

SOCIOLOGY 330
SOCIOLOGY OF FOOD INEQUALITIES
Fall Quarter 2018

Tuesdays, 4:40-6:30 pm
Broadway Building, Room 220

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Tues. & Thurs., 2:15-3:15pm
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This course examines the social relations behind the food we eat, including its production, distribution, preparation, and consumption. We will look at the environmental, health, and social effects of our increasingly global and industrial agriculture and food system, and how they relate to social inequality. The course also explores the broad range of alternatives and social movements that have emerged, both globally and domestically, in response to these changes. By the end of the course, I hope that you will have gained a stronger understanding of the food system, your role in it, and various approaches to changing it. This class is also intended to strengthen your ability to read critically, to engage actively in discussion and debate, to explore new subject matter creatively, and to communicate ideas clearly effectively in written and oral formats.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be familiar with:

- The dynamics of our current globalized, industrial food system, and the major transformations that food production, trade, and consumption have undergone in the past century.
- Conceptual frameworks for analyzing the food system and its social effects, in the context of economic globalization and neoliberalism.
- A range of critiques of the dominant industrial or conventional food and agriculture system, including issues of social justice/inequality, and environmental impact and sustainability.
- The roots of hunger, famine and food insecurity both domestically and internationally, as well as multiple positions in debates over their causes and solutions.
- Various positions in several current public debates and trends regarding food, including the increasing interest in organic and locally-grown food, and controversies over food safety, food deserts, obesity, pesticides, and biotechnology, among other issues.
- A range of alternatives and responses to the dominant conventional food system, both in the U.S. and in the global South (or Third World), including food justice, food sovereignty, organics and fair trade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) Attendance: This is an upper-level, discussion-based course. Your presence and active participation are essential for the learning experience of everyone in the course. Regular attendance is especially important in a small seminar course. Attendance will count for 12 percent of your final grade. NOTE regarding attendance policy: Each student will begin the quarter with 12 points for attendance. *Your first absence will not reduce the total. Each additional absence after the second will reduce the total by three (3) points.* In short: multiple absences will hurt your grade.

Comment Cards: *During each class session, you should write a short (2-3 sentence) comment, question, or reaction* pertaining to the content of the reading and/or discussion, or feedback on how the course is going for you. Write this question/comment on a 3x5 card. *Please purchase (or share with another student) a pack of these cards (3x5 only, please) for use in class. Write your full name and the date at the top of the card.* At the end of class, leave your card at the front of the room. I will use these cards to register attendance.

2) Readings: *Everyone should arrive in class having completed all of the readings for that session.* Incomplete preparation deprives everyone of the benefit of your insights and analysis, and in a small, upper-level course such as this one, that is especially detrimental.

3) Class Participation: This is a small, upper-level course, and we will dedicate a substantial amount of time to discussion and debate. Your active participation in discussion is critical to making the class worthwhile, both for yourself and your classmates, and it counts for 15 percent of the final course grade. Please note that *your five required postings on the documentary films (see below) are a key part of the participation grade.*

4) ASSIGNMENTS:

A) READING RESPONSE POSTINGS:

On six (6) weeks during the quarter (beginning in Week 3), you should write a short response/reaction that **incorporates all of the starred (*) readings for that week.** (Note: posting a response in Week 3 is required.)

These postings should be very short papers, between 600-800 words (see specifications below). Response postings should be well organized, with correct grammar and spelling. **Note:** The 600-word minimum is a firm minimum.

IMPORTANT: In these responses, you may: criticize or praise the readings, find points of similarity or divergence, question the key ideas or concepts, point out weaknesses, relate the readings to your own personal experiences, examine their underlying values/assumptions, compare them to other readings, etc. *The key point is this: You should critically and thoughtfully engage with and respond/react to the ideas in the required readings; the posting should not be merely a summary or restatement of the author's points.*

→ Quotes from the readings, and/or references to specific sections or passages (with page numbers) will be necessary evidence of your engagement.

→ At the end of your posting, please include one or more questions about the readings (in **bold type**) that will help frame our discussion in class.

→ **Post your response to our course D2L website** (under the “Discussions” tab, click on the folder for the appropriate date, and then “Compose” to start a new posting), so that everyone in the class can read each other’s comment—and respond—before we meet. *NOTE: Please DO NOT click “add a file” attach your Word file to the posting; instead, compose your response in a word processing program, then select the text of your response, copy it, and paste it into the window for the thread. **Warning: Don’t write your posting online in D2L; you are likely to lose your work! You are responsible for saving a backup copy of all your written work.***

→ **POSTING DEADLINE: 10:00am Tuesdays.**

****Late posting policy:** If your posting is late (between 10:01 am and 12:00 noon), you will receive 50% of what your grade would have been. No credit will be given for postings after 12:00 noon.

