

EVST 480: FOOD JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY
Spring 2020. Mon. and Weds. at 3:00 - 4:20 pm
 LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING, ROOM 138

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

I strongly encourage you to come talk with me if you have questions, or if I can be of help in any way. My office hours are: **Monday, 2:00 - 3:00 pm, Wednesday, 4:20 - 5:20 pm.** If these are impossible for you, please contact me and we can find a different time to meet.

Purpose of the Course

Food is central to our lives – a basic human need imbued with political, economic, ecological, and cultural meaning. Whether we think about it or not, one of the most fundamental ways that we interact with the natural and social world every day is through the food we eat. Accordingly, in this course, we will look at the historical and ecological conditions created by the dominant, industrial food and agricultural system. Examining this background will allow us to then investigate emerging alternatives and grassroots efforts to move toward a healthier, more just, and ecologically sound food system.

The course will demonstrate an approach to interdisciplinary study and practice. Organized as a seminar, we will read deeply, including three books, and engage in meaningful discussion. You will have the opportunity to improve your critical thinking, reading, writing, research, and oral communication skills through class materials, discussions, and research or action-projects.

Learning Objectives

1. To increase participants' knowledge of the development of US agriculture; the role of science and technology in agricultural industrialization; the major structural issues in the dominant food system (e.g., concentration of economic power); and questions surrounding sustainability of current food systems.
2. To introduce the broad field of agri-food studies, and develop participants' knowledge of the alternative agri-food movements; the strategies being pursued; and the potentials and limits of those strategies.
3. To develop analytical and critical thinking skills through discussion, careful reading, and reflection assignments.
4. To increase substantive and experiential knowledge through a term paper or project.
5. To improve speaking and presenting skills by sharing your learning in class and in presentation.

Requirements

Readings: In addition to articles and other material posted on our course Moodle site, three required books are available for purchase at **Shakespeare and Co.:**

Ackerman-Leist, Philip. 2017. *A Precautionary Tale: How One Small Town Banned Pesticides, Preserved Its Food Heritage, and Inspired a Movement.* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Montgomery, David R. 2017. *Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life.* New York: Norton.

Quinn, Bob, and Liz Carlisle. 2019. *Grain by Grain: A Quest to Revive Ancient Wheat, Rural Jobs, and Healthy Food*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Class Participation and Attendance (25%): As a seminar, my aim is to create a learning community in which we grapple seriously and critically with the issues presented by the readings. That means, one of your main tasks is to do each reading thoughtfully before class and then help us discuss it. The quality of the course greatly depends upon the active participation and contributions of all members. Accordingly, you must be prepared to read, think, and take responsibility for your learning. In order to do this, **please always bring readings to class!**

I hope you will enjoy attending class, and I expect you to attend consistently. If you are not in class, you cannot benefit from hearing the discussion of the material, nor can you contribute to the group's learning together. I understand that active participation in class discussions is not easy for everyone, so we will use various formats and processes for discussions. Give it a try.

Please treat each other with respect when expressing your views and help us to create space in which everyone has a chance to speak and learn from one another. If you are a person who often wants to step forward with an answer or response, consider pausing and listening first; if you are more reticent to speak consider stepping forward!

Reading Reaction Papers (50%): Your main job is to do the readings thoughtfully, and to help us discuss them in class. In order to help you read carefully and to facilitate class discussion, you will write ten short papers in which you react to the readings assigned. **These papers must be typed and should be 2 double spaced pages in length written in Times New Roman 12-pt. Font. Reaction papers are due in class the day we discuss the reading covered in the paper.**

These papers should reflect your reaction to and engagement with the readings; **they should not be a simple summary of the content of the readings.** In your reaction papers you should identify several (1-3) topics that we might address in class discussion. A great place to start is to focus on what really left an impression on you as you were reading. Trust yourself and follow your interests. The following are all great ways to approach reaction papers:

- grapple with things you don't understand in the reading(s) and identify points needing to be clarified;
- comment on all or part of the reading(s) that you agree or disagree with
- comment on parts of the reading(s) that you find especially enlightening or moving;
- explore how the reading(s) relates to your own personal experience;
- explore how the readings relate to each other; and/or
- explore how the reading(s) relate to ideas and issues raised in this course.

