

GGR 329 H1S

THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM

Course Syllabus | Winter 2017

Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto

Lectures: Fridays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in SS2125

Course Instructor

Bryan Dale, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography and Planning

Email: bryan.dale@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., or by appointment,
SS5022 (Sidney Smith Hall)

Teaching Assistant: Kelsey Carriere, kelsey.carriere@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Objectives

Through an examination of the changing geographies of food and agriculture, this class aims to enable students to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the issues, concepts and theories that help us to comprehend the relationships between food, the natural environment, and human society.
2. Identify the historical and contemporary factors that shape the global food system.
3. Understand some of the main theories, concepts, and political aspects concerning the geographies of the global food system.

Notes from the FAS Calendar about the course:

Explores the changing global geographies of food by tracing international movements of food through both mainstream and 'alternative' supply chains. The implications for sustainability, food security, community autonomy and health are investigated.

- Recommended Preparation: 8.0 FCE's including 1.0 FCE in Geography (SOC SCI/BR=3)
- Distribution Requirement Status: Social Science
- Breadth Requirement: Society and its Institutions (3)

http://calendar.artsci.utoronto.ca/crs_ggr.htm

Overview

Food is fundamental to human existence, central to most cultures and significant in terms of its effects on the physical environment. While the food system has long been global, the current processes involved with producing, distributing and consuming food are in many ways unique when we consider their complexity and the consequences those processes have worldwide.

This course introduces some key issues and concepts for understanding food and agriculture in a period of profound change. It serves as an introduction to the global food system through a critical examination of the interrelationships between social, political and economic systems. We will explore a range of topics to analyze the changes that have been taking place in the food system—from production and labour to health and inequalities based on class, race and gender. Students will use food as a lens to explore current issues that cover social, political, economic and ecological systems, by making connections between theoretical concepts and real-world problems.

We will discuss recent historical trends that have led to the development of the current food system, and address debates concerning global trade, corporate concentration, industrial agriculture, hunger and more. We will be focusing on the responses to the challenges to socio-ecological sustainability and justice that are evident in the world of food and agriculture. These responses include, for example, food sovereignty and agroecology, and we will consider such proposals for alternative food systems with a focus on their implications for Toronto and Canada, in relation to the global context.

Course Organization

Course Format

Class meetings will consist of opening lectures to provide some background and context for the themes for the day, as well as multi-media presentations, group discussions and other interactive activities and, occasionally, lectures by guest speakers. The material covered in class will be used to help interpret (as opposed to summarize) the readings, to add new concepts and examples to those covered in the text, and to provide opportunities for discussion.

The course website is available through Blackboard (a.k.a. the Learning Portal: portal.utoronto.ca). Information on login procedures is available [here](#). All course materials will be posted on the Blackboard site, including the syllabus, assignment descriptions and submission links, and additional information related to the course.

Assigned and Recommended Readings

See below for the course schedule and readings list. There is an assigned textbook for this course, which is available at the U of T Bookstore:

- Koç, Mustafa, Jennifer Sumner and Anthony Winson (eds. 2017) *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, Second Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press. *[Please be sure to look for the new edition!]*

All other course readings, unless otherwise noted, will be available electronically through Blackboard. Please read the required readings *before* the class for which they are assigned. Recommended readings can help you further develop your understanding of the issues being discussed in a given week, and they may be

particularly helpful as you work on your course assignments. You are encouraged to come to class with questions about the assigned/recommended readings.

Assignments and Grading

Item	Grade weight	Dates
Assignment 1: Podcast Analysis	20%	Feb. 10
Assignment 2: Position Paper	35%	Mar. 17
Exam	35%	TBA (Exam period is Apr. 10 to 28)
Participation	10%	Ongoing

Notes:

- Details regarding the assignments will be provided in separate documents.
- For important dates, see the Faculty of Arts & Science calendar at: http://calendar.artsci.utoronto.ca/Sessional_Dates.html ...For example, March 13, 2017 is the last day to drop S section code courses from academic record and GPA.

