

Community & Environmental Sociology 340

Critical Approaches to Food Systems



Maxine Albro, WPA Mural, Coit Tower, San Francisco (1930s)

Fall Semester 2015

TR 2:30-3:45

Office Hours: TR 1-2:30 or by appt.

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Nothing is more fundamental to human survival and satisfaction than food. The production, processing, preparation, and consumption of food involve us in intimate relations with the natural world and with each other. They are part of our daily lives and our cultural heritage. This course provides concepts and frameworks for thinking about all aspects of our contemporary food system, including its tremendous commodification, economic concentration, and global reach. It explores what those trends mean for communities of consumers and workers who participate in the food system, paying attention to the class, race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status shape experiences. At the same time, the course examines the transformative work being done by food movements to take control of and reconfigure their relationships to food.

Note on participation: The quality of our collective experience in this course depends on your participation. Participation means ATTENDING and keeping up with the readings and being able to discuss them thoughtfully in class. I encourage debate based on careful reading of materials and we will work to cultivate an environment of respect for one other's views.

Course Materials:

Books:

1. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*, by Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman, MIT Press, 2011.
2. *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit*, by Barry Estabrook, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2011.
3. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food*, by Steve Striffler, Yale University Press, 2005.

Course reader: available electronically through MyUW. I will arrange to have a hard copy printed for purchase through StudentPrint for students who prefer that format.

Assignments (see descriptions below):

Writing projects (5)	6 points each	30 points
Quizzes (2)	10 points each	20 points
Final Research Project		<u>50 points</u>
Total		100 points

1. **Writing projects** are listed on the syllabus and are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated. These are not “reaction papers” or “opinion pieces” although they often ask you to reflect on some aspect of your own experience. They are meant to be well-written and well-reasoned 3-page essays where you take a position on an issue, often incorporating evidence from class readings or some other source. I will give more specific explanations and we will talk about grading criteria, and format during class.

2. **Quizzes:** There will be a mid-term and a final quiz. These are not comprehensive exams but short exercises designed to measure whether you understand key concepts introduced over the preceding weeks. I will give you a list of concepts that might be covered, but the quiz will require you to demonstrate a complex understanding of these terms—not just to memorize definitions.

2. The **final research project** is a chance for you to do independent research on some aspect of the food system of interest to you. You can define your own topic, but I will need to approve it and you will need to turn in a prospectus and list of sources before the final project is due. That way I can give you feedback on sources and on defining the study in a way that is feasible to complete in one semester. Some possible projects would include: a commodity chain analysis of a product; mapping food resources in a neighborhood and interviewing people about food access; comparing organic or artisanal production of a product to its “agro-industrial” production; examining working conditions in some part of the food system (farm work, processing, retail, restaurant work); study of a food movement (could include interviews with participants); the history of a cuisine or food practice; the global dissemination of a food or food practice. Due dates: Topic (Oct 15); Prospectus and Sources (Nov 3); Final Project (Dec 15).

Grading Scale	73-79 = B/C
94-100 = A	66-72 = C
87-93 = A/B	60-66 = D
80-86 = B	below 60 = F

Accommodations: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Grade disagreements: If you have questions about a grade, speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair of Community & Environmental Sociology, Gary Green, who will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the appeals procedure if no resolution is reached informally.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: The UW takes academic honesty very seriously. If you are found to be cheating on exams or papers, you will receive a grade of F and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

All of the work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this appears straightforward, it can sometimes be confusing. Whenever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come to see me (or Kate) to figure out the best strategy. If you use a web-based source, you can always cite the URL. For information about plagiarism policy:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

