sustainability, using food system innovations as examples to help focus our discussions and thinking. Drawing on both theoretical and case study material we will look across local and global scales to reveal the interconnections and disconnections between ecological stewardship, social justice, cultural vitality, prosperity and citizen engagement.
Learning Outcomes:
After completing this course, you will:

- Be familiar with frameworks that can facilitate a systems-level approach in your future work. Specifically, we will discuss the community capitals framework, just sustainabilities, and sustainable transitions in socio-technical systems.
- Use conceptual tools to think about and assess sustainability from different perspectives. For example, you will engage in a hands on analysis of local sustainable food-related initiatives using site visits and content analysis.
- Weigh trade-offs among social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability, and constructively communicate these assessments in social media, presentations and academic writing. Specifically you will draw on case studies and your own reflections to create class presentations and blogs that reveal the possibilities for greater urban sustainability inherent in these projects.
- Understand how approaches to sustainability are situated and contextualized, and explore how different cultural, political and macro-economic contexts interact to both drive and restrain transitions to urban sustainability. Specifically, you will compare sustainable food initiatives in Waterloo Region with initiatives across the global North and South.

Mutual expectations:
What you can expect of me: Your learning is my priority. This course exposes you to different ‘ways’ of learning (reading, lecture, discussion, site visits, videos etc.) and different approaches to assessment (in class contributions, presentations, lay and academic writing). I will share all rubrics in advance (on LEARN) and use these in grading so there will be ‘no surprises’. I will try to create a safe and friendly environment in which you can share and test out ideas. I will respect your ideas and challenge you to develop these further.
What I expect of you: I expect you will arrive on time, attend all classes, attend class fieldtrips, and complete all readings and assignments. You should expect to invest at least 10-15 hrs per week in this course, in and outside of class.

Course Requirements & Assessment
Engagement with readings, site visits and discussions are key to this seminar-style course. You need to arrive prepared to discuss the assigned readings. You will be assigned randomly to a ‘reading group’ so you will only need to read half of the articles selected. Each class (excluding field trip weeks) your group will: read the assigned articles (see below), discuss them in your group (during class class), and present a synopsis of your discussion to the other reading group. In this process you are responsible to complete the readings assigned, prepare a ‘spark’ (short reflection) on those readings and take a turn facilitating the discussion. These requirements are discussed below.

Sparks – 20%
‘Sparks’ are questions, comments and examples drawn from your experience that can ignite (spark) group discussion. You are encouraged to share sparks that draw case studies and examples from outside Waterloo Region (and indeed outside the global North) into our
discussions. At the start of each class in which we have readings, you will share your ‘sparks’ within your reading group. The ‘perfect’ spark helps us to further interrogate that week’s readings with an example or illustration from elsewhere. In the weeks indicated below, you are expected to write you ‘spark’ on the form provided, print it, and bring it to class. The rubric for the sparks is outlined in the ‘rubrics’ file on LEARN. There are 7 weeks in which sparks are due, for a total of 20 marks. You need to be present in class in order to be credited for your spark.

**Facilitating Discussions – 10%**
In addition to the sparks, you will take 2 turns facilitating discussion (2 @ 5% each) in your small group and presenting a synopsis to the entire class. In week 1, you will sign up for the readings/weeks you want to facilitate. A rubric for grading your facilitation is included in the ‘rubrics’ file posted on LEARN. Your facilitation mark will be posted on LEARN after class.

**Site Visits & Reflections – 20%**
We will make 3 site visits together as a class (listed below), and for each, you will prepare a brief reflection:

1. Sitopia in downtown Kitchener. This is a self-guided walking tour in Kitchener. We will meet at the Working Centre and maps and routes will be assigned. More details will be shared in class. You will prepare a two page reflection on your tour using annotated selfies and photos (6%) (due Oct 2 to dropbox)

2. Little City Farm, KW Gleaners & Urban Forest – We will bus together to these sites. You will prepare a 2 page reflection that responds to the question: What social, economic, political, cultural conditions drive and/or restrain projects like these? (7%) (due Oct 30 to dropbox)

3. Pfennings Organic Wholesale/Distribution - We will bus together to this site. You will prepare a second reflection that also responds to the question above, but ideally shows how your thinking has changed over the course (7%) (due Nov 27 to dropbox)

**Individual/Small Group Case Studies/Site Visits– 10%**
In addition to the sites we visit together, everyone will sign up to visit and consider a particular Waterloo Region sustainable food initiative. A list of options will be provided in the first class. Feel free to bring in additional ideas. You can visit these initiatives individually, in couples, or in groups of three. Regardless, you will be graded individually. Your grade will come from one of the following:

a. present a reflection on your visit to the class, or
b. write and post reflective blog that engages with the initiative

Our approach to these site visits is guided by both appreciative inquiry and critical analysis. More details will be shared in class and a rubric is included in the ‘rubrics’ file on LEARN.

