

**EVST 480: FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT**  
**SPRING 2016. TUES. AND THURS. AT 11:10-12:30**  
**LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING, ROOM 138**

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**Office hours:** If I can be of assistance, please come see me during my office hours by signing up for a meeting time on the sheet posted across from my office door in Rankin. My office hours are: **Tuesdays 9:30 – 10; Wednesdays 11:00 – 12:20 and 1:00 – 2:00.** If these are impossible for you, please contact me to make an appointment.

**PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:**

According to Wendell Berry, “eating is an agricultural act.” Food is central to our lives, and it has the capacity to profoundly connect us with nature and the place where we live. But most of us know very little about how the food we eat each day is produced, how production processes might impact the environment and human health, or how our food reaches our plates.

Overall, the purpose of the course is to introduce you to some of the contemporary issues in the study of food and agriculture in the U.S. and to demonstrate an approach to interdisciplinary study and practice. We will look at the conditions created by the dominant, “industrial” food and agricultural system, as well as investigate emerging alternatives – such as “sustainable agriculture,” “organic farming,” and “local food systems.”

You will have the opportunity to improve your critical thinking, writing, and oral communication skills through class discussions and a series of assignments aimed at encouraging you to engage with the readings, concepts, and other course materials.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Readings:** The required readings (see schedule) will be posted on our Moodle site for this course. The syllabus is also posted at the top of the Moodle site so you can go there to access any hyperlinks easily if you want. In addition, three required books are available for purchase through the UC Bookstore. These are:

Ackerman-Leist, Philip. 2013. *Rebuilding the Foodshed: How to Create Local, Sustainable, and Secure Food Systems.* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Carlisle, Liz. 2015. *Lentil Underground: Renegade Farmers and the Future of Food in America.* New York, NY: Gotham Books.

Estabrook, Barry. 2012. *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit.* Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, Inc.

**Class Participation and Attendance:**

The course is organized as a seminar, which means it is primarily discussion, but we’ll mix it up some. Its quality greatly depends upon the active participation and contributions of all members. This is an upper-division and graduate level seminar; therefore, you must be prepared to read, think, and take responsibility for your learning. Also, all of us have a responsibility to use this opportunity to learn from the experiences, insights, and values of others in the course. My aim is

to create a learning community in which we will grapple seriously and critically with the issues presented by the readings.

One of your main tasks in this course is to do each reading thoughtfully before class and then to help us discuss it in class. Please bring readings to class! I hope you will enjoy attending class, and I will expect you to attend class 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, but I encourage you to give it a try. I may choose to give you a little extra credit at the end if you have been an active and thoughtful participant in class. Please treat each other with respect when expressing your views and help us to create space so that everyone has a chance to speak.

**Essays:** The course is divided into three sections with an essay assignment due at the end of each section. The assignments will ask you to think critically about what you read, to synthesize the material covered, and perhaps do some extra research or activity.

I will distribute the question(s) and specific guidance at least two weeks before it is due. Typically, these papers should be five pages, typed, and double-spaced with normal margins and fonts. I expect these papers to be well organized, grammatically correct, and completely referenced.

Late Papers: If you do not turn in an essay assignment on time for whatever reason, you can turn it in as much as one week later – but no later than that – for one less point for each day it is late.

**Graduate Students:** I expect a greater level of sophistication and synthesis in your essays. In addition, each graduate student will prepare a **term project or research** paper (15 pages in length, double spaced) and report on their findings in a brief **oral presentation** to the class at the end of the semester.

Graduate students will make a **proposal for their term paper to me by Tuesday, Feb. 16**. The more specific you are, the more helpful I can be in giving you feedback. I am happy to help you think about ideas during my office hours. As you think about what you want to look at, remind yourself that you can only do so much in this brief period of time. I suggest you define your topic as narrowly and specifically as you can. Please include the following in two to three pages:

- (1) Identify the specific research topic or question you want to explore.
- (2) Discuss briefly why you think it is significant;
- (3) Describe what you will do to answer the question of interest;
- (4) Include a preliminary bibliography.

**Outlines and Bibliographies:** An outline of your term paper and an updated and annotated bibliography is due on **March 15**.

**Presentations:** On **May 3**, graduate students will make a short, formal presentation on their research/project to the class. Be creative! **Papers due on Friday, May 5 by 5 PM.**

**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.

**Grading:** There are a total of 200 possible points; letter grades will be assigned accordingly.

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>
➤ Class participation (i.e., attendance, contributions to class discussions, leadership)	50
➤ Three essays (0-50 points each)	150
➤ Graduate students' research papers will be an additional 50 points (so grade out of 250).	

**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.

**COURSE MENU**  
SUBJECT TO CHANGE IF NECESSARY

**PART ONE: AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**1. Tues., Jan. 26 – What’s on Our Plate? Getting to Know Each Other.**

**2. Thurs., Jan. 28 – Agrarianism and Industrialism**

Lyson, Thomas. 2004. “From subsistence to production.” Pp. 8-29 in *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*. Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.