I (or the TA) will evaluate your response paper postings in the following way:

- Strong response—keep it coming! = **4.5 to 5.0 points**
- Good response; meaningful engagement, but room for improvement = **4.0 to 4.4 points**
- Adequate response; some good engagement, but needs to be strengthened = **3.5 to 3.9 points**
- Inadequate response; low engagement, needs much improvement = **3.0 to 3.4 points**
- Unsatisfactory; you didn't engage substantially with the readings. = **0 to 2.9 points**

NOTE: Regardless of whether you write a response posting on a given day, you are expected to come to every class session prepared to discuss all of the readings, with the readings in hand.

B) “PERSONAL FOOD POLICY” PAPER (8 points): We will discuss this short essay assignment (approximately 3 to 5 double-spaced pages) in the first class session. It will be due on Friday, Sept. 28 by 10:00am, on D2L. We will discuss the papers at our second class session.

C) TWO FOOD EXERCISES (16 points each) OR COMMODITY ANALYSIS (32 points), plus Oral Presentation (3 points):

You can choose to select either two of the exercise options, OR the longer commodity analysis project, both of which are described on a separate document. All options involve writing up your findings/reflections in essay format (5-7 double-spaced pages for exercises; 10-14 pages for commodity analysis). During finals week, we will have short (~5 minute) oral presentations of your findings from these assignments.

Deadlines for these exercises are as follows:

- **Exercise #1:** **Due by Friday, November 2 at 5:00pm**
- **Exercise #2 OR Commodity Analysis:** **Due by Friday, November 30 at 5:00pm**

Policy on late papers: Late papers turned in within 3 days (72 hours) after the deadline will receive 60% of what the grade would have been. No credit will be given for papers more than 3 days late.

D) DOCUMENTARY FILMS: On six weeks during the term, there are required documentary films assigned (see calendar schedule below). For at least 5 of those 6 weeks, you should watch the film and write a short response to the film (at least 100 words), on the separate discussion forums on D2L. Watching these films is part of the “hybrid” course design, and it takes the place of the normal Thursday class period. The deadline for posting film responses is 8:00 pm on the Friday before the following week’s class. NOTE: Your five short film responses will be an important component in your class participation grade.

E) EXTRA CREDIT: There will be opportunities to earn extra credit, up to 3 points total. Most of these involve attending lectures, events, or documentary films related to food and/or agriculture, and writing a short response. I will alert you to these opportunities as they arise, and we will discuss this option further in class.

EVALUATION/GRADING:

The final course grade will weigh the assignments and requirements in the following way:

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| ➤ Class Attendance | 12 points (<i>see note above</i>) |
| ➤ In-class Participation | 15 points |
| ➤ Reading Response Postings (6 total): | 30 points (5 points per posting) |
| ➤ “Personal Food Policy” Paper | 8 points |
| ➤ 2 Exercises (16 pts. each) <u>OR</u> Commodity Analysis | 32 points total |
| ➤ Oral presentation of assignment findings | 3 points |
| ➤ Extra Credit | 3 points maximum |

TOTAL:

103 possible points

Final grades will be calculated based on the following table:

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|----|------------|----|-----------|----|--------------|
| A | 93.0-103.0 | B- | 80.0-82.9 | D+ | 67.0-69.9 |
| A- | 90.0-93.9 | C+ | 77.0-79.9 | D | 63.0-66.9 |
| B+ | 87.0-89.9 | C | 73.0-76.9 | D- | 60.0-62.9 |
| B | 83.0-86.9 | C- | 70.0-72.9 | F | 59.9 or less |

COURSE GUIDELINES:

Starting Time: Class will start promptly at 4:40 pm. I expect you to show me and your fellow students the courtesy of arriving in class on time. If you repeatedly arrive late, the participation portion of your course grade will be reduced.

Distractions: Please turn off laptops, tablets, cell phones, smartphones, and any other electronic devices, and keep them out of sight during the entire class. Because it detracts from classroom focus and from discussion quality, I have a firm policy against using these devices during class, with one exception I will discuss in class.

Syllabus: This is your principal guide to the class. Please bring it with you to each class in case we need to make adjustments. Before emailing me with a question, *reread the syllabus first* to make sure that it doesn't answer your question.