In the last class, we will bring all these site visits/mini case studies together for a collective analysis and mapping activity.

**Comparative Case Study Paper– 40%**
This paper examines, and makes an argument about, how food system initiatives contribute (or not) to the sustainability of cities, and how different socio-political contexts drive and/or restrain
the development of such sustainable initiatives. In this paper you will draw on class readings plus additional research to compare a project/initiative/program from Canada (might be one of our site visits for example) with a related example(s) from outside of North America. More details and a rubric are included in the ‘rubrics’ file, posted on LEARN. The mark for the paper is divided into 2 parts:

1. Outline - 10% 2 pages, double spaced, submitted by Nov 13 midnight at the latest to the dropbox on LEARN (submit earlier if you wish)
This is an opportunity for feedback and adjustment (if necessary) before writing the full paper. The instructor will give you individualized feedback on your thesis/argument, selection of cases and bibliography/reading list.

2. Final paper – 30%, ABSOLUTE max 10 pages, double spaced (including citations page), due December 5 midnight to the dropbox on LEARN.

**Course Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings – all on LEARN</th>
<th>Other/Due</th>
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| Week 1    | Introductions – What does sustainability mean to me?  
Course & Assignments Overview | Both groups A & B read:  
Beaull & Fox, 2009, Ch 2  
Wheeler & Beatley, 2009  
SCAN: IISD’s Sustainable Development Timeline  
SCAN: Waterloo Region sustainable food system folder on LEARN | Sign up for readings facilitation  
Sign up for site visits/mini case study |
| Week 2    | History of cites & sustainability  
Sitopia - mapping sustainability through food Introducing Waterloo Region’s emerging sustainable food system as our learning lab |                                                                                       | Sparks due in class  
Bring in a historical food-related artifact  
Final day to sign up for facilitation and site visits/case studies |
| Week 3    | Field Trip – Sitopia of downtown Kitchener | Annotated ‘selfie reflection’ due – Oct 2 to dropbox |                                                                 |
| Week 4    | Perspectives on sustainability – What are the different ways we can think about sustainability of food systems and cities?  
• Community Capitals Framework  
• Just Sustainabilities  
• Sustainable Transitions and City-Region Food Systems | Group A read:  
Gutierrez-Montes & Fernandez-Baca (2009)  
Connelly et al (2011)  
Jennings et al (2015)  
Group B read:  
Roseland (2012) Ch1  
Opp (2016)  
Moragues-Faus & Morgan (2015): | Spark due in class |
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<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Oct 14</th>
<th>Oct 12 – reading break - Class re-scheduled for Oct 14  Working session to plan site visits/case studies</th>
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| Week 6  | Oct 19 | Greening the City  
Group A read: McClintock (2014)  
Group B read: Tornaghi, (2014)  
Turner, B. (2011)  
Both groups scan: Thomas (2014)  
Maan Miedema (2013)  
Spark due in class  
“Greening the City” Site Visit/Blog presentations due in class |
| Week 7  | Oct 26 | Field Trip – Combining city greening and justice  
Reflection due Oct 31 to dropbox: What social, economic, political, cultural conditions drive and/or restrain projects like these in the global North and/or South? |
| Week 8  | Nov 2  | Just Sustainabilities & Inclusive Cities  
Group A read: Crowe & Smith (2012)  
Miewald & McCann (2013)  
Short et al (2007)  
Warshawsky (2015)  
Myers & Caruso (2016)  
Both groups scan: RoW Food Access  
Spark due in class  
Just Sustainabilities site visit/blog presentations due in class |
| Week 9  | Nov 9  | Food flows and market-based sustainabilities  
Jarosz (2008)  
Shor (2014)  
Group Bread: Morales (2011)  
Lamine (2015)  
Bos & Owen (2016)  
Both groups scan: Urban Agriculture Magazine Issue 30  
Spark due in class  
Food Flows/Market Based Sustainabilities site visit/blog presentations due in class |
| Week 10 |        | Governance for Sustainability  
Group A read:  
Spark due in class |
| Week 11 Nov 23 | Field Trip – Pfenning Organic | Reflection due Nov 27: What social, economic, political, cultural conditions drive and/or restrain projects like these in the global North &/or South: How has your thinking on this question changed? |
| Week 12 Nov 23 | Mapping Waterloo Region’s Sustainable Food Initiatives Course wrap-up pot luck | Both groups scan: Schumilas (2014), Ch 8 Spark due in class: How can sustainable food initiatives in the global North and/or South scale up and out for greater impact without losing foundational values? |