You must do at least 10 reaction papers this semester. **Five must be completed by February 26, and the remaining five by April 15.** I split them this way because I'd like you to engage with the readings *throughout* the course, rather than slamming out ten at the beginning or end of the course. If you do not have five written by February 26, you may submit more than five between February 26 and April 15 in order to reach 10. These will be counted for a maximum of 3 out of 5 points.

The reaction papers will be scored according to how seriously, extensively, and accurately you engage the readings. I want to see evidence that you are thinking about, and interacting with, the readings. Though you do not need to make a 'Works Cited' page for reaction papers, as I will know the source material, strong responses should make specific references and pull quotations from the texts.

You will receive 0-5 points for each paper:

- 5 = excellent
- 4 = very good
- 3 = good
- 2 = fair
- 1 = poor
- 0 = not an adequate effort or not turned in

Term Papers, Projects and Presentations (25%): In this course, you can do either a traditional term paper or you can choose to do a more action-oriented project. The term papers or projects provide an opportunity for you to delve more deeply into a topic that interests you. Much more will be said about these papers/projects in class. You will report your findings in presentations, papers and/or other products due at the end of the term.

Term papers: Undergraduates will produce term papers that are 15 pages in length. Graduate students will produce papers that are about 20 pages long.

Projects: These projects (which may be done in small groups) are intended to give you an opportunity to engage in an action or community service learning related to the food system. I will share ideas in class. Unless you and I agree on an alternative plan, projects will be reported on through an annotated portfolio that presents your work. Portfolios include a description of your project, details on your activities, and any materials that were generated as a result of the work (e.g., videos, factsheets, photos, posters). Portfolios must include a 2 to 3-page reflection paper about what you learned in the course of doing your work (e.g., What were your successes? How did you push yourself? What challenges did you encounter? What would you do differently next time? What are your take home lessons?). When projects are conducted in teams, each student should write their own reflection paper on the process.

Paper/Project Proposals: In a two to three-page proposal due on **Wednesday, Feb. 19**, you will:

- (1) identify a specific research question or project;
- (2) discuss briefly why you think it is significant;
- (3) describe what you will do to answer the question of interest and/or what specific tasks you might engage in if your project is more action-oriented;
- (4) if you are working in a team, please sketch out the division of labor among the team members; and
- (5) include a preliminary bibliography of at least 5 sources or a list of people you will contact for assistance or background information.

The more specific you are in your proposal, the more helpful I can be in giving you feedback. I am happy to help you think about topics and methodologies, so please contact me during my office hours.

Presentations: During the last few weeks of the semester, you will make a short, formal presentation on your research/project to the class. Be creative!

Final papers are due Monday, **May 4** at noon in my mailbox in Rankin Hall.

Grading: Your final grades will be based upon the following:

- Class participation (25%)
- Reflection papers (50%)
- Presentation (5%)

- Final term paper or project (20%)

Graduate students: To receive graduate credit for this course, you will sign up to help lead discussion twice during the semester (see me). Your term papers or projects will be developed in greater sophistication and depth.

Guest Speakers: Several guest speakers may be added as appropriate.

Other Activities: If there is sufficient interest among the members of the class, we may want to organize a field trip, participate in a service project, and/or have a potluck.

A note on plagiarism: Academic honesty and integrity are essential. The student code of conduct expressly forbids plagiarism, which is the representation of another person's work as your own. It will not be tolerated in this course, and any student whom I suspect of plagiarizing will be subject to the procedures and consequences described in the student conduct code.

