Community & Environmental Sociology 341

Labor in Global Food Systems

Fall 2019 – TR 4:00-5:15
Agricultural Hall 10
Class email list: cesoc341-1-f19@lists.wisc.edu
3 cr. S-I (cross-listed with Soc)
Canvas URL: https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/169099

Professor Jane Collins
Office: 312 Agricultural Hall
jcollins@ssc.wisc.edu
Office hours: TR 2:30-3:30

Official Course Description:
Provides an overview of our current food system and how new technologies and globalization are reshaping it, focusing especially on the implications for workers throughout the food chain. We will also learn about the ways that social movements are working to reshape commodity chains by promoting local production, fair trade, and labor justice. P: A C&E Soc or Soc course.

Overview:
In our global economy, much of our food travels thousands of miles from farm to plate and undergoes extensive processing. Because of the distance and complexity of the connections between producers and consumers, it is hard for most of us to know who grows our food and under what conditions, what kinds of labor are involved in its processing and distribution, and what happens “behind the kitchen door” in the restaurants where we eat or behind the scenes in grocery stores and other retail outlets. In this course, we will learn to build models of commodity chains as a way of visualizing and studying all of the activities, from conception to end use and disposal, involved in bringing food to market. The analysis of commodity chains provides a novel way of studying globalization and a methodology for uncovering the social relationships and transactions that make up markets. Through this lens, we will explore debates about the state of our current food system and how new technologies and globalization are reshaping it. We will also learn about the ways that social movements are working to reshape commodity chains by promoting local production, fair trade, and labor justice.
Instructional Mode and Credit:
This class meets for two 75-minute face-to-face class periods each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of classroom for every class period.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify sources of information appropriate for analyzing global food systems
- Construct models and descriptive accounts of food commodity chains
- Analyze how institutions govern local and global food systems
- Describe the kinds of labor involved in various parts of the food system
- Learn interview and observation-based methodologies and practice them to gain knowledge of a type of food system labor
- Map the spatial dimensions of food commodity chains
- Engage in ethical reasoning about more just food system conditions

Course Materials:

Books:
Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*, 2013

Reader: PDFs and links on our CANVAS website.

Assignments:

Reading responses: Ten times during the semester, you post a thoughtful response to one of the week’s readings. 10 points (1 point each for 10 responses). Limited to one per week, with 5 “weeks off.”

Essays: 500-word essays due September 24 and October 29. Topics/guidelines will be handed out in class. 10 points each.

Quizzes: In class quizzes on concepts (some fill-in-the-blank questions and some short essays). October 15 and November 26. 10 points each.

Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet: Detailed guidelines will be provided. In-class work on Oct 17. Due Oct 22. 20 points.

Analysis of a Food System Job. Detailed guidelines will be provided. Proposal due November 5. Bibliography (minimum of 5 sources providing background material) due November 14. Annotated outline/script due November 28. Final paper (8-10 double-spaced pages, including bibliography) or podcast (30 minutes, with supplemental materials including bibliography) due December 10. Paper/podcast = 25 points. Class Presentation (Dec 5 or 10) = 5 points.

Graduate Student Assignments:
If you are a graduate student enrolled in this course, you are not required to take the quizzes or write the essays, but are expected to produce reading responses (10 points) and complete the
commodity chain assignment (20 points). In place of the Food System Job paper, you will write a research paper on some aspect of food system labor. The final research paper for graduate students should be approximately 20 double-spaced pages (70 points).

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<tr>
<th>Assignments (undergraduate)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading responses (weekly, 5 “weeks off”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>Sep 24</td>
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<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet</td>
<td>Oct 22</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food System Job paper/podcast proposal</td>
<td>Nov 5</td>
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<td>Food System Job Paper bibliography</td>
<td>Nov 14</td>
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<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>Nov 26</td>
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<td>Food System Job paper/podcast annotated outline</td>
<td>Nov 28</td>
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<td>Food System Job Paper/podcast</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
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<td>Presentation on Food System job paper/podcast</td>
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<td>Total points</td>
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**Grade Distribution:**
Grades for the course will be assigned using the following point distribution (grades will not be curved):

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<thead>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>89-93.9</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-89.9</td>
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<td>BC</td>
<td>77-82.9</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70-76.9</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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**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 and Environmental Sociology, Michael Bell, who will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the appeals procedure if no resolution is reached informally.