Assignment Submissions and Late Penalties

Assignments must be submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. to Blackboard on the due date in question (Go to *Course Materials > Assignments*). Hard copies will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, provided you have cleared this with me (the Course Instructor). Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day (including weekends). Assignments will not be accepted more than ten days after the due date.

Turnitin.com

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to *Turnitin.com* for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the *Turnitin.com* reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin.com* service are described on the [Turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) web site. If you have concerns about the course's use of *Turnitin*, contact me at least a week before the first assignment is due, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Missed Term Work

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the dates indicated in this outline. Exemption or deferral of an assignment or examination is only permitted for a medical or personal emergency or due to religious observance. Please notify me if you anticipate any problems in meeting the deadlines outlined here. A student who misses an assignment deadline should come forward as soon as possible, and usually no later than one week after the date in question. I will request documentation in order to accommodate missed term work, e.g.

- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form (available [online](#))
- Student Health or Disability Related Certificate
- A College Registrar's Letter
- Accessibility Services Letter

Participation

A portion of your overall course grade (10%) is devoted to your participation in class. I am, however, sympathetic to the fact that some students are shy and others require time for reflection before they comment on the issues being discussed. Consequently, this grade accounts for much more than simply how frequently you participate (i.e. *quality* of participation is generally more important than *quantity* of interventions). It includes other factors such as being on time, being prepared with the readings done, being attentive and respectful during discussions, taking notes, and asking thoughtful questions before, during and after class. I also ask that you make an effort not to dominate discussions and to allow your fellow classmates the opportunity to fully express their perspectives, even if you may sometimes disagree with them.

Note: In order to help me calculate your participation mark, I will take attendance in each class beginning in week 2, and I will occasionally ask you to complete tasks in class and submit your responses/reflections.

Email Policy

Please be sure to allow adequate time for me to respond to your emails (e.g. avoid sending last-minute emails before an assignment is due). I will endeavour to respond to messages within 24 hours, however come to see me in person if you have a question that requires more than a brief response. I cannot guarantee that I will be checking email on weekday evenings or on weekends.

On Writing (Well)

There are numerous resources at your disposal at the University of Toronto that are intended to help you improve your writing. Some of these are tailored to students whose first language is not English. Some are simply meant for anyone seeking to improve their writing. I encourage you to make use of these resources.

To access these resources visit: www.writing.utoronto.ca

See in particular:

- The page on Writing Centres at www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres
- Resources for those for whom English is not their first language at www.writing.utoronto.ca/faqs/english-as-second-language.
Note also that [Communication Café](#) will be holding sessions for English language learners who are seeking guidance.
- Writing Plus is a workshop series aimed at helping students improve a range of academic skills: www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus

On Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Please also be sure that you are clear about:

- Academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>, and

- How to avoid plagiarism in your writing:
<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or www.accessibility.utoronto.ca

Impediments to Academic Performance

If you should encounter a situation that compromises your ability to perform to your potential in this course please notify me immediately. I am committed to your success in this course so please maintain an open line of communication with me.

Video and Audio Recording

You are not permitted to make any video or audio recordings of any aspects of in-class meetings on electronic devices, unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. accessibility needs). If you would like to take photos or videos during class, please speak with me beforehand.

Use of Technology in the Classroom

The misuse of technology, which includes texting, web browsing, online gaming, video and movie watching, etc. is not permitted in class. While I do not ban the use of laptops, it is my preference that you take hand-written notes and do not bring laptops to class. Studies have shown that written notes lead to better conceptual understanding of material than typed notes, and students with open laptops during classes (i.e. lectures, etc.) tend to score lower overall on tests and exams than students who do not use laptops.

Course Schedule and Readings

Note: Chapters listed in capital letters below are from the assigned textbook (see above).

