Course Description

How and what we feed ourselves is an inextricable part of how we shape our planet. From the fossil fuels and habit destruction required by industrial agriculture, to the exploitation of distant lands and peoples to produce culinary products in demand locally, our food system is laden with all sorts of cultural and ethical issues.

In this course we’ll examine those issues from as broad a lens as we can. Readings will come from not only philosophy and literary studies, but also from history, sociology, economics, nutrition science, psychology, geography, and indigenous studies, among other fields. We’ll survey a wide array of topics, including the ecological impact of individual food choice, the entanglement of food issues with issues of social justice, and movements to transition our food system to a more sustainable future.

This is a seminar course, and we’ll all need to be active participants, prepared to contribute to our joint understanding of these complex issues.

Objectives

- Develop the ability to integrate sources and concepts from a diverse set of disciplines to address complex questions. Achieve a transdisciplinary perspective on course topics.
- Improve skill in written and oral persuasive communication through carefully application of rhetorical technique and philosophical argumentation.
- Apply academic literature and methods to issues of relevance to our own lives and to our local communities.

Texts

Most readings will be provided on Canvas.

In addition, we’ll have four required books:

- **Like Water for Chocolate**, Laura Esquivel; Anchor, ISBN-10: 038542017X
- **Milk! A 10,000-Year Food Fracas**, Mark Kurlansky; Bloomsbury, ISBN-10: 1632863820
Grading will be apportioned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term project</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly responses</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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More detailed rubrics will be forthcoming, but here are the basics:

**Term project**
Due 13 December 2019

In consultation with the professor, develop a project related to the themes of the course. This will probably be a full-length academic paper, but I’m cautiously open to alternatives such as creative projects, empirical research, or community engagement projects. If you wish to pursue an alternative to a standard paper, you must consult with me early in the semester to obtain approval.

We will have several check-in assignments on project progress throughout the semester, and these will be included in your term project grade.

**Weekly responses**
Before class each week you must write a brief (~1 page, single-spaced) response to one of the assigned readings. This response should have three parts:
First, a summary of an argument or theme developed in the reading.
Second, a critical discussion of this argument or theme. “Critical” doesn’t necessarily mean “negative.” While you could analyze how the argument is unsound, you could also discuss how the argument relates to other readings from the course, examine how the author’s structural and stylistic choices contribute to developing their theme, etc.
Third, a question or topic related to the reading that you would like us to discuss in class.

**Presentations**
You will give two presentations over the course of the semester, graded on both content and style. First, you’ll start a discussion during a regular week. The second is a presentation on your term project, at the end of the semester.

**Participation**
Do the readings. Speak your thoughts. Be nice.
Honesty:
You are encouraged to use any available resources, including your peers, to understand readings and prepare for assignments, but submitted work must be your own, and follow appropriate citation practices.

It is your responsibility to be familiar with university policy on academic honesty: http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php

Environment:

I aim to make our classroom a safe, welcoming environment for you, and require that you do the same for your peers. While disagreement and debate is encouraged, hostility and aggression will not be tolerated.

Student life can be challenging and stressful, and for some of you that will include participating in this course. I encourage you to chat with me if you begin to feel overwhelmed by this course.

Support:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS)
Schedule of readings

21 August
Food as a lens on the environmental crisis
No readings

28 August
Food, environment, and culture
Milk! A 10,000-Year Food Fracas, Mark Kurlansky (selections)

4 September
The locavore movement
“The Birth of Locavore,” Jessica Prentice
“The Locavore Memoir: Food Writing in the Age of Information.” Ch. 6 of Global Appetites, Allison Carruth
“Does eating local food reduce the environmental impact of food production and enhance consumer health?”, Gareth Edward-Jones

11 September
Eating meat
Animal Liberation, Peter Singer (selections)
“Eating Animals And Personal Guilt: The Individualization Of Responsibility For Factory Farming,” Grace Boey

18 September
Hunting
Good Seeds: A Menominee Indian Food Memoir, T. F. Pecore Weso (selections)

25 September
The human body
Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body, Roxanne Gay (selections)
“Goblin Market,” Christina Rossetti

2 October
Cooking
Like Water for Chocolate, Laura Esquivel
“Cooking Lesson,” Rosario Castellanos
9 October  
**FALL BREAK (No Class)**

17 October  
**Food and fuel**

“Environmental Action, Gender Equity and Women’s Participation,” Bina Agarwal
“Beyond Industrial Agriculture? Some Questions about Farm Size, Productivity and Sustainability,” Philip Woodhouse
Unbroken Ground (short documentary)

23 October  
**The urban ecosystem**

Hunger, Knut Hamsun
“Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology,” Julian Agyeman and Jesse McEntee

30 October  
**Biotech: GMOs and lab-grown meat**

Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge, Vandana Shiva (selections)
“Clean Meat Hoax” (Website), John Sanbonmatsu

6 November  
**Globalization and food**

“Cultural Appropriation and the Intimacy of Groups,” Thi Ngyuen and Matthew Strohl

13 November  
**Wine**

“No Such Thing as Terroir?: Objectivities and the Regimes of Existence of Objects,” Genevieve Teil
“Wine and the Brain,” Jamie Goode
“Can Wines be Brawny? Reflections on Wine Vocabulary,” Adrienne Lehrer

20 November  
**Final project presentations**

4 Dec  
No class 27 November due to Thanksgiving holiday