**Week 1, Sept 14**

**Part 1: Introductions** - Where have I lived? What do I think about the ‘sustainability’ of these places? What is our collective class vision for a sustainable city, and where does the food system intersect with this vision?


**Part 2: Course & Assignments Overview** - How can I do well in this course? What is expected of me? What can I expect? Sign-up for site visits and facilitation weeks.

**Week 2, Sept 21**

**Part 1: History of Cities** -- Can we shed light on sustainability in cities by looking at the past? How did cities develop? How does our need to feed ourselves co-produce cities and food systems?

Referred to as ‘the intimate commodity’ food is said to ‘make cities’. In this week we’ll look at how the history of cities is also the history of agriculture and food systems. Looking historically from ancient to modern times, we’ll discuss the ways in which our need to feed ourselves has
co-produced cities and food systems. In particular, we’ll look at how the division of urban and rural evolved in modernity, and how distinct economic activities of ‘industry’ and ‘agriculture’ have shaped our ideas of development and sustainability. But this bifurcation has not always existed. Indeed in North America it has been only 1-2 generations since the city and the countryside were clearly linked together with city folk spending significant time on farms and in fields.

In your spark this week, tell us a story - from your memories, or maybe something you heard about from your grandparents, that links urban and rural in a sustainable way and relate this back to our readings.

Readings (both groups read the same articles this week):


Also scan: IISD’s Sustainable Development Timeline

Part 2: Waterloo Region as our sustainable food lab.

Starting in 2000, Waterloo Region Public Health began an ambitious research, policy and community development program related to the local food system and sustainability. Academics, policy makers, activists and practitioners have cited this work as a ‘watershed’ for the exponential grown in local, green and fair food system initiatives and related municipal planning across Ontario and Canada. Sadly, the work has never been compiled into one place, and hence remains somewhat fragmented. We will draw on these disparate policy and academic reports, videos and case studies, and supplement them with our own site visits/mini case studies. Balancing an appreciative inquiry approach with more critical thinking we will ‘map’ some of these initiatives using the community capitals framework. Then in our final class, following more conceptual thinking on transitions to sustainability and complex systems, we will collectively review our work and identify cultural, political and economic contexts that drive and/or restrain these niche initiatives.

Scan: ‘Waterloo Region Sustainable Food System’ documents posted on LEARN.

Week 3, Sept 28: Class site visit – Sitopia - meet at the Working Centre - downtown Kitchener (meet at the Working Centre on Queen St.)

‘Sitopia’ (versus utopia) is from the Green sitos (or food) and topos (or place). So it literally means ‘food place’. Carolyn Steel suggests we try to see the world through food if we want to build sustainable systems. This week we are going to put on those ‘food system glasses’ she talks about and wander around downtown Kitchener. We’ll divide into 4 teams. Starting from the corner of King and Queen – each team will walk 2-4 blocks in each direction. You’ll have
maps to help you. Your task is to (individually) document what you see using photos and selfies, and then to prepare a reflection. Our challenge is to see and reflect across time (what did food look like here 100 years ago? What kind of relations around food are here today? What possibilities exist for the future?), and imagine across scale (Were there, are there, could there be symbiotic relationships between city and countryside? What about symbiotic relations beyond this region? How are broader social, economic, political and cultural conditions manifest in the (un)sustainable food relations we see? What potential do you see for addressing some of our urban sustainability dilemmas? What food values seem to be shared and practiced in downtown Kitchener? What does that tell us about sustainability in this city?)

**Week 4, Oct 5: Perspectives on Sustainability**

What are the different ways we can think about sustainability of food systems and cities?

