

Community & Environmental Sociology 341

# Labor in Global Food Systems

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Fall 2021

3 credits

Canvas course URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/273726>

Class email list: [cesoc341-1-f21@g-groups.wisc.edu](mailto:cesoc341-1-f21@g-groups.wisc.edu)

**Instructor: Professor Nan Enstad**

[nenstad@wisc.edu](mailto:nenstad@wisc.edu)

**Office hours:**

- 1- Mondays 3:45-5:00 in person somewhere near our classroom. When it's nice out, we'll find a place outside; otherwise we will find somewhere in Grainger. Please let me know by 3:45 that day (earlier if possible) if you intend to come to office hours. I will stick around as long as someone wants to talk.
- 2- By appointment on zoom. Email is the best way to contact me. I check email M-F by noon and respond within 24 hours (usually faster); I'm not on email over the weekend.

**Class Meeting Times and Location:**

MW 2:30-3:45 Grainger 1280

**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 difficult 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. COVID-19 has made the weaknesses of our food system especially clear and has exacerbated them. 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. We will also foreground workers and workers' perspectives in our inquiry in order to understand the race, gender, and international power dynamics in the food system.

**Instructional Mode and Credit:**

The credit standard for this 3 credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor:student meeting times (MW 2:30-3:45), reading, writing, and other student work as described in the syllabus. This translates to an average of 9 hours per week total time over 15 weeks.

## 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

## Required Readings:

All of our readings are available at no cost to you on our Canvas site. You *may wish to* (but are not required) to purchase hard copies of the two books we will read in full: Eric Hold-Giménez, *A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism* and Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*.

## Course Requirements:

**ALL written assignments are due on SUNDAYS at 11:59PM. This includes any discussion posts & replies.**

**1. Class sessions:** Our class sessions will feature short lectures, guest speakers, discussions of the readings, and work in small groups. You may be asked to lead discussion with a team on one occasion. You are expected to arrive prepared and to contribute by participating in class.

**2. Weekly short written assignments:** 20% of final grade. Written assignments will include reading responses (template will be provided) or a stage in one of our major, graded assignments. Discussion boards responses have **two parts: your initial post** of approximately 200-400 words, and a **reply to another post**, approximately 100-300 words. One point per written assignment or discussion board. Please note that you will only receive credit for an engaged and complete assignment or post. In addition, discussion boards must be respectful in tone and showed engagement with course content or peers' previous posts to receive credit. I expect there to be more short written assignments than discussion boards because we are going to discuss in class.

**4. Two Essays:** 10% each. 500-word essays due Sept 26 and Nov 7. Topics/guidelines will be provided.

**5. Two Quizzes:** 5% each on vocabulary/concepts that you need for the assignments. During weeks 6 and 13.

**6. Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet:** 20% Due Oct 24. Detailed guidelines will be provided.

**7. Analysis of a Food System Job:** Paper/podcast = 25%. Class Presentation (weeks 14 and 15) = 5%. Detailed guidelines will be provided. Proposal due November 14. Bibliography (minimum of 5 sources providing background material) due November 21. Annotated outline/script due December 5. Final paper (8-10 double-spaced pages, including bibliography) or podcast (30 minutes, with supplemental materials including bibliography) due December 19.

## Course Grade Scale:

Grades for the course will be assigned using the following % distribution:

A = 93-100	AB = 88-92	B = 83-87
BC = 78-82	C = 70-77	D = 60-69.9
F = below 60		

**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.

**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.

**Podcasting Resources.** “UW-Madison Voice/Podcasting Resources for Student Digital Media Assignments”: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/ZlBikGy1rHmsu/>. “Planning Your Podcast: Scripts and Formats”: <https://www.voices.com/blog/planning-your-podcast/>

## Campus Resources and Policies

**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/>

**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, 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](#), 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 the Dean of Students Office, 608-263-5700, Room 70 Bascom Hall, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**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](#), which is an excellent general referral service. For personal problems, Counseling Services, a unit of [University Health Services](#), 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. Contact me first. 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.

#### **PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS and the USAGE of AUDIO RECORDED LECTURES**

See information about [privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures](#).

