INTL 399: Global Food Security  
S 2015

Tu/Th 2 :00-3:50  
208 Deady Hall

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Office:  346 PLC

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All sorrows are less with bread.  
-Miguel de Cervantes

So long as you have food in your mouth, you have solved all questions for the time being.  
-Franz Kafka

Food is the one central thing about the human experience that can open up both our senses and our conscience to our place in the world.  
-Alice Waters

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Overview: The world currently produces sufficient food to feed the seven billion people who inhabit the planet. Yet hunger and food insecurity is a daily reality for nearly one in seven. This class explores the global food system. We will attempt to elucidate the politics, science, and economic choices that result in a world where one billion are underfed while an equal number are overfed. The central theme is that of food security: “reliable access to sufficient quantities and types of food to ensure a healthy life” (Bassett and Winter-Nelson, 2010). The course material addresses both the advantages and unsustainable aspects of the current system while considering alternatives to current practices. We will examine all parts of the food life cycle in our analysis including production, distribution, storage and preparation, consumption and waste. The weekly topics include:
1) Overview of the global food system—how did we get here?
2) What is Food (In)security?
3) Industrial Production and Food Security
4) Small-scale Production and Food Security
5) Trade and Food Security
6) Energy, Climate Change and Food Security
7) Food Waste and Food Security
8) Conflict and Food Security
9) Student Presentations: Innovations in Food Security
10) Course Overview and The Challenges Ahead
Throughout the class we will explore alternative practices and policies that foster greater food security. This includes the work of international organizations and governments at all levels. **Goals:** The goal of the course is to develop a fundamental knowledge about the global food system, the roots of food insecurity, and various possibilities for the next fifty years when the global population is expected to exceed nine billion. More specifically, the goals are twofold: that students become better informed about major international issues in food and agriculture and that they sharpen critical thinking skills about the global food system. I will do my best to create an enjoyable atmosphere of respect and intellectual integrity. In turn it is essential that you be committed to taking an active role in your learning process.

**Communication:**
Course announcements, assignments, project instructions, study guides, some notes and images, additional readings, website links, and contact information will be posted on Blackboard. Check the site on a regular basis. If you do not have reliable access to Blackboard, please notify the instructor. You may contact the instructor by email. I will try to respond with 24 hours with the exception of weekends.

**Why offer this course?:** I am a farmer by heritage, a geographer by training, a teacher by vocation and a humanitarian by conviction. I believe that we of the affluent world have an obligation to better understand our global food system that appears to feed some too well while failing to meet this most basic of human needs for many others.

**GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS**
Course grades will be determined by quality of work in the following exams and assignments.

- **Exams:** 2x25% = 50%
- **Annotated Bibliography:** 30% (instructions to follow)
- **Research Presentation:** 10%
- **Attendance and Participation:** 10%

Attendance will be monitored because attendance factors into the participation score. Students with frequent absences obviously cannot contribute to structured group discussions and generally do not perform well on exams or assignments. Significant amounts of new material and elaboration on some of the readings will be presented in lectures and through films. Each student will be held responsible for all material covered in lectures, assigned readings, exercises, videos and agreements entered into jointly by the class instructor.

**TEXTS**

Non-text readings will be accessed through Blackboard under COURSE DOCUMENTS.

There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.

-Gandhi

The poets have been mysteriously silent on the subject of cheese.

-G.K. Chesterton