Governing Global Food and Agriculture/Global Food Systems
ERS-PSCI 606/ERS-PSCI 489/GEOG 429
Course Outline – Fall 2008

Course Director: Jennifer Clapp

Office: ES2 Rm. 2016
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-3 pm, or by appointment
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Times and Location: The course is scheduled as two 1.5 hour slots – a lecture/film session on Mondays, and a discussion/seminar session on Wednesdays.
Lecture/Film sessions: Mondays 2:00-3:20pm, ES1 – 350 (for all students together)
Seminar Discussion sessions: Wednesdays: 11:00-12:20 ES2 2006 (undergraduate seminars)
Wednesdays 12:30-1:50 ES2- 2022 (graduate seminars)

Course Information:

Calendar Description: This course examines the international rules and organizations that have emerged to govern the increasingly global system of food and agriculture. Specific themes to be covered include governance issues related to the rise of global food corporations, agricultural trade liberalization and the WTO, food aid distribution, international agricultural assistance, the global agro-chemical industry, and agricultural biotechnology.

Detailed Description: We will examine the globalization of the agro-food system and the various mechanisms that have arisen to govern it at the global level. We will begin by addressing the current debate on the state of global food security. Some see an impending food crisis, which will require more scientific and technical intervention, combined with a more globalized food system. Others see abundance and argue that alternative agriculture at the local level is sufficient to feed the world's growing population. With this debate in mind, we will look at the current global food system, and the extent to which people around the world are increasingly 'distanced' from the production of the food they eat. We will then trace the historical trajectory of the globalization of the industrial agricultural model and the role that corporations have played in its diffusion globally. We will then turn to look at the global development of and trade in agricultural biotechnology (as part of a more general discussion of the agricultural input industry). Issues at the global trade level, such as the WTO agriculture agreement and recent debates over food aid, will also be covered. Finally we will look at alternative agricultural models, such as organic, fair trade and food localism, and assess their viability in today's globalized world.

Marks Distribution:
Reading Responses (4) 40% (10% each)
Participation: 10%
Book Review Essay: 40%
Presentation: 10%
**Reading Responses:** For 4 of the weeks (after week 1), you are to write a one to two page (single spaced) ‘editorial’ which responds to that week’s readings. Please try to develop an argument regarding the topic we are studying that week, and try to incorporate the following in your reading response: 1) What information, ideas or content in the readings did you find helpful or useful to your thinking about global governance and/or the global food system, and in what way? (i.e. did the readings 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?) 2) What information, ideas or content in the readings did you disagree with or take issue with, and why? You may be called upon to present your editorial comments to the class. The schedule for reading responses will be determined in the first class. These papers are worth 10% each.

**Class Participation:** Your participation grade will be based on your attendance, the quality of your contributions to group discussions (which demonstrates comprehension and constructive critique of readings), and your ability interact with your fellow classmates in a respectful manner.

**Book Review Essay:** You are to write a review of one of the books listed below. If you desperately want to review a book not on this list, please consult with me first. The review should analyse the key ideas presented in the book and clearly link them to the readings and discussions in this course (which should be properly cited where appropriate). This review should be approximately 10 pages long (3000 words). Your review is due on the day that you present it in class (last two weeks).

**Book Review Presentation:** You are to present your book review to the class in the final two weeks of the course. You will have 10 minutes to present your review. Aim for a presentation that gets across the main ideas of the book, and your main points of discussion in your review, in a brief and lively manner. Be prepared to answer questions from your audience.

**Books for Book Review Essay:**


Course Materials:

Readings: There is one required text for this course:

• ERS/PSCI 606 – ERS/PSCI 489 – GEOG 429 Course Reader

Assigned readings should be read before the relevant classes (or at the very least between the lecture/film session on Mondays and the seminar discussion meeting on Wednesdays).

UW-ACE: There will be a UW-ACE website set up for this course. Announcements, relevant web-links and optional readings will be posted on this site. You should check this site periodically for announcements, etc.

Policies:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to debarment from the University. Definitions, procedures, and penalties for dealing with plagiarism are set out on the University of Waterloo webpage (Policy #71 Student Academic Discipline Policy) at:
http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm

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. Once registered with OPD, please meet with the professor, in confidence, during my office hours to discuss your needs.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

September 8/10
Global Governance of Food and Agriculture: Food Security or Food Sovereignty?

Monday: Film: The Global Struggle for Food

Wednesday:
• Amartya Sen “Why Half the Planet is Hungry”, Observer of London, June 16, 2002. (online)
September 15/17
The Current Global Food Situation: How Did We Get from Abundance to Crisis?


Film excerpts from: The Politics of Food and Food or Famine?

September 22/24
Globalization of the Food System - Agriculture, Food and Distancing


Film excerpts from: Jungleburger and/or Food

September 29/October 1
Green Revolution – Driving Forces and Impacts


Film: Seeds of Plenty, Seeds of Sorrow
October 6/8
Corporations and the Global Agro-Food Complex


Film: Merchants of Grain

October 13/15 – No class – Thanksgiving week! Eat well.

October 20/22
Governing Seeds and Agricultural Biotechnology


Film: The Future of Food

October 27/29
Agricultural Trade Liberalization and the WTO


Film: Trade Trap
November 3/5
Food Aid and Famine Relief

Film: The Price of Aid

November 10/11
From Global to Local? Alternatives in Global Context

Film: The Future of Food (last part)

November 17/19
Student Presentations

November 24/26
Student Presentations

December 1st
Student Presentations

Additional films may be shown in the final weeks of class if time permits.