

GGR107H1F: ENVIRONMENT, FOOD, AND PEOPLE

Fall 2015

Friday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

ES 1050

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Office hours: Friday 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm, and by appointment

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the relations between food, nature, and society. Food is fundamental to human existence and central to most cultures – it also has significant and widespread effects on physical and social environments. In this course, we will be using food as a framework to analyze human-environment interactions at a variety of scales, from the local to the global. The course is divided into five units. The first unit will serve as an introduction to environmental geography and the evolution and characteristics of agricultural systems. In the second unit, we will explore how historical developments such as colonialism, industrialization, and the Green Revolution have shaped the contemporary food system, which serves as the focus of the third unit. Here, we will consider the changing geographies of food production and some of the economic, social, and environmental challenges and inequities associated with the globalization of agriculture and large-scale industrial farming. In the fourth unit, we will delve into the consumption of food, looking at food insecurity in both core and peripheral countries (including hunger, famine, and obesity). We will also consider the globalization of food culture, including the hybridization of various forms of cuisine in local contexts. For our fifth and final unit, we will discuss alternative food movements and agricultural systems and their efficacy in addressing some of the most pressing issues associated with the global food system.

Distribution Requirement Status: This is a Social Science course

Breadth Requirement: Society and its Institutions (3)

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course has a strong emphasis on developing critical thinking skills. Thus, upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the issues, concepts, and theories that help us understand the relationships between food, the natural environment, and human society;
- Differentiate between facts and opinions in readings and lectures, and examine the assumptions underlying different arguments (including their own);
- Identify and assemble appropriate and reputable sources of evidence to support their own arguments or perspectives on course material;
- Communicate opinions and supporting evidence more effectively, orally and in writing.*

**This course has been included in the Writing Instruction for TAs (WIT) Project this semester. This means your TAs have received extra training in teaching writing, with the goal of helping you develop your writing skills. To this end, you will be provided with constructive feedback on your writing throughout the semester. If you would like to learn more about WIT, visit <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/wit/?searchterm=wit>.*

III. COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Course Website

The course website is available through the University of Toronto portal (portal.utoronto.ca). All students enrolled in the class should be able to view the link to the course once they enter the portal using their UTORid and password (any questions or concerns about portal access should be directed to the help desk in Robarts Library). All course materials – including the class schedule, tutorial guide, assignments, and lecture slides – will be posted on the website. In addition, you can email me and the TAs through the site. You are expected to check the course website regularly to check for announcements and any modifications to the reading list (you will also be notified of these changes in class).

Workload

There is a considerable amount of reading associated with this course; it is imperative that you come to tutorial and class having read the assigned reading for the week, that you are prepared to discuss the reading in class and tutorial, and that you stay on top of the reading throughout the semester. You should bring any assigned readings with you to tutorial so that you may consult them as necessary.

In addition to chapters and sections from the required textbook, you will be responsible for reading some peer-reviewed journal articles and other works, some of which will likely be challenging. Please consider starting a reading/study group with your peers early on in the semester in order to approach these texts effectively, and of course, you are always encouraged to consult with myself or the TAs if you need clarification on reading content. You can also post questions about readings in the class discussion forum.

Tutorials

To do well in this course, you will need to attend each tutorial session. Tutorials provide an opportunity to discuss the lectures, readings, etc. in a smaller group. They will also help you develop the skills you need for the course assignments. Each tutorial is led by a teaching assistant (TA) – s/he will guide you through the assignments, and will also grade them. Tutorials will be held according to the schedule contained in the course schedule (available on the course website), **beginning in the third week of classes**. Tutorial participation forms 10% of the grade for this course. Please see the Tutorial Guide posted on the course website for more information about the tutorials and what is expected of you.

Class Conduct: Towards A Positive Learning Environment

For this class to be successful, we will need to create and maintain a positive learning environment. To this end, I expect your cooperation in at least four ways:

Respect the rights of others to learn

- Respect for me, your TAs, and your peers requires that you adhere to the following guidelines:
 - If you have a cell phone, **put it away** unless you are asked to use it to participate in class or tutorial (no texting or checking cell phones at any time).