More information on source citation:

www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Graduate Student Participation: Graduate students enrolled in the class will prepare a final research paper (around 30 pages, with the topic to be discussed with me during office hours) in lieu of the assignments listed above.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS AND READING QUESTIONS
Sep 3	Introduction to Course	
	Key Concepts	
Sep 8	What is a Food System?	Gereffi, Gary, Lee, Joonkoo, and Christian, Michelle, "U.S.-Based Food and Agricultural Value Chains and Their Relevance to Healthy Diets," (Rdr) Kloppenburger, Jack, John Hendrickson, and G. W. Stevenson, "Coming Into the Foodshed" (Rdr) Howard, Phil, Food Systems Website: https://msu.edu/~howardp/foodsystem.html
Sep 10	Food Meaning and Memories	Shange, Ntozake, "What'd You People Call That?" (Rdr) Carney, Judith, "Memory Dishes of the African Diaspora" (Rdr) Mintz, Sidney, "Eating American" (Rdr) Alexander, Elizabeth, "Butter" (Rdr) <u>ASSIGNMENT 1</u> : Write an essay or poem about a food memory and what it means to you.
Sep 15	The Political Economy of the Food System, Pt. 1	Heffernan, William, "Consolidation in the Food and Agricultural System" (Rdr) Hendrickson, Mary, and Heffernan, William, "Concentration of Agricultural Markets" (Rdr) Food Industry Consolidation (graphic- Rdr)
Sep 17	The Political Economy of the Food System, Pt. 2	Mascarenhas, Michael, and Busch, Lawrence, "Seeds of Change: Intellectual Property Rights, Genetically Modified Soybeans, and Seed-Saving in the United States" (Rdr) "Seeds of Dilemma: Who Owns the Genes That Fill the Stomach?" http://whyfiles.org/2014/seeds-of-dilemma-who-owns-the-genes-that-fill-the-stomach/ Bittman, Mark, "Stop Making Us Guinea Pigs," http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/25/opinion/stop-making-us-guinea-pigs.html

Sep 22	The Global Food System	<p>OXFAM, "Behind the Brands: Food Justice and the 'Big 10' Food and Beverage Companies" (Rdr)</p> <p>Anna Lappé and Olivier De Schutter, "Who Says Food Is a Human Right?" http://www.thenation.com/article/who-says-food-human-right/</p> <p>Menzel, Peter, and D'Aluizio, Faith, "What the World Eats" http://time.com/8515/hungry-planet-what-the-world-eats/</p> <p><u>ASSIGNMENT 2</u>: Diagram a commodity chain for a food item of your choosing. Write a paragraph explaining your diagram. Phil Howard's "food system" website (see Sept 8) has useful examples.</p>
Sep 24	Hunger	<p>Wright, Richard, excerpt from <i>Black Boy (American Hunger)</i> (Rdr)</p> <p>Skilern, Tim, "Going Hungry in America," http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/lookout/going-hungry-america-distressing-humbling-scary-011618014.html</p> <p>Drewnowski, Adam, and Barratt-Fornell, Anne, "Do Healthier Diets Cost More?" (Rdr)</p> <p>Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Chart Book: SNAP Basics," http://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/chart-book-snap-helps-struggling-families-put-food-on-the-table</p>
Sep 29	Food Security, Food Sovereignty, Food Justice	<p>Holt-Giménez, "Eric, Food Security, Food Justice, or Food Sovereignty?" [CFJ]</p> <p>Alkon, Alison Hope and Agyeman, Julian, "Introduction: The Food Movement as Polyculture" [CFJ]</p>
	Legacies of Inequality in Food Systems	
Oct 1	Institutional Racism and Hunger in Native American Communities	<p>Norgaard, Kari Marie; Reed, Ron; and Van Horn, Carolina, "A Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional Justice on the Klamath" [CFJ]</p>

