

Community And Environmental Sociology 340: Issues in The Food System

Fall 2023
Course Location: 1116 DeLuca
Biochemistry Building
Course Time: T/TH 4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Michaela
Hoffelmeyer
Pronouns: she/they
E-mail: hoffelmeyer@wisc.edu
Office: Ag Hall Room 308, room G
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3, or by
appointment

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:

With primary emphasis on the U.S., the course covers social, economic, and biological dimensions of food systems. Using classroom and community experience, the course combines academic approaches with practitioner knowledge. A community project is required.

PREREQUISITES:

SOC/C&E SOC 140, SOC 181, 210, or 211

Course Attributes:

- Intermediate
- Social Science
- Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Who controls what we eat? Who has access to food production and consumption? How do our identities and social locations in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality influence our ability to access food and farming? This course is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the historical and contemporary landscape of the agriculture and food (agrifood) system in the U.S. This course will take a "farm-to-table" approach to analyze the U.S. agrifood system's social, economic, political, and cultural constructions. This course will examine how individuals and communities involved with these systems have experienced dramatic changes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By the end of this course, students will describe the historical ideologies that undergird the agrifood system, identify issues with the dominant agrifood system, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of many of the proposed solutions for creating a more sustainable and equitable food system.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand historical and contemporary trends in the development of the U.S. agrifood system.
- Describe what is meant by the structure of the agrifood system and explain some of the consequences of changes in the structure of the agrifood system.
- Identify the different actors in the agrifood system and the varying ideas about food production, distribution, and access as it relates to equity.

- Analyze challenges within the contemporary agrifood system, including food justice, food sovereignty, and sustainability.
- Gain knowledge and skills to deepen engagement with agrifood systems as consumers, researchers, and advocates.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Howard, P.H., 2021. Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat? revised ed.

***Note do not get the 2016 version!**

READINGS:

All other course readings can be found on the CANVAS site in modules designated for each week of the course.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING: ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Your course grade will reflect your performance on the following components for a total of 300 points:

	Points:	Percent of Grade
Participation	30	10%
Weekly Quizzes	45	15%
Reflections	75	25%
Podcast Project	90	30%
Final Exam	60	20%

I will calculate your grade according to the total points you have accumulated:

A	93% or higher	(279-300 points)
AB	88-92.99%	(264-278 points)
B	83-87.99%	(249-263 points)
BC	77-82.99%	(231-248 points)
C	70-76.99%	(210-230 points)
D	60-69.99%	(180-209 points)
F	59.99% or lower	(179-0 points)

Participation: 10%

Active participation is required in this course. Class sessions frequently include small and large group discussions. As such, this requires that students show up prepared for class. Preparation includes completion of the readings and a readiness to discuss and engage with your colleagues in the course. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester and will count toward your participation grade. If you have a scheduled reason to miss a session, contact the instructor a **week in advance** to make the proper arrangements.

Note: This syllabus is subject to adjustment at the instructor's discretion.

Individual Meeting & Meme

During week 6, each student will set up a meeting with the instructor. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss the course and any questions or concerns that you have regarding assignments, readings, or the final project. These meetings will take place outside of class time. During this meeting, you will bring an original meme that reflects a reading or theme of the class.

In-Class Quizzes: 15%

Short quizzes will be randomly administered throughout the term. These will be short answers, multiple-choice, and/or short essays based on the readings. Eleven quizzes will be given out during the term. The two lowest scores will be dropped.

Reflections 25%

Students will write reflections about the following three topics/experiences. Additional details will be provided separately (25 points each):

- 1) Reflection 1 Race in the Food System: **Due 10/15 at 11:59 PM.**
- 2) Reflection 2 Gendered Objects in the Food System: **Due 10/29 at 11:59 PM.**
- 3) Reflection 3 Foodways: **Due 12/3 at 11:59 PM.**

Podcast Project: 30%

In a group of approximately four students, you will identify a topic related to food systems and produce a podcast about an agrifood system organization working on this topic. The instructor will provide a list of potential topics and resources for choosing an organization; however, students may propose alternative topics/organizations. Podcast components will be completed in segments throughout the semester. Students will be expected to interview at least one person working on this topic to integrate into the podcast. You will receive detailed information on each component. Your final podcast will be graded using a combination of a rubric, which the instructor will use to evaluate the project, as well as student-based grades of each team member's contributions.

