CSUS 811
Community, Food and Agriculture: A Survey

Fall 2015
Wednesdays, 11:30am to 2:20pm
1210 Anthony Hall
3.0 credit hours

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Required Texts:

Description: This graduate multi-disciplinary course in the Department of Community Sustainability examines a range of philosophical, environmental, socio-economic and political issues related to food and farming in the US. This course is designed as the introductory course for Community Sustainability students specializing in the area of Community, Food and Agriculture, as well as others interested in a wide variety of local, national and global food and farming issues. It also serves as an introductory social science course for students in the Ecological Food and Farming Systems specialization.

Key course themes that are addressed from diverse disciplinary and conceptual frameworks include: sustainability; American agrarianism; the industrialization and corporate control of US food and farming; food and globalization; localized and place-based agriculture; governance of the agrifood system; and, food democracy, security and sovereignty.

Course Objectives
• provide students with an overview of the literature addressing local, national and global issues in community, food and agriculture
• develop an understanding of various conceptual perspectives used to address issues in the area of community, food and agriculture
• develop a scholarly capacity for analyzing food and farming problems from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

Course Approach The course is organized as a small seminar with a commitment to developing collaborative learning among all who participate. In the spirit of creating an intellectual community around community, food and agricultural issues, participants are encouraged to share their concerns about the learning environment and to shape our efforts to explore these issues.
Course Assignments and Evaluation
Assignments (100 points each) include:
1. required readings and participation in class discussions, and self-evaluation
2. critical review of a scholarly book related to community, food and agriculture
3. weekly online reflections applying the readings and class discussion from the previous week
4. final group project

Weekly readings - you are expected to come to class prepared to answer the following questions about the weekly readings:

1. what did you agree/disagree with the most? OR what did you find most useful?
2. what did the readings potentially leave out?
3a. what question(s) did the readings raise? 3b. what were you able to uncover about this question? (This will require that you seek out and read at least one additional article or chapter in an effort to answer your question. It's OK if you're not able to answer the question, just share what you learned in the process.)

Online Component
Each week (beginning with week 2) you will relate concepts from the previous class (readings and discussion) to your daily life and/or current events in an essay of approximately 500 words. For example, you might a) discuss how your food consumption behaviors have changed as a result of learning about the labor practices in agriculture and food processing, b) compare and contrast policies developed for seeds in the United States to other agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers, c) describe how you might incorporate concepts from the readings in your thesis or dissertation research, or d) numerous other possibilities of your choosing. The intention is not require a significant amount of additional research, but to stimulate retrieval of the previous week's content, encourage memory formation, and reinforce connections to other subjects (see Brown et al. 2014, Make It Stick, for more on the cognitive research supporting these outcomes).

Critical review of a scholarly book - choose a book addressing the topics of community, food and agriculture of interest to you. Read carefully and write a critical review of approximately 1000 words. You may choose from among the references in the Carolan text, suggestions in the assignment folder, or meet with me to discuss some possibilities you're considering. Be sure to look at a number of examples of book reviews in scholarly journals, such as Agriculture and Human Values, to get a sense of what is expected. Typical elements include bibliographic information, a brief summary of the book, a critique, and a suggested audience. Keep in mind the purpose of the review is to help readers decide if it is worth their time to read the book.

Group project - You will form groups of ideally 3-5 to look at a problem, issue or opportunity related to community, food and agriculture and apply concepts from this course to analyze it. Your group will create a series of articles/blog posts, with an introduction written as a team, and additional articles written by each individual group member. The introduction and articles should include photos or other graphics in addition to text. See examples here:
https://farmersforthefuture.wordpress.com/
http://conventionalwisdomoflocalfood.blogspot.com/
Schedule
Sept. 9 - Introduction

Sept. 16 - reading: Carolan, Introduction and Part I

Sept. 23 - reading: Carolan, Part II

Sept. 30 - reading: Carolan, Part III and IV

Oct. 7 - reading: Obach, Chapters 1-4

Oct. 14 - reading: Obach, Chapters 5-8


Oct. 28 – guest Steven Gray, CSUS

Nov. 4 - guest Wynne Wright, CSUS and Sociology

Nov. 11 - guest Laura DeLind, Anthropology and RCAH
DeLind, Laura B. 2011. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars? Agriculture and Human Values 28: 273-283.

Nov. 18 – guest Paul Thompson, CSUS and Philosophy
Thompson, Paul B. 2015. From Field to Fork: Food Ethics for Everyone. Oxford University Press. (Chapters 1, 2 & 6).
Dec. 2 – guest Rich Pirog, CSUS and Center for Regional Food Systems
Pirog, Rich & Corry Bregendahl. 2012. Creating Change in the Food System: The Role of
Regional Food Networks in Iowa. MSU Center for Regional Food Systems.
Pirog, Rich, Crystal Miller, Lindsay Way, Christina Hazekamp & Emily Kim. 2014. The Local
Food Movement: Setting the Stage for Good Food. MSU Center for Regional Food Systems.
Development*.

Dec. 9 - Synthesis and final projects

Dec. 18 - 10am to noon, Final Exam due

Article 2.III.B.2 of the Academic Freedom Report states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for
maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the Department of
Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of
Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00,
Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including
homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop
original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy
the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any
course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will
receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students
reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and
grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This
course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Michigan State University is committed to ensuring that the bereavement process of a student who loses a family
member during a semester does not put the student at an academic disadvantage in their classes. If you require a
grief absence, you should complete the “Grief Absence Request” web form (found
at https://www.reg.msu.edu/sitemap.aspx?Group=7) no later than one week after knowledge of the circumstance. I
will work with you to make appropriate accommodations so that you are not penalized due to a verified grief absence.