Academic Integrity: I expect that your writing and your work on all assignments in this course will reflect original thought. Using the work or ideas of others without proper citation and attribution—whether from the internet, publications, or any other source—is plagiarism, and is a violation of the Student Conduct Code. We will discuss this issue during the quarter, but you are responsible for understanding plagiarism and the correct practice for quoting and attributing sources. Any language or ideas that you draw from course readings or other sources *must* be properly attributed and cited, and verbatim text *must* be placed in quotation marks. Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university, and I take violations of this policy very seriously. Therefore, any student whom I find to be in violation of these standards will receive either a grade of zero for the assignment in question, or a failing grade for the entire course. I will also report all violations of this policy to the Dean of Student Life. If you have questions or concerns about these policies, or about proper attribution/citation practice, I strongly encourage you to discuss them with me. Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct for more information: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>

PSU Sexual Harassment Policy: As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. I also have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals at: <https://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help>. For more information about Title IX, please complete the required student module "Creating a Safe Campus" in your D2L.

CLASS READINGS

1) There are two required books for the class:

Jason Konefal and Maki Hatanaka (editors). 2018. *Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. Oxford University Press.

[Note: This book is available either in hard copy, or (cheaper) as a 180-day E-Book rental:
<https://www.redshelf.com/book/979973/twenty-lessons-in-the-sociology-of-food-and-agriculture-979973-9780190662141-jason-konefal-maki-hatanaka>]

Seth Holmes. 2014. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. University of California Press.

[Available as a free E-Book via the [PSU Library site](#), or in hard copy at PSU Bookstore or online.]

2) **Readings on D2L:** The remaining required readings for the course are posted on the class D2L website, under the “Course Content” link, and then in the folders for the relevant dates. *Please see me with any questions you have about using the site.*

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COURSE “MENU” AND READINGS

(Please note that this is a *tentative* calendar. Some readings may be shifted, added or dropped during the quarter. I will let you know about these changes in advance.)

*Starred readings must be included in your reading response posting; other readings may be included.

| DATE | TOPICS | READINGS |
|--|---|---|
| | FIRST “COURSE”: | INDUSTRIAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE |
| WEEK 2 Tues. Oct. 2 | The Industrial Food System: Globalization, Concentration, Financialization, Speculation “Personal Food Policy” Paper Due Fri. 9/28, 10am, on D2L. | *Phil Howard. 2018. “Increasing Corporate Control: From Supermarkets to Seeds.” Chap. 7 in <i>Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture</i> . (Required E-book) . *J. Dara Bloom. 2018. “Globalization of Food: The World as a Supermarket.” Chap. 8 in <i>Twenty Lessons (E-book)</i> . *Fred Magdoff and Brian Tokar. 2010. “Agriculture and Food in Crisis: An Overview.” 9-30 in <i>Agriculture and Food in Crisis</i> . George Steinmetz. 2016. Super Size: The Dizzying Grandeur of 21 st -Century Agriculture.” (Photos and video.) <i>New York Times</i> , October 5. *Johanna Bockman. 2013. “Neoliberalism.” <i>Contexts</i> 12(3):14-15. |

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| | <i>Required Film for Week 3:</i> <i>(post response by Friday 10/5)</i> | <i>“Food, Inc.” (available free on many online sites, or Netflix, or borrow DVD from PSU Library)</i> |
| WEEK 3 Tues. Oct. 9 | Food Access, Diets, Health/Illness, and Safety | <p>*Winne, Mark. 2008. “Growing Obese and Diabetic; Going Local and Organic.” 110-136 in <i>Closing the Food Gap</i>.</p> <p>*Anthony Winston and Jin Young Choi. 2018. “Food, Diets, and Industrialization.” Chapter 3 in 20 Lessons (E-book).</p> <p>*Andrew Jacobs and Matt Richtel. 2017. “How Big Business Got Brazil Hooked on Junk Food.” <i>New York Times</i>, Sept. 16, 2017.</p> <p>*Michael Pollan. 2016. “Big Food Strikes Back: Why Did the Obamas Fail to Take on Corporate Agriculture?” <i>NY Times</i>, Oct. 5.</p> <p>*Julie Guthman. 2007. “Can’t Stomach It: How Michael Pollan et al. Make Me Want to Eat Cheetos.” <i>Gastronomica</i> 7(2): 75-79.</p> <p>Michael Moss. 2009. “The Burger That Shattered Her Life.” <i>The New York Times</i>, October 3.</p> <p>Oliver Millman. 2018. “Weedkiller Found in Wide Range of Breakfast Foods Aimed at Children.” <i>The Guardian</i>, Aug. 16.</p> <p>Plus: Center for Food Safety website: www.endindustrialmeat.org</p> |
| | <i>Required Film for Week 4:</i> <i>(Post response by Fri. 10/12)</i> | <i>“Hunger in a World of Plenty” (watch online via PSU Library)</i> |
| WEEK 4 Tues. Oct. 16 | The Roots of Hunger; Food Aid to the South; “Big Hunger” in the North The Environmental Impact of the Industrial Food System | <p>*Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins. 2015. <i>World Hunger: Ten Myths</i>. Grove Press. 13-33, “Too Little Food, Too Many People.”</p> <p>*Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins. 2015. “World Hunger: Ten Myths.” <i>Food First Backgrounder</i> 21(2) (Summer).</p> <p>Megan Tady. 2007. “Who Does U.S. Food Aid Benefit?” <i>In These Times</i>, September 12.</p> <p>*Andrew Fisher. 2017. <i>Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups</i>. 1-10, Introduction.</p> <p>*Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele. 2008. “Monsanto’s Harvest of Fear.” <i>Vanity Fair</i> (May).</p> <p>*GRAIN. 2011. “Food and Climate Change: The Forgotten Link.”</p> <p>Damian Carrington. 2014 “Giving Up Beef Will Reduce Carbon Footprint More than Cars, Says Expert.” <i>The Guardian</i>, July 21.</p> |