Topic & Podcast Plan (<i>group grade</i>)	10 points	Sunday, September 23 at 11:59 PM
Article Summaries (<i>individual grade</i>)	10 points	Sunday September 30 at 11:59 PM
Interview Notes (<i>individual grade</i>)	10 points	Sunday, November 5 at 11:59 PM
Podcast Storyboard (<i>group grade</i>)	20 points	Sunday, November 12 at 11:59 PM
Final Podcast (<i>group grade and individual grade</i>)	40 points	Sunday, December 3 at 11:59 PM

Exams: 20%

- Final Exam: The final exam will be a written exam summarizing what you have learned during the semester. You will be given the prompts in the last week of class. **Due 12/16 at 11:59 PM.**

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LATE-ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

All assignments are expected to be turned in on or before the due date. For each week that an assignment is overdue, there will be a 5% deduction. However, late-assignments can continue to be turned in before the end of the semester. **This excludes the podcast project, in which all assignments must be completed on time to receive credit.**

If you have a major emergency or crisis during the semester that impacts your ability to complete assignments or attend class, please contact me to discuss how we can find a solution based on your needs.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE (Potential additions from class are welcome!)

1. When class begins, please put away other devices or distractions (phones, etc.). You may use your computer to take notes.
2. You may eat in class, but try to limit the distraction for other students as best you can.
3. Be prepared to contribute by writing, speaking, and being visually present.
4. Respect classmates, guests, the instructor, and yourself. Provocative ideas and questions are encouraged; do not be afraid to voice your opinion just because it may be different. However, avoid language whose sole purpose is to provoke or disparage others.
5. We are building a conversation. Learn and use your classmates' names. If you contribute frequently, allow others to speak before speaking again.

NAME AND PRONOUN POLICY

- Please let me know if the name that is listed on the class roster is not the name you would like to be called. You can let me know in class or through email at any time in the semester. You are encouraged to correct any mispronunciations of your name as soon as possible in class or via email.
- Please refer to your classmates' names and pronouns in the way that your classmates are most comfortable with.
- You are encouraged but not required to list your preferred name and pronouns on your class name tag. If you have any concerns regarding your pronouns, you are welcome to email or visit me during office hours at any point in the semester.

EMAIL POLICY & OFFICE HOURS

If you have a logistics question, please first consult the syllabus and CANVAS. If you missed a lecture, first contact a fellow student for notes. **Email me with "C&E SOC 340" in the subject line** about accommodations, to schedule an appointment, or with concerns.

ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE USE OF AI

The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities: Brainstorming your ideas and checking grammar and style. The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities: Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose reflections assigned to you, completing group work that your group has assigned to you, writing a draft of assignments, and writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers. You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of

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AI tools must be properly documented in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students with Disabilities:

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 (UW-855) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center). **Please talk with me at any time during the semester if your learning needs change, even if you are still working with the Student Disability Resources Office to formalize accommodations.**

Diversity & 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.

Academic Integrity:

By virtue of enrollment, you agree 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.

Counseling & Psychological Services:

UW-Madison mental health providers understand the complexities of student life and offer an open, safe, and confidential environment to help students through issues that may interfere with their development, well-being, and academic productivity. UHS's no-cost mental health services include individual, couple/partner, group counseling, outreach programming, and stress

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management. We also offer 24/7 crisis services. Psychiatry services are also available for medication management.

- Mental Health Services (<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>): Make an appointment by calling 608-265-5600 (option 2) or through the MyUHS app
- UHS 24-hour Crisis Line 608-265-5600 (option 9)
 - If you're thinking about suicide, or if you're concerned for the well-being of someone you know, call UHS to speak with an on-call crisis counselor who will help address your most pressing concerns, assess your safety, and connect you with follow-up service needs. We care about you, and want you to get connected to the support you need. **The crisis support line is available 24/7, 365 days a year.** They receive calls from students, family members, partners, friends, roommates, faculty, housing staff, and other campus community members who are concerned about a student. (<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/prevention/suicide-prevention/mh-resources/>)
- Survivor Services
 - UHS Survivor Services provides free, confidential support services to UW–Madison student survivors of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and/or stalking. Read our [FAQs](#) for more information. For a comprehensive guide to rights and resources for survivors of sexual and relationship violence, access the [UW–Madison Sexual Misconduct Resource and Response Guide](#).

