

St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology

Sociology 364: Food and Society

Syllabus: Fall Semester: 2013-14

Dr. John Phyne
Annex 110A

Class Times: Monday: 11:15 to 12:30; Thursday: 12:45 to 2:00 AM

Office Hours: Monday: 1:30 to 3:00; Thursday: 10:00 to 12:00 Noon; Friday: 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon 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. 5 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 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 (four 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’ 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 Chile and South Africa (four 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

Tony Weis, *The Global Food Economy: The Battle for the Future of Farming*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2007.

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

Donald D. Stull and Michael J. Broadway, *Slaughterhouse Blues: The Meat and Poultry Industry in North America*. Second Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2013.

Evaluation

Test One: Thursday, October 3, 25 per cent.

Essay: Thursday, October 17– 15 per cent (outline handed out in class on Thursday, September 12).

Test Two: Monday, November 4 – 25 per cent.

Final: 35 per cent.

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)

Mustafa Koç, Rod MacRae, Andrea M. Noack and Özlem Güçlü Üstündağ, “What is Food Studies? Characterizing an Emerging Academic Field through the Eyes of Canadian Scholars.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*, pp. 4-15.

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.

Tony Weis, *The Global Food Economy: The Battle for the Future of Farming*, Chapter 1, pp. 11-46.

Section Two: Fordist and Post-Fordist Food Chains: The Global North (Four Weeks)

Tony Weis, *The Global Food Economy: The Battle for the Future of Farming*, Chapter 2, pp. 47-88.

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

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

Donald D. Stull and Michael J. Broadway, *Slaughterhouse Blues: The Meat and Poultry Industry in North America*. Second Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2013, Chapters 1, 2, 6 and 7, pp. 1-41; 109-29.

Section Three: Post-Fordist Food Chains: The Global South (Four Weeks)

Tony Weis, *The Global Food Economy: The Battle for the Future of Farming*, Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 89-160.

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

Andrietta Kritzing, Stephanie Barrientos and Hester Rossouw, "Global Production and Flexible Employment in South African Horticulture: Experiences of Contract Workers in Fruit Exports." *Sociologia Ruralis* 44(1), 2004, pp. 17-39. *

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.*

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.

Technology and this Course

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) pervade many aspects of our lives and the classroom is no exception to this trend. I require that you abide by the following rules for the use of ICT in conjunction with 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. Also, if you need to text message someone, I suggest that you leave the class.
3. **No use of laptops for taking notes:** Students are increasingly making use of laptops for taking notes. I have tried to get students to do this responsibly. Unfortunately, the surfing of the Internet while in class has interfered with the teaching environment. Therefore, as of 2010, I decided to ban the use of laptops in my classes.
4. **No audio or video taping of lectures:** Under no circumstances are my lectures to be audio or video taped. If you require assistance in the taking of notes, I suggest that you seek the assistance of the Counseling Centre (867-2281).