

GEOG 4/568: Contemporary Food Systems

Spring 2018

Tues & Thurs; 10:00-11:20

Lillis 185

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All course materials can be found on the canvas course site: canvas.uoregon.edu

Food is the stuff that binds us to our planet, to nature, and to our communities. Recent years have seen a proliferation of interest in the study food, both academically and in popular culture from writers such as Michael Pollen and Eric Schlosser. This proliferation has brought us into contact with new ingredients (offal, anyone?) and new cuisines. It's also led to a general critique of what is affectionately known as the industrial food system and a proliferation of 'new' food movements: urban agriculture, veganism, backyard gardens, eat local, eat organic, nose-to-tail eating, and so much more. In reality, these are not new, but have been reinvented and resituated in the larger context of a growing concern for health of both bodies and the environment that forms the basis of the critique of global food systems.

Contemporary food systems is a broad name, and as such, this class can go in many directions. We will cover some aspects of the industrialization of food from a political economy perspective, but we will also delve into a newer trend in the geography of digestion, or how ideas about what constitutes proper digestion have also shaped our current food system. In the final weeks of this class, we will delve into just a few aspects of the food justice movement, focusing on race, gender, and how scale has been brought into food movements.

A geographical approach to food systems seeks to understand the spatial manifestation of food, people, economies, and cultures round food. This course will focus primarily (although not exclusively) on issues in the US, just as a way to contain the material. Much research in less developed countries has focused on nutrition and poverty, rather than some of the other ways we will look at it. That is a lack in the literature that we will peek through, but cannot explore fully in this class.

Class meetings will be a combination of small and large group discussions and reflections. There will be minimal lecturing in this course. There will be reading assigned for almost every class session. For those sessions students are expected to bring a 250-300 word write-up reflection (NOT SUMMARY!) of the readings. They should also come with two questions about the readings. These questions could be about confusion over content, but hopefully more about how a concept might be applied in a different context. We will actively use these reflections in class and students are expected to be prepared to talk through the readings each day.

Expected Learning Outcomes

- Identify the spatial and historical processes that comprise the current food system.
- Engage with course concepts to understand current states of food production and distribution.
- Situate personal choices regarding food and nutrition in a larger context and see how food systems are shape and are shaped by our preferences.
- Critically analyze a food policy issue and construct an appropriate response that incorporates diverse perspectives.

Requirements

- **Complete all of the readings prior to coming to class.**
 - Bring a 250-300 word reflection on concepts, focusing on lingering questions and application to other issues. Bring 2 to 3 questions to invite discussion to class.
- **Attend and actively participate in class meetings.** This class depends upon your active engagement and what you bring to the discussion. Please be ready to bring it.
- **Complete three take-home assessments.** One each after the three sections of the course, after weeks 3, 6 and 9.
- **Complete a policy brief and accompanying storymap.** Details on this will be provided by week 2.

How grades will be determined

Assessment type	points
Attendance & participation	20
Reading reflections	20
Policy brief (incl peer review, etc)	30
Storymap policy brief	20
Assessments (15 pts ea)	45
TOTAL	135

Graduate students: Please meet after first class session to agree on extra work for graduate credit

A note on assignments:

This course is about professional development. Like any class, make sure you follow the guidelines and hand in professional quality material. As such;

- Marginal work will earn a marginal grade;
- Any assignment that is late will receive 10% off for each day it is late;
- There is no opportunity for extra credit in this class.

Academic Integrity Code

All students are expected to complete assignments in a manner consistent with academic integrity. Students must produce their own work and properly acknowledge and document all sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases). Students can find more complete information about the University of Oregon's Policy on Academic Dishonesty in the University of Oregon Student Handbook. Find links on the Blackboard to clarify what is meant by plagiarism and to find proper ways of using sources.

If you are found to have plagiarized (copied) off a classmate or from other materials for a test or an assignment of any sort, your first warning will be a zero on the assignment. Your second incident will result in an F in the course.

Disability Statement

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me at the beginning of the term if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is an important part of a student's educational experience. Students are expected to attend every meeting of their classes and are responsible for class attendance. Regardless of what reasons there may be for absence, students are accountable for all academic activities, and I reserve the right to require special work or tests to make up for the missed class or classes.