Berry, Wendell. 2001. “The whole horse.” Pp. 63-79 in *The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life*, edited by Eric T. Freyfogle. Washington: Island Press.

**3. Tues. Feb. 2 – Agricultural Development: Structure and Markets**

Guptill, Amy, Denise A Copelton, and Betsy Lucal. 2013. Industrialization: The high costs of cheap food. Chapter 6 in *Food and Society: Principles and Paradoxes*. Malden MA: Polity.

Manning, Richard. 2014. “Idaho’s sewer system: As big ag flourishes, the Snake River suffers.” *High Country News*, 46(13): 10-17.

Kim, Anne. 2016. “Lettuce Pray.” *Washington Monthly Magazine*, January/February.

**4. Thurs., Feb. 4 – Critical Agrarianism**

Carlisle, Liz. 2012. “Critical agrarianism.” *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*. Pp. 1-11.

**5. Tues., Feb. 9 – *Tomatoland* pp. xiii-middle of page 96**

**6. Thurs., Feb. 11 – *Tomatoland* pp. 97-152.**

**7. Tues., Feb. 16 – *Tomatoland* pp. 153 –197.**

**8. Thurs., Feb. 18 – Systems Thinking**

Carolan, Michael. 2012. “Understanding the food system: Past, present and future.” Pp. 40-65 in *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. London: Routledge.

Lynas, Mark. 2015. “How I got converted to G.M.O. Food.” Opinion. *New York Times*. April 24.

**9. Tues., Feb. 23 –Vandana Shiva**

Dr. Shiva will be on campus on Wed. She is the Founder and Director, Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology and Founder and Managing Trustee, Navdanya Trust, New Delhi, India. See: [www.vandanashiva.org](http://www.vandanashiva.org) to learn about her work and Navdanya.

Shiva, Vandana. 2005. “Introduction” (Pp. 1 -12). *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Shiva, Vandana. 1989. “Science, nature and gender.” Ch. 2 in *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. London: Zed Books.

Specter, Michael. 2014. “Seeds of Doubt.” *The New Yorker*. August 25 issue.

**Wed. Feb. 24 – Dr. Vandana Shiva – Please attend at least one of these talks.**

- “Living Seed, Living Soil and Earth Democracy” @ 3:10 p.m. in Gallagher Business Building Room 123
- President’s Lecture Series: ‘We Are All Seeds: Food Security and Environmental Sustainability’ @ 8:00 pm, Dennison Theatre UM

**10. Thurs., Feb. 25 – Discussion and Work Session**

**11. Tues., March 1 – ESSAY #1 DUE. Be prepared to share your ideas in class.**

### **PART TWO: UNDERGROUND**

**12. Thurs., Mar. 3 – Roots of change**

Berry, Wendell. 2009 (2006). “On *The Soil and Health*.” Pp. 161-172 in *Bringing it to the Table: On Farming and Food*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint.

*Lentil Underground* – Authors note; Prologue, Chap. 1 Homecoming (pp. xii-17)

**13. Tues., Mar. 8 – *Lentil Underground* Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 (Pp. 19-80)**

**14. Thurs., Mar. 10 – *Lentil Underground* Chapters 6-11 (Pp. 81-170)**

**15. Tues., Mar. 15 – *Lentil Underground* Chapters 12-Epilogue (Pp. 170-263).**

**16. Thurs., Mar. 17 – Ecological Agriculture**

Guest speaker, David Oien, Timeless Seeds.

Magdoff, Fred. 2007. “Ecological agriculture: Principles, practices, and constraints.” *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 22(2): 109-117.

**17. Tues., Mar. 22 – TBA**

**18. Thurs., Mar. 24 – Work Session**

**19. Tues., March 29 – ESSAY #2 DUE. Be prepared to share your ideas in class.**

### **PART THREE: FOODSHED THINKING AND DOING**

**20. Thurs., March 31 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

Preface, Intro., and Part I: Dilemmas (chap. 1-3, pp. xi-26).

**SPRING BREAK: Week of April 4**

**21. Tues., April 12 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

Part II: Drivers: Energy; Environment (chap. 4, 5; pp. 29-96)

**22. Thurs., April 14 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

Part II: Drivers: Food Security; Food Justice (chap. 6-7, pp. 97-158)

**23. Tues., Apr. 19 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

Part II: Drivers: Biodiversity; Market Value; Marketplace Values (chap. 8-10, pp. 159-210).

**24. Thurs., Apr. 21 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

Part III. New Directions (Chap 11 & 12, pp. 211–254)

**25. Tues., Apr. 26 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

Part III. New Directions (Chap 13 & 14, pp. 254—292)

**26. Thurs., Apr. 28 – TBA**

**27. Tues., May 3 – GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

**28. Thurs., May 5 – Work Session.**

**29. Friday, May 13 8:00-10:00 – Exam period. ESSAY #3 DUE AT FINAL GATHERING.  
Be prepared to share your ideas in class.**

Note: There will be no exam, but we are going to meet during exam week. We will try to select another time, earlier in the week, and have a final gathering/potluck and reflection on the course. If we cannot find an earlier time, we will meet at the designated one, so plan on being there.