- You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes – **NOT** to browse the internet, check e-mail, Facebook/Twitter, look at pictures, check sports scores, etc.
- **All students who elect to use laptops should sit at the back of the room during lecture to minimize the distraction of their screens to other students; students not using laptops should sit closer to the front of the room to leave space at the back for laptop users.**
- Any discussion or talking in class should be shared with everyone in the room or not done at all.
- Please *do not* arrive late to class or tutorial, or start getting ready to leave before class is over.

Acknowledge and respect diversity

- It is imperative that a respectful, tolerant, and safe atmosphere be maintained in the classroom at all times. Discussion of controversial issues is encouraged in this course. You will not agree with all the points of view of your instructor, TAs, guest lecturers, or fellow students, but as citizens of this class you are responsible for respecting all individuals as fair-minded persons. In this class you will be asked to maintain an open mind to the differences around you, and place positive value on that diversity.

Attend lecture and tutorial

- You are expected to be present at the beginning of class and tutorial and stay until the end. ***Attendance in tutorial affects your grade.*** If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for any course content you missed. In cases of valid absence, please consult me or your TA as soon as possible so that we can work toward getting you caught up.

Take responsibility for your learning experience

- Your participation in this course is crucial – especially in your tutorial section, which will be discussion-based. A significant portion of your grade is based on participation, and in order to participate meaningfully in class and tutorial discussions, you will need to complete the assigned readings, and come ready to discuss them. If parts of the readings are unclear or they raise further questions for you, don't get discouraged – bring those questions to tutorial so you can talk through them with your TA and peers.

IV. COURSE POLICIES

Contacting the Instructor and TAs:

Please note that I have a “**no email**” policy for this course. You may email me in an emergency situation, or to schedule an appointment with me outside of office hours, but otherwise I encourage you to come and see me during my office hours after class on Friday, when I will be happy to answer any questions you have. You may also post questions in the discussion board on the course website; the TAs and I will check it regularly and post responses. The TAs will also hold office hours – they will provide times and locations, as well as other contact information, during the first tutorial. You may wish to visit the TA in charge of your section, but you are welcome to visit any of the TAs (especially if your TA's office hours conflict with your schedule).

Late Work

All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on their assigned due dates.

Late work will only be accepted without penalty in exceptional circumstances such as documented illness and family emergency. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation for a disability or long-term illness, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>.

In all other instances you will receive a 5% reduction on papers for every day past the initial due date (this includes weekend days). Papers submitted more than **one week late** will receive a zero.

Late work can be submitted to your TA's mailbox in the geography office on the fifth floor of Sidney Smith Hall. **Please get your assignment time stamped before you submit it so your TA knows when you handed it in!**

Academic honesty

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University of Toronto courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others (i.e. submitting work you have done for another class) or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own (i.e. plagiarism) is "scholastic misconduct." Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for this course will result in a failing grade.

All work you submit must be your own. When you use other people's ideas in your assignments, you must acknowledge the source. For instance, portions of this syllabus have been adapted from Dr. Sarah Wakefield's syllabus for the same course from a previous semester. A failure to acknowledge this would constitute plagiarism. We will discuss how to properly reference the work of others when we discuss the first assignment. You should also refer regularly to the Writing and Referencing Guide posted on the course website.

The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to speak with myself or the TAs. More information is available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students>.

V. TEXTS/WEBSITE

There is one required textbook for the course which is available for purchase through the campus bookstore (please note that the first edition of this text is **not** an acceptable substitute):

- Haskins, Greg R. 2011. *Environment, Food, and People: Custom Textbook for the University of Toronto (2nd Edition)*. Boston, MA: Pearson Learning Solutions

Additional readings will be made available on the course website, which can be accessed by logging in to the UofT Portal, and clicking on the link for the course. **You are expected to have completed all readings assigned for the week before you go to tutorial or class (whichever comes first), and to bring readings with you to tutorial.**

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Response Papers	20%	(2/3 @ 10% each)
Critical Appraisal	15%	
Commodity Chain Analysis	20%	
Participation	10%	
Final Exam	35%	

***All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on their assigned due date.**

Response Papers – 20% (2/3 @ 10% each)

- RP1 due: Oct 9th (Week 4); RP2 due: Nov 6th (Week 8) OR RP3 due: Nov 27th (Week 11)

You will be required to write two response papers throughout the semester based on films and readings. These short, two to three page papers will be graded out of 10 points. Each response paper is due one week after it is assigned. There will be three response paper prompts throughout the semester – you must complete the first response paper when it is due, but you can choose between the second and third response paper prompts – in total you will complete TWO response papers. A handout detailing the assignment requirements will be provided in class and online.

