

SOC 3460 Special Topics: FEEDING THE WORLD and SUSTAINING LIVELIHOODS
Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba
Three credit hour course - Winter 2015 – T/R 2:30 – 3:45
Room: Tier 215

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Office hours: Thursday 3:45 – 4:45 (or make an appointment by e-mailing me at Annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why does hunger persist? What economic and political forces drive the global food system? Is this system efficient? This course examines the causes of hunger and the links between being “stuffed” or “starved.” We also examine solutions and how communities use food sovereignty to help feed the world, sustain livelihoods, and cool the planet.

The course looks at the political and economic forces that drive the global food system; it also examines the social and environmental impact of food production and consumption, and why this matters. SOC 3460 is designed to help us better understand the global food system and explore efforts at building alternative food systems that are socially-just and environmentally sustainable.

The course is divided into different units, each dealing with specific themes. We begin by looking at what history can tell us about hunger and famines since an historical perspective might provide some important lessons for how we can better understand the current context. The unit then proceeds by examining some of the arguments concerning the causes of hunger and mainstream solutions. Next we explore the processes involved, and the impact of, the globalization of an industrial model of agriculture. We then focus more on better understanding the social and environmental costs of industrial, corporate-led agriculture and food. We will then examine the promises and limitations of the mainstream food security approach that has been used in attempts to deal with hunger. The course ends by exploring what food sovereignty is all about: we will analyze if and how it is a more socially just and environmentally sustainable model of agriculture and food.

The course will centre on lectures, use some documentary film and guest speakers (when available), and involve some in-class discussion of course topics. Students are expected to actively participate in these discussions.

COURSE OUTLINE

This syllabus is subject to change. As we go through the course the sequence of themes may be altered, more time for discussions may be added and/or new topics may be substituted for something that is already listed. You are strongly advised to check D2L regularly for all updates and the list of required readings.

January 6, 2015: Introduction to Course

Unit One: Some Causes and Responses to Hunger

What can we learn from history?

- Lessons drawn from the Irish Potato Famine and Famine ravaged India

What really happened in Niger in 2005?

The Politics of Aid

The Global Food Crisis and What the World Eats

Global land grabbing

Unit Two: The Globalization of Agriculture and Food

Modernizing Agriculture: Exporting the Green Revolution

Industrializing Agriculture and Food

Impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement

Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program and Mexican Farm Labourers

What is the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Agriculture and who cares?

Unit Three: The Social and Environmental Costs of Industrial Agriculture and Food

The Blue Revolution: Shrimp Farming

Intensive Livestock Production and Food Safety

The Coca Cola Case and the KillerCoke Campaign

Bananas, Pesticides and the Power of a Transnational Corporation

The World According to Monsanto

What do agriculture and food have to do with climate change?

Unit Four: The Promises and Limitations of Food Security

The Human Right to Food

Three World Food Summits

The 2012 UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Mission to Canada

Unit Five: From Food Security to Food Sovereignty

What exactly is Food Sovereignty?

Agrarian Reform and Brazil's Zero Hunger Campaign

Agro-ecology and Small farms vs. Big Farms and Industrial Food

Eating local food vs 'food from nowhere'

Peoples' Food Policy Project: Food Sovereignty in Canada

Course Overview

COURSE READINGS: Throughout the course I will provide the references (and/or links) to all required readings. Because these references will be uploaded on a weekly basis you need to

regularly check D2L for updates. The following required text for this course is available in the U of M bookstore:

Roberts, Wayne. 2013. *The no non-sense guide to world food*. 2nd Edition. New Internationalist and Between the Lines.

IMPORTANT DATES:

February 16-20: Mid-term break – no classes are held this week

March 19: Last day for voluntary withdrawal from this course without academic penalty

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES

	Due Date	%
Discussion paper #1, Unit 1	2:30pm, January 27, 2015	25%
Discussion paper #2, Units 2 and 3	2:30pm, March 12, 2015	35%
Attendance and participation		15%
Discussion paper #3, Units 4 and 5	2:30pm, April 9, 2015	25%

Critical Discussion Papers

Students will submit three critical discussion papers of the required readings and film(s) used in the course. A critical reflection paper is not simply an overview of the articles and the films. Instead, students will analyze what the readings and film(s) tell us about the food system by also integrating key learnings from the lectures. That is, the papers can certainly provide a summary of the argument(s) and the evidence used in the articles and films. But, you must go beyond this to also include your reflections/thoughts on what this all means for how we can better understand aspects of the global food system.

Critical discussion papers #1 and #3: The papers must meet the following specifications:

- Be typed on 8.5” x 11” white paper
- 8 pages of discussion + a title page (a title, your name and student number) + the list of references you used in your discussion paper
- Double-spaced lines using Times New Roman 12 pt font
- Remember to number the pages.

Critical discussion paper #2: This paper must be 11 pages + title page + list of references. This paper will reflect on the readings and films used in Units two and three and also integrating key learnings from the lectures.

Assignments are to be submitted on the SOC3460 site of D2L by 2:30pm of the due date. I have set up a Dropbox for that purpose.

DUE DATE POLICY: Late papers will be penalized 5% per day late. No papers will be accepted if they are submitted five days or more after the due date. Exceptions will be made **only** in the case of acceptable circumstance (i.e. serious illness) and acceptable documentation. In the event of such a case the request for an extension **must** be made **before** the due date. Computer failures do not fall in the category of acceptable circumstances.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP A COPY OF ALL OF THE WORK YOU HAND IN.

Attendance and participation: Students must read all of the required readings, attend all classes and participate in class discussions. This will greatly enhance your understanding of the course content and help you prepare thoughtful and analytical discussion papers. The attendance/participation grade will be based on attendance and your participation in the discussion.

In assigning letter grades for the course, the following scale will be used:

A+	90% and over	Exceptional
A	80 - 89%	Excellent
B+	75 - 79%	Very Good
B	70 - 74%	Good
C+	65 - 69%	Satisfactory
C	60 - 64%	Adequate
D	50 - 59%	Marginal
F	less than 50%	Failure

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic dishonesty is a serious offence. Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, ("Personation at Examinations" (Section 5.2.9) and "Plagiarism and cheating" (Section 8.1)) and duplicate submission by reading documentation provided at the Arts Student Resources web site at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html>. Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them. The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

The minimum penalty for plagiarism on a written assignment is F on the paper and may result in and F-DISC (discipline) in the course. This notation appears on the student's transcript. For repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of up to 1 year.

The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty in a test or final examination is F for the test/examination, and an F-DISC (discipline) in the course plus a suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of one year. The F grade and disciplinary notation appears on the student's transcript. For repeat violations, the penalty may include suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of up to 5 years.

DISPOSAL OF TERM WORK: Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for four (4) months from the end of the final examination period for the term in which the work was assigned. At the conclusion of this time, all unclaimed term work will become property of the Faculty of Arts and be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.

USE OF CELL PHONES AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS: While the use of cell phones (and texting) has become a regular feature of our everyday lives, *students should refrain from using their cell phones during class time*. Similarly, while students are welcome to bring a laptop computer to class for the purpose of recording notes from the lectures and discussions, *the use of laptop computers for checking emails or surfing the Internet during class time is not permitted*.