Class 1: January 6

Geographies of the Global Food System

- CHAPTER 8 – Albritton, Robert - Two Great Food Revolutions: The Domestication of Nature and the Transgression of Nature's Limits
- CHAPTER 1 – Koç, Mustafa, Margaret Bancarz, and Kelsey Speakman - The Interdisciplinary Field of Food Studies

Recommended:

- Tansey, Geoff (n.d.). *The Food System: An Overview* [video]. Available at: <http://www.foodsystemsacademy.org.uk/videos/geoff-tansey.html>
- Winter, Michael (2003). Geographies of food: agro-food geographies – making reconnections. *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(4): 505–513.

Class 2: January 13

Food Regimes and the Industrial Food System

- CHAPTER 2 – Friedmann, Harriet - Changing Food Systems from Top to Bottom: Political Economy and Social Movements Perspectives
- CHAPTER 9 – Weis, Tony - A Political Ecology Approach to Industrial Food Production

Recommended:

- McMichael, Philip (2009). A Food Regime Genealogy. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 36(1), 139–169.
- CHAPTER 12 – Sundar, Aparna – The Food System in the Fisheries: Crisis and Alternatives

Class 3: January 20

Corporate Power and its Consequences

- CHAPTER 13 – Winson, Anthony - Spatial Colonization of Food Environments by Pseudo Food Companies: Precursors of a Health Crisis
- Cloke, Jon (2013). Empires of Waste and the Food Security Meme. *Geography Compass*, 7(9), 622-636.

Recommended:

- Clapp, Jennifer (2014). Financialization, distance and global food politics. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(5): 797-814.
- Johnston, Josée, Andrew Biro and Norah MacKendrick (2009). Lost in the supermarket: the corporate-organic foodscape and the struggle for food democracy. *Antipode*, 41(3): 509-532.

Class 4: January 27

Food Sovereignty

- CHAPTER 24 – Desmarais, Annette Aurélie - Building Food Sovereignty: A Radical Framework for Socially Just and Ecologically Sustainable Food Systems
- Rosset, Peter (2011). Food Sovereignty and Alternative Paradigms to Confront Land Grabbing and the Food and Climate Crises. *Development*, 54(1): 21-30.

Recommended:

- Martínez-Torres, M.E. and P.M. Rosset (2010). La Via Campesina: the birth and evolution of a transnational social movement. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37(1), 149–76.
- Edelman, Marc, Tony Weis, Amita Baviskar, Saturnino M. Borras Jr, Eric Holt-Giménez, Deniz Kandiyoti and Wendy Wolford (2014). Introduction: critical perspectives on food sovereignty. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(6): 911–931.

Class 5: February 3

Agroecology

- CHAPTER 22 – McInnes, Ashley and Mount, Phil - Actualizing Sustainable Food Systems
- Altieri, Miguel A. and Toledo, Victor Manuel (2011). The Agroecological Revolution in Latin America. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38(3): 587-612.

Recommended:

- CHAPTER 21 – Sumner, Jennifer - Conceptualizing Sustainable Food Systems
- CHAPTER 11 – Kornelsen, Shannon - The Welfare of Farm Animals on Intensive Livestock Operations (ILOs) in Canada

Class 6: February 10

~ First assignment due ~

Canada within the Global Food System

Guest lecture: Aric McBay, author and organizer with the National Farmers Union

- CHAPTER 10 – Wiebe, Nettie - Crisis in the Food System: The Farm Crisis
- Desmarais, Annette Aurélie and Wittman, Hannah (2014). Farmers, foodies and First Nations: getting to food sovereignty in Canada. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(1): 1153–1173.

Recommended:

- CHAPTER 20 – MacRae, Rod - Food Policy for the 21st Century
- CHAPTER 17 – Clark, E. Ann - Questioning the Assumptions of Genetically Modified Crops in Canada

Class 7: February 17

Toronto within the Global Food System

- CHAPTER 19 – Mendes, Wendy - Municipal Governance and Urban Food Systems

- Lister, Nina-Marie (2007). Placing Food: Toronto's Edible Landscape. In Knechtel, John (ed.). *Food*. Boston: MIT Press, pp. 148-185.