Especially in North America, our thinking about sustainable cities has been strongly influenced by the Brundtland report and its ‘three pillars’ approach. At the grassroots this has given rise to the ‘community capitals framework’. As a framework it is pragmatic and easily understood. (We’ll use it to ‘map’ the sustainable food initiatives/site visits in Waterloo Region). The communities capitals approach compliments the sustainable livelihoods framework – an integrated approach to development that also focuses on economic opportunity, social protection and concern with environmental sustainability.

But scholars have begun to note that, in practice, the community capitals framework approach ends up marginalizing issues of ‘social development’, equity and justice. Critical theorists have been working to bridge what often seem like the ‘two solitudes’ of justice and environmental sustainability with the concept of ‘just sustainabilities’.

Many argue the elemental construction of the Brudtland paradigm (and the 3 pillars approach) doesn’t reflect complexity of our socio-ecological problems. We can supplement the pillars or capitals approach by situating sustainable food initiatives within ‘food systems’ by drawing on theorizing about transitions in socio-technical systems. Such systems are complex networks of actors, processes and relationships in which alternative approaches (sometimes called niche initiatives) can seed sustainable regime transformation. Arising primarily in Europe, ‘city-region food systems’ is an approach that draws on this theoretical perspective and moves sustainable city discussions across scales, focuses on ‘governance beyond the state’ processes, and links flows between the urban and the rural in post industrial societies.

**Readings – Group A:**


Readings – Group B:


Also both groups scan:
Urban Agriculture Magazine - #29
Indicator framework for city-region food systems assessment – work in progress at Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems & RUAF.

Week 5, no class Oct 12
There is no class on Oct 12. Instead, use this time to plan/coordinate your site visits, or to go on your visits.

Week 6, Oct 19 - Greening the City
Urban green infrastructure is considered to be an important means to deliver multiple sustainability benefits. Indeed when you mention urban sustainability and food systems to someone, urban agriculture projects come to mind first. Cites in the global North and South alike are turning to urban and peri-urban agriculture for social, ecological and economic reasons. This week we look at how urban food spaces can offer opportunities to interact with nature in ways that can provide multiple ecosystem services and multiple social benefits. What kinds of capital, stocks and assets can these projects build? How do urban greening projects help with nutrient, water, and waste management and recycling? How can these projects be catalysts for civic action and social change? What is the buzz about ‘climate smart’ urban agriculture?
Carolyn Steel maintains that large cities could never produce enough food to feed themselves (which is why we need to re-configure urban-rural relations for sustainability). What do you think? Can these urban food initiatives be replicated and scaled up to feed us and also ‘cool’ the planet? What broader social, economic, political and cultural conditions might be driving and/or restraining these transitions?

Readings – Group A:

Readings – Group B:


Both groups scan:


Week 7, Oct 26: Field Trip – Little City Farm, Tri-City Gleaners & Food Forest
Urban agriculture takes many forms. This week we look at a newly planted food forest, talk with K-W City Gleaners, and visit Little City Farm - whew!!! This will be a busy trip.

These projects make us re-think private and public space in the city. What if every urban neighbourhood had such a site? What social, political, cultural and economic conditions prohibit or encourage replication of such an initiative? Historically, in North America, many urban homes had similar food production activities on their properties. What changed? How does this approach to ‘the rural in the urban’ differ in the global South in your experience?

Your reflection on this site visit should address the question: What social, economic, political, cultural conditions drive and/or restrain projects like these in the global North and/or South?

Week 8, Nov 2: Just Sustainabilities & Inclusive Cities
This week we look at a number of urban sustainability issues with a ‘justice lens’ and consider how cities might be develop food systems that are inclusive. Is the goal of maximizing profit always at odds with meeting social needs? How can cities respond to the problem of food insecurity and limited food access? We consider urban design and the paradoxical relationship between food and neighbourhood and spatial inequalities in food access (food deserts, food swamps). urban ‘food rescue’ as a response to food injustice,

Readings – Group A:


**Readings – Group B:**


**Both groups scan:** RoWH 2012 – Access to Food

**Week 9, Nov 9: Food Flows and Market Based Sustainabilities**
In part, sustainability means support for local economies. City-regions need to be places where producers can earn a living. This week we examine the global proliferation of (so called) ‘alternative’ food networks that re-creating and strengthening urban-rural linkages which were broken in globalization and specialization processes. The global proliferation of such initiatives raises a myriad of questions about cities and sustainability. Can these innovations that are based in the market also address the ecological and justice considerations we’ve discussed? Can we really save the world just by shopping? Is local always more sustainable? Can promising initiatives like CSAs and buying clubs expand into urban retail systems and offer greater choice and convenience? Are new ‘food hubs’ emerging as alternatives to supermarkets? How can promising initiatives ‘scale up and out’ to have greater impact without losing foundational values? In what ways can the new digital world and associated technology aid in achieving urban food sustainability?