| | SECOND "COURSE": | LABOR, INEQUALITY, AND JUSTICE |
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| | <i>Required Film for Week 5:</i> (post response by Fri. 10/19) | <i>"The Harvest/La Cosecha" (view online via PSU Library)</i> |
| WEEK 5 Tues. Oct. 23 | Food and Labor (I): Migrant Farmworkers | Seth Holmes. 2013. <i>Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies</i> . 1-87. University of California Press. (E-Book , available via PSU Library) Deborah Barndt. 2004. "Fruits of Injustice: Women in the Post-NAFTA Food System." 37-51 in Gerardo Otero, ed., <i>Mexico in Transition: Neoliberal Globalism, the State and Civil Society</i> . Christine Ahn, Melissa Moore and Nick Parker. 2004. "Backgrounder: Migrant Farmworkers: America's New Plantation Workers." Oakland, CA: Food First. |
| | <i>Required Film for Week 6:</i> (Post response by Friday 11/9) | <i>"Food Chains" (available on Netflix or Amazon, via other online sites, or borrow DVD from PSU Library)</i> |
| WEEK 6 Tues. Oct. 30 | Food and Labor (II): Food, Globalization, and Migration, and Labor Organizing Exercise #1 DUE Fri. Nov. 2, 5pm (OR email progress update on commodity chain analysis) | Seth Holmes. 2013. <i>Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies</i> . 89-110 and 155-198. (111-154 are optional.) (E-Book , PSU Library) Laura Anne Minkoff-Zern. 2013. "Farmworker-Led Food Movements Then and Now." 157-178 in Alkon and Guthman (eds.), <i>The New Food Activism</i> . University of California Press. Richard Mertens. 2017. "Tomato Pickers Win Higher Pay. Can Others Use Their Strategy?" <i>Christian Science Monitor</i> , March 9. (Optional): David Bacon. 2013. "From Perote to Tar Heel." 1-21 in <i>The Right to Stay Home</i> . Beacon Press. |
| WEEK 7 Tues. Nov. 6 (Election Day—Vote!) | Food and Labor (III): Food Service Worker Organizing and Social Reproduction Guest Speaker: Amy Coplen, Ph.D. candidate, Urban Studies Food Justice | *Amy Coplen. "Survival Pending Revolution: Building Worker Power Through Mutual Aid in a Fast Food Chain." (Article manuscript) *Molly Solomon. 2018. "In Historic Election, Portland Burgerville Employees Vote to Unionize." <i>OPB News</i> , April 24. Steven Greenhouse. 2016. "Thousands of Fight for 15 Workers Rise Up in 340 Cities Across the U.S." <i>The Guardian</i> , November 29. Anna Marum. 2017. "New Seasons Workers Allege Retaliation, Union-Busting." <i>The Oregonian</i> , December 7. *Alison Alkon. 2018. "Food and Justice." Chap. 20 in <i>Twenty Lessons (E-book)</i> . |