Recommended:

- Levkoe, Charles and Wakefield, Sarah (2011). The Community Food Centre: Creating Space for a Just, Sustainable and Healthy Food System. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development*, 2(1): 249-268.
- McClintock, Nathan (2014). Radical, reformist, and garden-variety neoliberal: coming to terms with urban agriculture's contradictions. *Local Environment*, 19(2): 147-171.

~ Reading week: No class February 24 ~

Class 8: March 3

Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Racial Justice

Guest lecture: Yi Wang, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography & Planning

- CHAPTER 14 – Martin, Debbie and Amos, Margaret - What Constitutes Good Food? Towards a Critical Indigenous Perspective on Food and Health
- Holt-Giménez, Eric and Wang, Yi (2011). Reform or transformation? The pivotal role of food justice in the US food movement. *Race/ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, 5(1): 83-102.

Recommended:

- Morrison, Dawn (2011). Indigenous food sovereignty: a model for social learning. In H. Wittman, A. Desmarais, and N. Wiebe (eds.). *Food sovereignty in Canada: creating just and sustainable food systems*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, pp. 97-113. [Available at the library]
- Guthman, Julie (2008) "If They Only Knew": Color Blindness and Universalism in California Alternative Food Institutions. *The Professional Geographer*, 60(3): 387-397.

Class 9: March 10

Responses to Hunger and Food Insecurity

- CHAPTER 15 – Dachner, Naomi and Tarasuk, Valerie - Origins and Consequences of and Responses to Food Insecurity in Canada
- CHAPTER 18 – Margulis, Matias E. and Duncan, Jessica - Global Food Security Governance: Key Actors, Issues, and Dynamics

Recommended:

- Wakefield, Sarah, Julie Fleming, Carla Klassen, Ana Skinner (2013) Sweet Charity, revisited: Organizational responses to food insecurity in Hamilton and Toronto, Canada. *Critical Social Policy*, 33(3): 427-450.

Class 10: March 17

~ Second assignment due ~

Diets, Consumption and Health in the Capitalist Food System

- Guthman, Julie, and Dupuis, Melanie (2006). Embodying neoliberalism: economy, culture, and the politics of fat. *Environment and Planning D*, 24(3): 427-448.
- CHAPTER 5 – Beagan, Brenda L. and Chapman, Gwen E. - Constructing "Healthy Eating"/Constructing Self

Recommended:

- CHAPTER 3 – Johnston, Josée and Cappeliez, Sarah - You Are What You Eat: Enjoying (and Transforming) Food Culture
- LeBesco, Kathleen (2011). Neoliberalism, public health, and the moral perils of fatness. *Critical Public Health*. 21(2): 153-164.

Class 11: March 24

The Gendered Politics of Food

Guest lecture: Terran Giacomini, PhD Candidate, University of Toronto

- CHAPTER 6 – Brady, Jennifer, Elaine Power, Michelle Szabo, and Jacqui Gingras - Still Hungry for a Feminist Food Studies
- Allen, Patricia and Sachs, Carolyn (2007). Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, (15)1: 1-23.

Recommended:

- Shiva, Vandana (2009). Women and the Gendered Politics of Food. *Philosophical Topics*, 37(2): 17-32.

Class 12: March 31

Moving Forward + Exam Review

Note: Come to class with questions prepared!

- Holt-Giménez, Eric and Shattuck, Annie (2011) Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38(1): 109-144.
- CHAPTER 23 – Levkoe, Charles Z. - Alternative Food Initiatives, Food Movements, and Collaborative Networks: A Pan-Canadian Perspective

Recommended:

- Guthman, Julie (2008). Bringing Good Food to Others: Investigating the Subjects of Alternative Food Practice. *Cultural Geographies*, 15(4): 425-441.

~ Exam period runs Apr. 10 to 28 ~