**Readings – Group A:**


**Readings – Group B**


**Both Groups Scan:** Urban Agriculture Magazine Issue 30

**Week 10, Nov 16: Governance for Sustainability**
We’ve seen that food is a central dimension of rural-urban linkages and interacts with other urban systems for sustainability. These connections will be most efficient when the governance structures that influence and regulate them are inclusive. The three urban sustainability approaches we’ve looked at (community capital, city-region systems and just sustainability) all suggest we need to create frameworks for conscious food governance. In this week we contrast the process of more ‘top down’ municipal level land use planning with ‘bottom up’ grassroots engagement with food policy councils, as ways of shaping food systems and sustainability in cities. We ask, who shapes the vision for cities? To what degree are planning processes inclusive? How are principles of sustainability incorporated into plans? How do plans on paper play out ‘on the ground”? What about ‘commons’ approaches to governance? Do emerging forms of governance drawing on on-line spaces and commons governance hold promise?

**Readings – Group A:**


**Readings – Group B:**


**Both groups scan:**


Sustainable Food Lab [http://www.sustainablefoodlab.org/](http://www.sustainablefoodlab.org/)
Open Food Network: [https://openfoodnetwork.org/about/organisation/](https://openfoodnetwork.org/about/organisation/)
Week 11, Nov 23: Field Trip: Pfennings Organic Warehouse/Distribution Centre
If, as many have suggested, current consolidated ‘food chains’ that start with corporate farms and end with consolidated retail stores, are unsustainable, how do we aggregate and get food into cities in more sustainable ways? How can we aggregate and move food from smaller scale sustainable growers to networks of smaller scaled retail? This tour of Pfennings organic warehouse and distribution centre might give us a sense for the processes and scale involved in these ‘alternative’ food flows.

Your reflection on this site visit should address the question: What social, economic, political, cultural conditions drive and/or restrain projects like these in the global North and/or South?

Week 12, Nov 30: Mapping Waterloo Region’s Sustainable Food Alternatives
In our final week together, we will pull all of our site visits together. How do these seemingly disparate initiatives begin to give us the sense of an evolving sustainable urban food system? Drawing again on the concept of sustainable transitions in socio-technical systems, we will discuss and describe the social, economic, cultural and political conditions in the broader national and global contexts that drive and/or hold back such sustainable initiatives. To do this, we’ll first consider an example of similar mapping done with alternative food networks in China.

Readings (both groups scan):
Schumilas, T. (2014): Alternative Food Networks with Chinese Characteristics, Ch 8
In addition to the University of Waterloo Regulations available at: http://ugradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/Regulations-Overview the following course practices will apply:

Grading: If you believe that an error has been made in grading a course requirement, please contact the instructor immediately. The instructor reserves the right to re-grade any portion of the submitted material. Hence, it is possible that an appeal may result in a lower grade.

**Late Assignments**
For assignments due to the LEARN drop box, lateness will be penalized by 10% of the assignment total mark per 24-hour period to a maximum of 5 days. The late penalty begins immediately after midnight on the due date. At this point the dropbox for assignments closes, and late assignments need to be emailed to the instructor. **After the 5 day maximum** assignments will not be accepted and a grade of ‘zero’ will be recorded for the assignment.

There is no late penalty for assignments due in class (sparks, facilitation, case study presentations, blogs). These are graded as zero if not completed/handed in during the class in which they are assigned/due.

**Elective arrangements** (e.g. travel plans are not considered acceptable grounds for variance. In special unforeseeable circumstances where an assignment is missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the student, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the course instructor **no later than 48 hours after the scheduled date** and arrange to submit acceptable documentation according to the timeline determined by the course instructor.

Acceptable documentation may include a copy of a death certificate or obituary, a police report or a doctor’s certificate using the UW verification of illness form.

Travel plans or heavy workloads are not considered acceptable reasons for missing or late assignments.

**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. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.]

**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. When in doubt, please be certain to 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. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.] 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, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of 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.

**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.