Critical Appraisal – 15%

- Due: Oct 23rd (Week 6)

In this assignment, you will undertake a critical appraisal of an op-ed about a current issue related to agriculture in Canada. The assignment requires that you differentiate between facts and opinions, examine the assumptions and evidence underlying different arguments, and communicate your findings effectively in writing. You will spend time in tutorial developing your critical thinking and writing skills.

Detailed assignment instructions will be provided during the first few weeks of class.

Food Item Commodity Chain – 20%

- Due: Dec 4th (Week 12)

In this assignment, you will track a food item through the food commodity chain from production to consumption. You will identify where and how the food is grown (and by whom), how it is processed, packaged, and transported (and by whom), and where/how/by whom it is sold to the consumer. You will compare this contemporary commodity chain to the historical journey your food took when it was first incorporated into the global food system. In undertaking this analysis, you are expected to draw on issues, concepts, and theories from the course material to help you understand your food's journey from field to table and the environmental and social issues that arise during that trip. You will also be expected to assemble appropriate and reputable sources of evidence to support what you say, and to communicate effectively through writing and maps.

Detailed assignment instructions will be provided during the first few weeks of class.

Course Participation – 10% (5% tutorial contributions; 5% tutorial discussion facilitation)

Fostering meaningful student participation in a course of this size can be challenging, but your contributions are crucial, and there are a variety of ways in which you are required and encouraged to participate.

Your participation grade for the course is determined solely by your participation in tutorials. To do well in this course you will therefore need to attend each tutorial; attendance will be taken using a sign-in sheet. Your tutorial attendance is expected and will therefore not contribute to your grade, but an excessive number of absences will adversely affect it. You are expected to come to your tutorial having read the readings assigned for the week – be prepared to discuss these. Your participation in tutorial discussions will be assessed by your TA throughout the semester and will count for 5% of your overall grade. The other half of your participation grade will be based on a discussion you will lead during your tutorial section. As part of a small group, you will facilitate a discussion about the assigned readings during a portion of one tutorial – you will sign up for a week/topic during your first tutorial meeting. Instructions for discussion facilitation will be discussed at this time.

In addition to these required participation components, your participation during lecture is valued and appreciated. To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have their voice heard, we will be trying out an online discussion platform called “Today’s Meet.” This tool will allow you to post questions or comments in real time using your smartphone, laptop, or tablet – these will appear on the main screen. We will discuss the mechanics of this tool during the first day of class. We will also be having old-fashioned discussions during class, so please raise your hand and join the conversation often!

Final Exam – 35%

- Date: TBD (Exam Period: Dec 11 – 22)

The final exam will take place during the exam period at the end of the semester. It will consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions, and will be based on material from lectures, tutorials, videos, assigned readings, and discussions.

VII. COURSE GRADING

The assignments in this course will be graded according to the following scale (used throughout Arts & Science):

Percentage	Grade	GPA Value	Grade Definition
90-100	A+	4.0	<u>Exceptional performance</u> : strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
85-89.9	A	4.0	
80-84.9	A-	3.7	
77-79.9	B+	3.3	<u>Good performance</u> : evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
73-76.9	B	3.0	
70-72.9	B-	2.7	
67-69.9	C+	2.3	<u>Intellectually adequate performance</u> : student who is profiting from her or his university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
63-66.9	C	2.0	
60-62.9	C-	1.7	
57-59.9	D+	1.3	<u>Minimally acceptable performance</u> : some evidence of familiarity with subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
53-56.9	D	1.0	
50-52.9	D-	0.7	
0-49.9	F	0.0	<u>Inadequate performance</u> : little evidence of even superficial understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Some of the following readings may be changed or omitted as we proceed; please consult the course website for the most updated reading list.