**Attendance:** Regular class attendance will be absolutely necessary to do well on assignments, but I will not deduct points for failure to attend classes or participate.

**Writing Center.** Because a substantial part of your grade depends on the written assignments, I encourage you to make use of the resources available at the UW Writing Center (http://www.writing.wisc.edu). They have terrific online resources about planning and writing a research paper, thesis v. purpose statements, writing introductions, organizing paragraphs, organizing the paper using reverse outlines, citing sources, proofreading for common grammar errors, and improving your writing style. You can also make appointments for individual consultations.

**Academic Integrity:** By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. For more information: [https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/)

**Accommodations:** I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. 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. Faculty and students share responsibility for reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Students should 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.

**Student Rights and Responsibilities:** Every member of the University of Wisconsin–Madison community has the right to expect to conduct his or her academic and social life in an environment free from threats, danger, or harassment. Students also have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with membership in the university and local communities. UWS Chapters 17 and 18 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code list the university policies students are expected to uphold and describes the procedures used when students are accused of misconduct. Chapter 17 also lists the possible responses the university may apply when a student is found to violate policy. The process used to determine any violations and disciplinary actions is an important part of UWS 17. For the complete text of UWS Chapter 17, see [this link](https://www.wisc.edu/), or contact the on-call dean in the Dean of Students Office, 608-263-5700, Room 70 Bascom Hall.

No student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or discriminated against in any service, program, course or facility of the [UW] system or its institutions or centers because of the student’s race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status.

**Student Grievance Procedure:** Any student at UW–Madison who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly has the right to voice a complaint and receive a prompt hearing of the grievance. The basis for a grievance can range from something as subtle as miscommunication to the extreme of harassment.

Each school or college has a procedure to hear grievances. Generally, the process involves an informal attempt to solve the problem if appropriate. If not, more formal proceedings can be undertaken until a resolution is reached. Advisors and school or college offices have detailed
information. For assistance in determining options, students can contact the Dean of Students Office, 608-263-5700, Room 70 Bascom Hall, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Academic Calendar and Religious Observances:** [https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances](https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances)

**Seeking Assistance:** A student can seek help at many places on campus, for both personal and academic problems. For answers to general questions on many topics, a good place to start is [Ask Bucky](https://askbucky.wisc.edu/), which is an excellent general referral service.

For personal problems, Counseling Services, a unit of [University Health Services](https://health.wisc.edu/), offers a variety of individual, group and couple counseling services. Experienced counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists are available to assist students in overcoming depression and managing anxiety, and in developing self-awareness and understanding, independence, and self-direction. The counseling staff is experienced and sensitive to students of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Counseling Services is located at 333 East Campus Mall; 608-265-5600. In addition, an on-call dean in Student Assistance and Judicial Affairs is usually available by telephone (608-263-5700) or on a walk-in basis (75 Bascom Hall) Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

For academic problems, many places can offer help. The student should first discuss the problem with the professor or TA. If the problem is not resolved at that time, the student can speak with an academic advisor or the chair of the department. If further assistance is needed, the student should contact one of the academic deans in the school or college.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.”