Oct 6	Racial Legacies: Southern Black Farmers	Green, John J.; Green, Eleanor M.; Kleiner, Anna M., "From the Past to the Present: Agricultural Development and Black Farmers in the American South" [CFJ]
Oct 8	Race and Immigration in California Agriculture	Minkoff-Zern, Laura-Anne; Peluso, Nancy, Sowerwine, Jennifer, and Getz, Christy, "Race and Regulation: Asian Immigrants in California Agriculture" [CFJ] <u>ASSIGNMENT 3:</u> Choose an organization working to address some aspect of inequality in the food system. Using their website and any other materials you can find, write an essay explaining how they <i>define</i> the problem they are trying to solve, and what they are <i>doing</i> about it.
Oct 13	Food Desert?	McClintock, Nathan, "From Industrial Garden to Food Desert: Demarcated Devaluation in the Flatlands of Oakland, California" [CFJ] Fields, Tanya, "End the Corporate Exploitation of Food Deserts," http://www.ebony.com/wellness-empowerment/food-justice-end-the-corporate-exploitation-of-food-deserts#axzz3gdaGAIZg
Oct 15	Farmworker Food Insecurity	Brown, Sandy, and Getz, Christy, "Farmworker Food Insecurity and the Production of Hunger in California" [CFJ] <u>TURN IN TOPIC FOR FINAL PROJECT</u>
	Food System Case Studies	
Oct 20	Industrial Food Production	Estabrook, Barry, <i>Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit</i> , pp. 1-72 <u>ASSIGNMENT 4:</u> Write an essay about some aspect of the food history of the place where you grew up. Where did food come from? Who grew it? Was it plentiful or scarce? Talking to relatives or people from your "place" is a good way to start.

Oct 22		<i>Tomatoland</i> , pp. 73-138
Oct 27		<i>Tomatoland</i> , pp. 138-199
Oct 29		Quiz 1
Nov 3	Food Processing	Striffler, Steve, <i>Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food</i> , Intro and Chs. 1-3 <u>TURN IN PROSPECTUS AND SOURCE LIST FOR FINAL PROJECT</u>
Nov 5		<i>Chicken</i> , chs. 4-6 BEGIN KEEPING FOOD DIARY FOR 1 WEEK
Nov 10		<i>Chicken</i> , chs. 7-8
	Consumption	
Nov 12	Dietary Advice	Nestle, Marion, "The Food Industry and 'Eat More'" (Rdr) Nestle, Marion, "From 'Eat More' to 'Eat Less'" (Rdr) <u>ASSIGNMENT 5</u> : Turn in food diary and essay on what you learned from it
Nov 17	Inequality and Consumption	Freeman, Andrea, "Fast Food: Oppression Through Poor Nutrition" (Rdr) Guthman, Julie, "'If They Only Knew': The Unbearable Whiteness of Alternative Food" [CFJ]
	Food Movements	
Nov 19	Eating Locally	McEntee, Jesse C., "Realizing Rural Food Justice: Divergent Locals in the Northeastern United States" [CFJ]

Nov 24	Community Food Systems Pt. 1	Segment of Film: <i>Urban Roots</i>
Dec 1	Community Food Systems Pt. 2	Morales, Alfonso, "Growing Food and Justice: Dismantling Racism through Sustainable Food Systems" [CFJ] White, Monica, "D-Town Farm: African American Resistance to Food Insecurity and the Transformation of Detroit" (Rdr) Royte, Elizabeth, "Street Farmer," http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/05/magazine/05allent.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 Brisco, Fabu, "Urban Renewer: Robert Pierce Takes Produce to the People," http://www.channel3000.com/madison-magazine/dining-drink/Urban-Renewer/30739130
Dec 3	Community Food Systems, Pt. 3	Mares, Teresa M., and Peña, Devon G., "Environmental and Food Justice: Toward Local, Slow, and Deep Food Systems" [CFJ] Roberts, Wayne, "Food Policy Encounters of a Third Kind: The Toronto Food Policy Council" (Rdr)
Dec 8		Quiz 2
Dec 10	Global Movements: Agroecology	"Declaration of Nyeleni" (Rdr) Altieri, Miguel A., and Víctor Manuel Toledo, "The Agroecological Revolution in Latin America: Rescuing Nature, Ensuring Food Sovereignty and Empowering Peasants" (Rdr) De Schutter, Olivier, "Agroecology and the Right to Food" (Rdr) [De Schutter covers much of the same material as Altieri and Toledo, so you can just skim the report]
Dec 15	Wrap Up	<u>FINAL PROJECT DUE</u>