#### **Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement**

Lecture materials and recordings for CES/SOC 341 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

#### **STUDENTS' RULES, [RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES](#)**

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

#### **UW-MADISON [BADGER PLEDGE](#)**

#### **UW-MADISON [FACE COVERING GUIDELINES](#)**

While on campus all employees and students are required to [wear appropriate and properly fitting](#) face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

#### **Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19)**

Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be [worn correctly](#) (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason. Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office. Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

#### **QUARANTINE OR ISOLATION DUE TO COVID-19**

Student should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get [tested](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Student should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they

become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

**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/>

**Basic Needs:** Many students are struggling to meet basic needs, including obtaining healthy and sufficient food or meeting basic expenses. There are many programs in place here at UW and in the surrounding community to help. Please see <https://financialaid.wisc.edu/success/basic-needs-resources/> OR you can connect directly with a Basic Needs Assistant by emailing [basic.needs@finaid.wisc.edu](mailto:basic.needs@finaid.wisc.edu) . Please do not hesitate to contact Nan if you want help accessing these resources.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD SYSTEM--THE SUPPLY CHAIN

#### Week 1 Introductions—What is Your Proximity to Labor in the Food System?

Class Session:

Wed Sept 8

Course Materials:

Newspaper article: “The World is Still Short of Everything: Get Used to It” New York Times, Aug. 30, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/30/business/supply-chain-shortages.html>

UN News story: “Conflict, COVID, Climate crisis, Likely to Fuel Food Insecurity in 23 ‘Hunger Hotspots’ July 30, 2021. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/07/1096812>

Magazine article: Kip Dooley, “Growing Food Sovereignty on the Shores of Lake Superior,” In These Times, September 3, 2021. <https://inthesetimes.com/article/anishinaabe-food-sovereignty-lake-superior>

#### Week 2 What is a Supply Chain?: Visualizing the Global Food System

Sunday Sept 12 11:59pm First Reading Responses Due! Templates Provided.

Class Sessions:

Monday Sept 13

Wednesday Sept 15

Course Materials:

Chapter: Holt-Giménez, *A Foodie’s Guide* Introduction and ch. 1 “How Our Capitalist Food System Came to Be”

Academic article: Harriet Friedmann, “Remaking ‘Traditions’: How We Eat, What We Eat and the Political Economy of Food”

## **Week 3: What is a Commodity?: Race, Gender and Value in the Supply Chain**

Sunday Sept 19 Small Assignments Due 11:59pm

Class Sessions:

Monday Sept 20

Wednesday Sept 22

Course Materials:

Chapter: Holt-Giménez, *A Foodie's Guide* ch. 2 "Food, A Special Commodity"

Chapter: Holt-Giménez, *A Foodie's Guide* ch. 5 "Power and Privilege in the Food System"

Blog Post: Michele L. Norris, "Why Did It Takes So Long For Food Companies to Rebrand Their Racist Products" *Civil Eats* May 25, 2021

Blog post: "How Fostering Empathy for the People Who Feed Us Could Change Our Food System"

## **Week 4 Characteristics of Supply Chains: Consolidation**

Sunday Sept 26 11:59pm Short Assignments and Essay 1 due.

Class Sessions:

Monday Sept 27

Wednesday Sept 29

Course Materials:

Academic article: Hopkins and Wallerstein, "Commodity Chains in the World Economy" pp. 159-167 only.

Academic article: Phil Howard and Kiki Hubbard exchange, "How Corporations Control Our Seeds" and "Taking Back Our Seeds"

Special Report: Mary Hendrickson et al, "The Food System: Concentration and its Impacts"

Public Comment: Diana L. Moss, "AAI Encourages USDA to Take More Aggressive Role in Crafting Competition Policies to Combat Concentration and Supply Chain Instability in Food and Agriculture," American Anti-trust Institute, June 21, 2021.

## **Week 5 Characteristics of Supply Chains: Distance, Freshness and Durability**

Sunday Oct 3 11:59pm Short Assignments Due

Class Sessions:

Monday Oct 4

Wednesday Oct 6

Course Materials:

Academic Article: Harriet Friedmann, "Distance and Durability"

Academic article: Eric Wolf, "The Movement of Commodities"

Academic article: Susan Friedburg, "Freshness From Afar"

## **Week 6 Characteristics of Supply Chains: Waste**

Sunday Oct 10 11:59pm Short Assignments Due

Class Sessions: (Quiz One will be this week; specific date TBA)

Monday Oct 11

Wednesday Oct 13

Course Materials:

Academic article: Blanchette “Living Waste and the Labor of Toxic Health on American Factory Farms”

Academic article: Anna Zeide, “Grocery Garbage: Food Waste and the Rise of Supermarkets”

Policy report: Brenda Ellison and Maria Kalaitzandonakes, “Food Waste and Covid 19: Impacts Along the Supply Chain,” *Farmdocdaily* September 10, 2020.