[https://diversity.wisc.edu/](https://diversity.wisc.edu/)
COURSE SCHEDULE

Sep 5  Introduction to Course

Part 1 – Histories of Global Food Chains

Sep 10  The Political Economy of Global Food Chains, Then and Now
  ▪ Harriet Friedmann, “Remaking Traditions: How We Eat, What We Eat, and the Changing Political Economy of Food
  ▪ Eric Holt-Giménez, Foreword and Introduction to AFGC...
  ▪ Harriet Friedmann, “Food Regimes and their Transformation” [podcast, recommended. Try to listen by 9/19]

Sep 12  Global Food Chains in Slavery and the Industrial Revolution
  ▪ Eric Holt-Giménez, ch. 1

Sep 17  Global Food Chains and Colonialism
  ▪ Eric Wolf, “The Movement of Commodities”

Part 2 – The Structure and Special Characteristics of Food Chains

Sep 19  How is Food Different from Other Commodities?
  ▪ Eric Holt-Giménez, ch. 2

Sep 24  What is a Commodity Chain?
  ▪ Gary Gereffi, Joonkoo Lee, and Michelle Christian, “U.S.-Based Food and Agricultural Value Chains and Their Relevance to Healthy Diets”

Essay 1 Due: How Does Food Connect You to Another Part of the World?

Sep 26  Characteristics of Food Chains: Freshness
  ▪ Susanne Freidburg, “Freshness from Afar”

Oct 1  Characteristics of Food Chains: Distance and Durability
  ▪ Harriet Friedmann, “Distance and Durability”

Oct 3  Characteristics of Food Chains: Dependence on Nature
- Eric Holt-Giménez, ch. 3 and 4

Oct 8  Characteristics of Food Chains: Corporate Concentration
  - Eric Holt-Giménez, ch. 5
  - Phil Howard, “Food System Concentration: A Political Economy Perspective”

Oct 10  Power and Privilege in the Food System
  - Eric Holt-Giménez, ch. 6

Oct 15  Quiz 1 (30 mins)/Preparation for Commodity Chain Assignment (45 mins)

Oct 17  Workshop: Modeling Commodity Chains

Part 3 – The Labor of Growing our Food

Oct 22  Farmworker Labor on Large Farms, 1
  - Seth Holmes, Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States, chs. 1-3

  Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet Due

Oct 24  Farmworker Labor on Large Farms, 2
  - Seth Holmes, Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies, chs. 4-5

Oct 29  Farmworker Labor on Large Farms, 3
  Discussion of Food System Job paper
  - Holmes, Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies, chs. 6-7

  Essay 2 Due: Response to Holmes book

Oct 31  Disappearing Family Farms in the U.S.
  - Fred Buttel, et al., “Why Worry About an Agriculture of the Middle?

Nov 5  Family Farms in Global Economy
  - Grain, “Hungry for Land”
  - Miguel Altieri, and Víctor Manuel Toledo, “The Agroecological Revolution in Latin America”

  Food System Job Paper/Podcast Proposal Due

Nov 7  Farming under Contract
Roger Clapp, “The Moral Economy of the Contract”
Film: The Sharecroppers

Part 4 – Food Processing

Nov 12  Dis-assembly Lines
- Oxfam, “Lives on the Line”
- Alex Blanchette, “Making Monotony: Signs of an Overworked Hog”
- NPR, “Working the Chain”

Nov 14  Respatialization of Food Processing
- David Bacon, “How U.S. Policies Fueled Mexico’s Great Migration”
- Kathleen Schwartzman, “Ethnic Succession in the South”

Food System Job Paper/Podcast Bibliography Due

Part 5 – Selling and Serving Food

Nov 19  Fast Food Work
- Saru Jayaraman, “Burgers, Bills, and No Benefits”
- William Finnegan, “Fast Food Workers and a New Labor Activism”

Nov 21  Back of House, Front of House: Race and Class in Restaurant Work
- Saru Jayaraman, “$2.13: The Tipping Point”
- Saru Jayaraman, “Race in the Kitchen”

Nov 26  Quiz 2/ (30 mins) Workshop on final papers/podcasts (45 mins)

Part 6 – Alternatives

Nov 28  THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Dec 3  Food, Labor, Capitalism: Crises and Solutions
- Eric Holt-Giménez, ch. 6 and Conclusion

Annotated Outline/Script for Food System Job Paper/Podcast Due

Dec 5  Food System Job Presentations

Dec 10  Food System Job Presentations. Final Papers/Podcasts due