#	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1	Mon. 1.13.20	Introduction to the course and each other	
2	Weds. 1.15.20	The rise of industrial agriculture	Lyson, Thomas. 2004. "From subsistence to production." Pp. 8-29 in <i>Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community</i> . Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.
	Mon. 1.20.20	NO CLASS - MLK DAY	
3	Weds. 1.22.20	Land justice	Holt-Gimenez, Eric. 2017. "Agrarian questions and the struggle for land justice in the United States." Pp. 2-14 in <i>Land Justice: Re-imagining Land, Food, and the Commons in the United States</i> . Oakland: Food First Books. Corse, A. (2019). "I'm a Farmer and a Mother. Both Roles Should be Valued More" <i>Civil Eats</i> . [online] Civil Eats. Available at: https://civileats.com/2019/10/30/im-a-farmer-and-a-mother-both-roles-should-be-valued-more/?fbclid=IwAR0wJOnZqn7UDfgf_Rez3QkDZXFp2e37nS3Ke5J9GOMrKdMxxhrHMEfv8XM [Accessed 5 Jan. 2020].
4	Mon. 1.27.20	Industrialization: Costs and benefits	Guptill, Amy, Denise A Copelton, and Betsy Lucal. 2017. "Industrialization: The high costs of cheap food." Chapter 6 in <i>Food and Society: Principles and Paradoxes</i> . Second edition. Malden MA: Polity. Manning, Richard. 2014. "Idaho's sewer system: As big ag flourishes, the Snake River suffers." <i>High Country News</i> . 46(13): 10-17.
5	Weds. 1.29.20	<i>Growing a Revolution</i>	Pp. 9-50
6	Mon. 2.3.20	<i>Growing a Revolution</i>	Pp. 51-114
7	Weds. 2.5.20	<i>Growing a Revolution</i>	Pp. 115 -165
8	Mon. 2.10.20	<i>Growing a Revolution</i>	Pp. 166-219
9	Weds 2.12.20	<i>Growing a Revolution</i>	Pp. 220-284

	Mon. 2.17.20	NO CLASS - PRESIDENT'S DAY	
10	Weds. 2.19.20	Term papers and proposals	TERM PAPER OR PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE
11	Mon. 2.24.20	Key concepts	Holt-Gimenez, Eric. 2010. "Food security, food justice, or food sovereignty." <i>Food First Backgrounder</i> Vol. 16. No. 4. Retrieved at: www.foodfirst.org Hassanein, Neva. 2003. "Practicing food democracy: A pragmatic politics of transformation." <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i> 19:77-86.
12	Weds. 2.26.20	Food justice	White, Monica. 2011. "D-Town Farm: African American Resistance to Food Insecurity and the Transformation of Detroit." <i>Environmental Practice</i> 13(4):406-417. Montalvo, Marcelo Felipe Garzo. 2015. "To the American food justice movements: A critique that is also an offering." <i>Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development</i> Advance online publication: http://dx.doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2015.054.017
13	Mon. 3.2.20	Food justice activism	Alkon, Alison Hope. And Kari Marie Norgaard. 2009. "Breaking the food chains: An investigation of food justice activism." <i>Sociological Inquiry</i> 79(3):289-305.
14	Weds. 3.4.20	Native people and food	Vernon, R. V. 2015. "A Native perspective: Food is more than consumption." <i>Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development</i> . Additional reading TBA
15	Mon. 3.9.20	<i>A Precautionary Tale</i>	Pp. ix – 44
16	Weds. 3.11.20	<i>A Precautionary Tale</i>	Pp. 45 – 94
	SPRING BREAK - 3.16.20 - 3.20.20		
17	Mon. 3.23.20	<i>A Precautionary Tale</i>	Pp. 95 – 170
19	Weds. 3.25.20	<i>A Precautionary Tale</i>	Pp. 171 - 199
20	Mon. 3.30.20	Term papers and projects	TERM PAPER AND PROJECT CHECK IN

21	Weds. 4.1.20	Work session	Work on your term papers and projects
22	Mon. 4.6.20	<i>Grain by Grain</i>	TBA
23	Weds. 4.8.20	<i>Grain by Grain</i>	TBA
24	Mon. 4.13.20	<i>Grain by Grain</i>	TBA
25	Weds. 4.15.20	<i>Grain by Grain</i>	TBA
26	Mon. 4.20.20	Presentations	
27	Weds. 4.22.20	Presentations	
28	Mon. 4.27.20	Presentations	
29	Weds. 4.29.20	Presentations	
30	Mon. 5.4.20	Final paper due	Final papers are due no later than noon on May 4 in my mailbox in Rankin Hall. We will NOT have a final exam. We will, however, schedule a final potluck and gathering during the last few weeks of classes.