## **Week 7 Mapping the Supply Chain**

Sunday Oct 17 11:59pm Short Assignments Due

Class Session:

Monday Oct 18—Workshops on Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet

Wednesday Oct 20—no class meeting! Work on your Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet!!!

Course Materials:

Academic Article: Gary Gereffi, Joonkoo Lee, and Michelle Christian, “U.S.-Based Food and Agricultural Value Chains and Their Relevance to Healthy Diets”

## **UNIT TWO UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD SYSTEM—WORKERS**

### **Week 8 Focus on Workers: Farmworkers 1**

Sunday Oct 24 11:59pm Commodity Chain Model and Worksheet due; Reading Response on Seth Holmes chapter 1 due. Recommend you also read ahead in the Holmes book if you can.

Class Sessions:

Monday Oct 25

Wednesday Oct 27

Course Materials:

Chapter: Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* ch 1

### **Week 9 Focus on Workers: Farmworkers 2**

Sunday Oct 31 11:59pm Reading Response Holmes chapter 2 and one other chapter.

Class Session:

Monday Nov 1

Wednesday Nov 3

Course Materials:

Chapters: Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* chs 2-6

## Week 10 Focus on Workers: Processors

Sunday Nov 7 11:59pm Short Assg and Essay 2 on *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* Due.

Class Sessions:

Monday Nov 8

Wednesday Nov 10

Course Materials:

Chapters: Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* ch 7.

Academic article: Ian Carrillo and Annabel Ipsen, "Worksites as Sacrifice Zones: Structural Precarity and Covid-19 in US Meatpacking" *Sociological Perspectives* 2021.

Blog Post: Rudqailjah Yearly, "Meatpacking Plants Have Been Deadly Covid Hotspots" *The Conversation* February 26, 2021.

## Week 11 Focus on Workers: Fast-Food and Restaurant Workers

Sunday Nov 14 11:59pm Small Assignment and Final Project Proposal Due

Class Sessions:

Monday Nov 15

Wednesday Nov 17

Course materials:

Academic article: Sara Jayaraman, "Food Workers Taking on Goliath"

Academic article: Steven Ashby, "Assessing the 'Fight for Fifteen' Movement from Chicago"

Blog post: Tina Vasquez, "A Multiracial, Multigenerational Movement Led By Fast-Food Workers Has Taken Root in North Carolina," *The Counter*, Sept 6, 2021.

Podcast: Jennifer Little, "Small Talk"

## Week 12 Focus on Workers: Restaurant and Delivery Workers

Sunday Nov 21 11:59pm Project Bibliography Due

Class Sessions:

Monday Nov 22

Wednesday Nov 24—no class meeting! watch Film "Gather" on your own time.

Course Materials:

Film: "Gather"

Academic article: Ruth Milkman et al, "Gender, Class, and the Gig Economy: The Case of Platform-Based Food Delivery," *Critical Sociology* 47 (3), 2021.

Blog post: H. Claire Brown et al, "The Year in Staff Resignations: Food Industry Workers Recount What Drove Them to Quit en masse," *The Counter*, September 6, 2021.



## Week 13 Focus on Workers: The Future of Farming

Sunday Nov 28 11:59pm Small Assignments due

Class Sessions (Quiz 2 will be this week, exact date TBA):

Monday Nov 29

Wednesday Dec 1

Course Materials:

Academic article: Maywa Montenegro de Wit, "What Grows from a Pandemic? Toward an Abolitionist Agroecology" *Journal of Peasant Studies* 2021.

Academic article: Matthew Canfield et al, "UN System Summit 2021: Dismantling Democracy and Resetting Corporate Control of Food Systems," *Frontiers*, April 13, 2021.

Academic article: Mariaelena Huambachano, "Indigenous Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Food as Sacred Medicine in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Peru" *New Zealand Journal of Ecology* 2019

Chapter: Holt-Giménez, *Foodie's Guide*, ch 4 "Capitalism, Food and Agriculture"

## Week 14 Project Workshops/ Presentations

Sunday Dec 5 11:59pm Outline/script for final Project due.

Class Sessions:

Monday Dec 6 Project Workshops

Wednesday Dec 8 Project Presentations

Course materials:

Policy Report: Rockefeller Foundation, "Reset the Table: Meeting the Moment to Transform the US Food System" July 28, 2020.

Book chapters: Holt-Giménez, *Foodie's Guide*, chapter 6 and Conclusion

## Week 15 Project Presentations

Class Sessions:

Monday Dec 13 Project Presentations

Wednesday Dec 15 Project Presentations

No written assignments or course materials!

Sun Dec 19 11:59pm Final Paper/Podcast on Workers Due