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS	TUTORIALS
UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION: ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHY AND AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS				
WEEK 1: Sept 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Overview • A brief introduction to geography • Why geography is important to studying food systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 2: Introduction - Geography: Its Developments, Research Themes and Concepts 		No tutorial
WEEK 2: Sept 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief history of agriculture • Characteristics of agricultural systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 3: Agricultural Systems • Textbook Chapter 4: Soils and Agriculture • Textbook Chapter 5: Biotechnology and Food Resources (sections 5.2 and 5. 5) 		No tutorial
UNIT 2: THE FOOD SYSTEM IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT				
WEEK 3: Oct 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonialism and world-systems theory • Industrialization and the evolution of the modern food system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 7: Worlds Apart: Global Difference and Inequality • Vallianatos. 2011. Cash-crop colonialism and the attack on African agriculture 		Tutorials begin! Instructions for Critical Appraisal Assignment; Sign-up for discussion facilitation
WEEK 4: Oct 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of population growth and food supply • The Green Revolution • The Blue Revolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 1: A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking • Textbook Chapter 5: Biotechnology and Food Resources (From beginning to section 5.2) 	Response Paper 1 Due	Tutorial!

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS	TUTORIALS
UNIT 3: THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM				
WEEK 5: Oct 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing geographies of food production • The globalization of agriculture? • The commercialization of food production in peripheral countries • Agriculture and pandemics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 6: The Global Industrial Food System (From beginning to section 6.4) • Reddy. 2007. Impact of Globalisation on Small Farmers Worldwide: Implications on Information Transfer 		Tutorial: Instructions for Commodity Chain
WEEK 6: Oct 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biotechnology and food resources: The debate over GMOs • Biofuels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 5: Biotechnology and Food Resources (sections 5.3 and 5.4) • Umar. 2015. India's shocking farmer suicide epidemic • Abid. 2013. The myth of India's 'GM genocide': Genetically modified cotton blamed for wave of farmer suicides • Thompson. 2009. Agricultural Biofuels: Two Ethical Issues 	Critical Appraisal Due	Tutorial!
WEEK 7: Oct 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing rural worlds • Agricultural migrants and working conditions • Land Grabs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 10: Rural Worlds • Mwesigire. 2014. Land Grabbing in Africa: The New Colonialism 		Tutorial!
UNIT 4: CONSUMING FOOD				
WEEK 8: Nov 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Nutrition? • Food Insecurity: Under/mal-nutrition, famine, and obesity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 8: What is Nutrition? • Moseley. 2012. Famine Myths: Five Misunderstandings Related to the 2011 Hunger Crisis in the Horn of Africa 	Response Paper 2 Due (if you submit RP 2, you DO NOT submit RP 3)	Tutorial!

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS	TUTORIALS
WEEK 9: Nov 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalization and food culture • Theories of globalization • Localization and hybridization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 9: Consumption and its Geographies • Steger. 2009. Globalization and History: Is Globalization a New Phenomenon? • Groslik and Ram. 2013. Authentic, Speedy, and Hybrid: Representations of Chinese Food and Cultural Globalization in Israel 		No tutorial (fall break)
WEEK 10: Nov 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition transitions • Development, urbanization, and dietary change • The "Livestock Revolution" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vorster, et al. 2011. The Nutrition Transition in Africa: Can it be steered into a more positive direction? • Satterthwaite, et al. 2010. Urbanization and its implications for food and farming 		Tutorial!
UNIT 5: ALTERNATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS				
WEEK 11: Nov 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative agricultural systems and techniques • Urban gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook Chapter 5: Biotechnology and Food Resources (section 5.6 to end) • Textbook Chapter 6: The Global Industrial Food System (Section 6.4 to end) 	Response Paper 3 Due (if you DID NOT submit RP 2)	Tutorial!
WEEK 12: Dec 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The food movement: Organic food, local food, fair trade, farmers' markets • Big Organic • Food justice/sovereignty • Course Conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dearden. 2014. Fairtrade at 20: Much achieved but much more needs to be done • Strom. 2012. Has Organic Been Oversized? • Roberts. 2009. Spoiled: Organic and Local Is So 2008: Our industrial food system is rotten to the core. Heirloom arugula won't save us. Here's what will • Grey and Patel. 2015. Food sovereignty as decolonization: some contributions from Indigenous movements to food system and development politics 	Food Item Commodity Chain Due	Tutorial: Exam Review