

**St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology**

Sociology 364: Food and Society

Winter Semester, 2014-15

Dr. John Phyne
Annex 110A

Class Times: Tuesday: 2:15 PM to 3:30; Thursday: 2:15 PM to 3:30 PM

Office Hours: Monday: 1:30 PM to 3:00PM; Thursday: 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM; Friday:
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM or by appointment.

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E-mail Policy: Please restrict your e-mails to necessary communications. This includes extended absences from class (more than one week) and family emergencies. I refuse to use my e-mail to cover lectures from missed classes. My office hours or the phone should be used to cover materials pertaining to the course. Refer to the information and communications technology policy guideline on p. 4 of this syllabus.

Course Description

This course explores the linkages among food production, distribution and consumption within the changing global political economy. Consideration is given to these issues *within* the Global North and Global South. We also consider the historical and contemporary linkages *between* the Global North and South. These linkages are similarly assessed through an examination of food policy issues (health and safety, security and sustainability).

The course is divided into five sections. The **first section** covers the social organisation of local and global food production, distribution and consumption. Emphasis is given to the social and ecological consequences of global food production and consumption patterns. We deal with the consequences of the 'liberalisation' of trade in food products for food producers and consumers. The conceptual apparatus introduced here is the basis for the consideration of material in the rest of the course (two weeks).

Section Two emphasizes the social organisation of food production and consumption in the Global North. Much of the period since the end of WWII was characterised by state intervention and the maximization of production. Policies endeavoured to link production to consumption. This is referred to as the Fordist food regime. Case studies of the Fordist regime (US centred intensive regime) and the gradual decline of this regime include: the Canadian Wheat Board and supply management in Canadian dairy production. We also cover the roots of 'permanent' migrant labour in Canada's seasonal fruit and vegetable sectors, and the emergence of immigrant labour in the restructured beef-processing sector (three weeks).

Section Three emphasizes the social reorganisation of agricultural production in countries in the South and the linkages of this with Northern consumption practices. This ‘Post-Fordist’ (or corporate food regime) period arguably began in the late 1970s, but accelerated in the 1990s. It consists of a growing emphasis on ‘free markets’ in the sourcing of agricultural products. This process was engineered by Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in the revision of lending practices from Northern to Southern countries, and is stressed in the recent policy provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This growing liberalisation of trade in food products coupled with the rise in agro-export industries in the South has resulted in changing patterns in the relationships between producers and consumers. Food is now sourced from a wider variety of places in the Global South. Here, we examine trade liberalisation and its implications for the rise of ‘buyer-driven’ food chains for export agriculture in the Global South (three weeks).

Section Four deals with selected issues in food policy. The topics covered include: health and safety, and food security. Under health and safety, we will assess: the debates over genetically modified foods (GMOs) and farmed salmon, the mass marketing of pseudo-foods, how healthy eating corresponds to social divisions based upon gender, ethnicity, class and life stage, and the issue of food labelling as it applies to health and safety criteria. For food security, we examine the issue of food banks in the Global North and the role of the World Food Programme in the Global South. Food security will be assessed in terms of the ability of local, national and international governance arrangements to deal with hunger in the midst of plenty (three weeks).

Textbooks

Mustafa Koç, Jennifer Sumner and Anthony Winson, eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Philip McMichael, *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions: Agrarian Change & Peasant Studies*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013.

Gavin Fridell, *Alternative Trade: Legacies for the Future*. Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2013.

Evaluation: There will be two examinations (15 and 30 marks each) and one paper (20 per cent) within the term. The final examination is worth 35 per cent of your final grade.

Examination One: Tuesday, February 3 – 15 marks.

Examination Two: Tuesday, March 10– 30 marks.

Term Paper: Due in class (not under my door after class), Tuesday, March 17– 20 marks. The guidelines will be placed in Moodle and covered in class on Thursday, January 15.

Required Readings

Most of the readings are from your textbooks. Articles marked with an * are available in moodle. Read articles in the order in which these are listed. While much of this material will be covered in class, you are expected to complete all of these readings for your examinations. The failure to keep up with your readings will most likely result in a poor grade in this course.

Section One: The Social and Ecological Dimensions of the Global Food Economy (two weeks)

Harriet Friedmann, "Changing Food Systems from the Top to Bottom: Political Economy and Social Movements Perspectives." In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 16-32.

Robert Albritton, "Two Great Food Revolutions: The Domestication of Nature and the Transgression of Nature's Limits." In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 89-103.

Philip McMichael, *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions: Agrarian Change & Peasant Studies*. Chapters 1 to 2, pp. 1 to 40.

Section Two: Fordist and Post-Fordist Food Chains: The Global North (three weeks)

Nettie Wiebe, "Crisis in the Food System: The Farm Crisis." In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 155-170.

Gavin Fridell, *Alternative Trade: Legacies for the Future*, Chapter 3, pp. 67-98.

Kerry Prebisch, "Local Produce, Foreign Labor: Labor Mobility Programs and Global Trade Competitiveness in Canada." *Rural Sociology* 72(3), 2007, pp. 418-449.*

Section Three: Post-Fordist Food Chains: The Global South (three weeks)

Gavin Fridell, *Alternative Trade: Legacies for the Future*, Chapter 1, pp. 10-35.

Philip McMichael, *Food Regimes and Agrarian Questions: Agrarian Change & Peasant Studies*. Chapter 3, pp. 41-61; Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 84-130.

Carmen Bain, "Governing the Global Value Chain: GLOBALGAP and the Chilean Fresh Fruit Industry." *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture & Food*. Vol. 17 (1), 2010, pp. 1-23.*

Jennifer Clapp, "Who Governs Food Prices?" In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 276-289.

Section Four: Selected Issues in Food Policy: Health and Safety, and Food Security (three weeks)

Health and Safety

Elisabeth A. Abergel, “The Paradox of Governing Through the Courts: The Canadian GMO Containment Debate.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 260-275.

Anthony Winson, “Spatial Colonization of Food Environments by Pseudo-Food Companies.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 186-207.

Brenda L. Beagan and Gwen E. Chapman, “Constructing ‘Healthy Eating’/Constructing Self.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 136-151.

Irena Knezevic, “Labels and Governance: Promises, Failures and Deceptions of Food Labelling.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 247-259.

Food Security

Carole Suschnigg, “Food Security? Some Contradictions Associated With Corporate Donations to Canada’s Food Banks.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 223-242.

Wendy Mendes, “Municipal Governance and the Urban Food System.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 290-309.

Technology and this Course

1. **E-mail:** Please restrict your e-mails to necessary communications. This includes: extended absences from class (more than one week) and family emergencies. I refuse to use e-mail to cover lectures from missed classes. My office hours or the phone should be used to cover materials pertaining to the course. Unnecessary e-mails will remain unanswered.
2. **Cell phones:** Please turn off all cell phones before the commencement of class. If you need to have your cell phone turned on, please let me know as soon as possible.
3. **Use of laptops for taking notes:** No laptops are to be used in the class.
4. **No audiotaping or videotaping of lectures:** Under no circumstances are my lectures to be audiotaped or videotaped. If you require assistance in the taking of notes, I suggest that you seek the assistance of the Counseling Centre (867-2281).