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COURSE CALENDAR

*Note all dates are subject to change

Date and Theme	Materials	Assignments
Week 1: 9/7 Introduction	No outside materials	
UNIT 1: The "Farm"		
Week 2: 9/12 Agrarianism(s)	Thompson. "Thomas Jefferson and Agrarian Philosophy." Danbom. "Romantic Agrarianism." Review: USDA Farmer Demographics sheets	
9/14	Carlisle. "Critical Agrarianism." Guthman. "If They Only Knew:" The Unbearable Whiteness of Alternative Food'	
Week 3: 9/19 Food Sovereignty & Indigenous Foodways	Holt-Giménez. 'Food Security, Food Justice, or Food Sovereignty?' in Cultivating Food Justice. Hoover. "'You can't say you're sovereign if you can't feed yourself': Defining and enacting food sovereignty in American Indian community gardening.'	
9/21	Watch "Gather" in class	Topic & Podcast Plan due Sunday, September 23
Week 4: 9/26 Black Agrarianism & Resistance	Smith. "Black Agrarianism and the foundation of Black environmental thought." Tyler. "Rematriating to the Wombs of the world: Toward Black feminist agrarian ideologies."	
9/28	Leslie and White. 'Race and Food: Agricultural Resistance in U.S. History.' Karen Washington: It's Not a Food Desert, It's Food Apartheid	Podcast Article Summaries due Sunday, September 30
Week 5: 10/3 Migrant Farm Labor	Chapter 2 in Keller, Milking in the Shadows: Migrants and Mobility in America's Dairyland. Waupun Dairy and prison farms turn out milk, ice cream and skilled employees	One-on-one meetings during the week

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10/5	Gray. 2014. Labor and the Locavore: The Making of a Comprehensive Food Ethic Chapters 2 & 3.	
Week 6: 10/10 Farm Apprentices, Interns, & Volunteers	Guthman. “Willing (White) Workers on Organic Farms? Reflections on Volunteer Farm Labor and the Politics of Precarity.” Ekers et al. ““Will work for food: agricultural interns, apprentices, volunteers, and the agrarian question.”” Review Not Our Farm: https://notourfarm.org/	
10/12	Potential Guest Speaker or Rape in the Fields Documentary in Class	Reflection 1 due Sunday, October 15
Week 7: 10/17 Gender & Sexuality	Pilgeram et al. “How the USDA Changed the Way Women Farmers are Counted in the Census of Agriculture.” Carter and Lopez. ‘Rebranding the Farmer: Formula Story Revision and Masculine Symbolic Boundaries in U.S. Agriculture.’	
10/19	Rosenberg. “A Classroom in the Barnyard: Reproducing Heterosexuality in Interwar American 4-H.” Radishes and rainbows: the LGBTQ growers reimagining the traditional family farm	
UNIT 2: PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION		
Week 8: 10/24 Concentration and Power part 1	Chapters 1, 2, 3 in Howard. Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat?	
10/26	Chapters 4, 5, 6 in Howard. Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat?	Reflection 2 due Sunday, October 29
Week 9: 10/31 Concentration and Power part 2	Chapters 7, 8, 9 in Howard. Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat?	
11/2	Freshour. ‘Cheap Meat and Cheap Work in the U.S. Poultry Industry Race, Gender, and Immigration in Corporate Strategies to shape Labor.’ Read & Review: https://thefern.org/2020/04/mapping-covid-19-in-meat-and-food-processing-plants/	Podcast Interview Notes due Sunday, November 5

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Unit 3: Consumption & the “Table”		
Week 10: 11/7 Public Food Assistance Policies	Coleman-Jensen and Steffen. “Food Insecurity and Housing Insecurity” in Rural Poverty in the United States. Introduction in Bowen et al. Pressure Cooker: Why Home Cooking Won't Solve Our Problems and What We Can Do About It.	
11/9	Hatch et al. ‘Sugar ecologies: their metabolic and racial effects.’ Chapter 19 and Conclusion in Bowen et al. Pressure Cooker: Why Home Cooking Won't Solve Our Problems and What We Can Do About It.	Podcast Storyboard due Sunday November 12
Week 11: 11/14 “Ethical” Eating & Gentrification	Johnston et al. Good food, good people: Understanding the cultural repertoire of ethical eating.	
11/16	Chapter 6 and 7 in Joassart-Marcelli. The \$16 Taco. This Thanksgiving, Remember the People’s History of Our Food by Eric Holt-Giménez https://foodfirst.org/this-thanksgiving-remember-the-peoples-history-of-our-food/	
Week 13: Break No Class		
Week 12: 11/28 Reexamining Dietetics	“Health” chapter 5 in <u>Bite Back: People Taking on corporate food and winning.</u>	
11/30	Out of the Closet, Into Some Other Kind of Prison: One Gay Asian Man’s Journey Finding Self-Worth While Navigating Body Image and Eating Disorders in <u>Queering Dietetics and Nutrition.</u> Being Trans in Dietetics A Step in the Movement towards Trans and Queer Liberation through Collaborative Conversation in <u>Queering Dietetics and Nutrition.</u>	Refection 3 Foodways due Sunday, December 3
Week 13: 12/5 Just Food Futures	Alkon and Agyeman. Conclusion: Cultivating the Fertile Field of Food Justice Read chapters 15 and 16 in Penniman. <u>Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm’s Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land.</u>	

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12/7	TBD	Final Podcast due Sunday, December 10
Week 14: 12/12	No outside assignments Final exam questions are assigned In-class podcast session	
Week 15	Final Exam Questions due 12/16	

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