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| | (Nov. 6, continued) | <p>Hannah Levintova. 2014. “Is Giving Food to the Homeless Illegal in Your City Too?” <i>Mother Jones</i>, November 13.</p> <p>Edward Helmore. 2017. “One Community Garden at a Time: How New Yorkers Are Fighting for Food Justice.” <i>The Guardian</i>, June 12.</p> <p>(Optional): Garrett Broad. 2016. <i>More Than Just Food</i>. Univ. of California Press. 129-164, “From the Black Panthers to the USDA.”</p> |
| | THIRD “COURSE”: | ALTERNATIVES: FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL |
| | Required Film for Week 8: (Post response by Friday 11/9) | “Black Gold” (view online via PSU Library) |
| WEEK 8 Tues. Nov. 13 | <p>Fair Trade</p> <p>Organic Food: Social Movement or Organic, Inc.?</p> | <p>*Daniel Jaffee. 2018. “Fair Trade.” Chap. 16 in <i>Twenty Lessons (E-Book)</i></p> <p>Fair World Project. 2018. <i>For A Better World</i> 16 (Spring/Summer).</p> <p>*Kevin Obach. 2014. <i>Organic Struggle</i>. MIT Press. Chapter 1, Introduction. (Chapter 6 is optional.)</p> <p>*Whenona Hauter. 2012. <i>Foodopoly</i>. The New Press. 98-115, “Organic Food: The Paradox.”</p> <p>*Daniel Jaffee and Philip H. Howard. 2010. “Corporate Cooptation of Fair Trade and Organic Standards.” <i>Agriculture and Human Values</i> 27(4): 387-399.</p> <p>*Also Required: View the graphics showing organic industry consolidation (and remaining independents) on Phil Howard’s website: https://philhoward.net/2017/05/08/organic-industry/</p> <p>Plus: Look at Cornucopia Institute’s Organic Dairy Scorecard: https://www.cornucopia.org/organic-dairy-report-and-scorecard/</p> |
| WEEK 9 Tues. Nov. 20 | <p>Food Sovereignty, Seed Sovereignty, and International Peasant Movements</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Carol Hernández Rodríguez, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor, Sociology</p> | <p>*Carol Hernández Rodríguez. 2018. “The Dispute Over the Commons: Seed and Food Sovereignty as Decommodification in Chiapas, Mexico.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Portland State Univ. (Excerpt)</p> <p>*Vandana Shiva. 2016. “Sowing Seeds of Freedom.” 287-296 in <i>Seed Sovereignty, Food Security: Women in the Vanguard of the Fight Against GMOs and Corporate Agriculture</i>. North Atlantic Books.</p> <p>*Peter Rossett. 2003. “Food Sovereignty: Global Rallying Cry of Farmer Movements.” <i>Food First Backgrounder</i> 9(4).</p> |

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| | Local Food, Locavores, and Food Miles | <p>Also: Look at La Via Campesina’s website: www.viacampesina.org</p> <p>*Jessica Prentice. 2007. “The Birth of Locavore.” Oxford University Press Blog. https://blog.oup.com/2007/11/prentice/</p> <p>*Robin McKie. 2008. “How the Myth of Food Miles Hurts the Planet.” <i>The Guardian</i>, March 23.</p> <p>Ronald Bailey. 2002. “I Don’t Care Where My Food Comes From, and Neither Should You.” <i>Reason Magazine</i> (Sept. 25).</p> |
| | Required Film for Week 10: (Post response by Fri. 11/23) | “The Garden” (view online via PSU Library) |
| WEEK 10 Tues. Nov. 27 | Looking Ahead Exercise #2 OR Commodity Chain Analysis DUE Fri. Nov. 30, 5pm | <p>*Frances Moore Lappé and Anna Lappé. 2016. “Fields of Hope and Power.” 3-41 in Vandana Shiva (ed.), <i>Seed Sovereignty, Food Security</i>. North Atlantic Books.</p> <p>*Frances Moore Lappé. 2009. “The City That Ended Hunger.” <i>Yes Magazine</i>, February 13.</p> <p>*Joshua Sbicca. 2018. “Urban Food Production.” Chap. 19 in <i>Twenty Lessons (E-book)</i>.</p> <p>*Alison Hope Alkon and Julie Guthman. 2017. “A New Food Politics.” 316-323 in <i>The New Food Activism</i>. Univ. California Press.</p> <p>Michael Pollan. 2008. “Why Bother?” <i>New York Times Magazine</i>, April 20.</p> |
| FINALS WEEK Dec. 4 | Student Oral Presentations: Tuesday 12/4 (regular class time) | |

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities:

PSU values diversity and inclusion. We are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union: 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and to discuss your accommodations.