

**Getting from Field to Fork**

ECON 3010 (4 credits / 60 hours)

International Honors Program (IHP)

**Rethinking Food Security: People, Agriculture, and Politics**

**PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester. In addition, considerations of student safety may change some course content.**

**Course Description**

Throughout history, 'economy' has meant different things. Aristotle used the term to describe a household's social reproduction. Adam Smith used it to describe frugality, or the prudent use of resources. The modern use of the term to represent the relations of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services within a country did not arise until the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. But each of these conceptualizations of economy has something in common: they necessarily require thinking about interdependency in human and natural systems. Following Smith and other political economists, we often think of economic-ecological relations as being mediated by markets, but this wasn't always the case. How did markets – for land, labor, water, and crops, among other things – come into being? What extra-economic factors facilitated the creation and prominence of markets in agriculture and food systems?

In this course we will answer these questions, examining specific historical periods and economic practices that shape relations among countries, landowners and tenants, growers and manufacturers, producers and consumers, and subsistence and communal means of production. To understand these relationships, we will pay special attention to capitalist processes of enclosure, accumulation, commodification, and privatization. We'll examine the benefits of these processes as well as how people passively and actively resist them. And we will situate these processes in their colonial, neoliberal, and global contexts.

Our explorations of 'economy' are centered around agrifood systems: What economic factors contribute to food in/security? What economic models offer hope? And, for whom? Thus, we will pay close attention to how capitalist processes impact the daily lives of farm laborers, smallholder farmers, artisans, market vendors, city-dwellers, restaurant workers, cooks, and more. By considering economic questions from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, this course will combine broad explanatory frameworks with economic processes that are unique to specific geographic locations and social positions.

## Course Goals

- Cultivate a community of respect, curiosity, and mutual support.
- Honor every member of our learning community as a whole human.
- Realize the ways in which we are all teachers *and* learners.
- Introduce students to capitalist processes which shape agrifood systems.
- Encourage students to embrace and grapple with uncertainty and complexity.
- Promote empathy, self-reflection, and critical thinking as complementary and mutually reinforcing learning skills.
- Ask questions that genuinely interest you.

## Learning Outcomes

- Identify, describe, and analyze major capitalist processes at work in global food systems.
- Develop methods for understanding the economics of food systems and food security that combine broad explanatory frameworks and unique lived experiences.
- Distinguish and compare ways in which economic processes play out in different geographical locations, social positions and across time.
- Integrate experiences, literature, class concepts, and self-reflection in original ideas and arguments about major themes related to agrifood systems and food security.
- Analyze the role of states, multinational institutions, the private sector, and civil society in the economics of agrifood systems.
- Build confidence and skills related to public presentations.

## Course Requirements

### COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

#### Module 1: USA (12 hours)

In our first session, we will discuss broad terms of engagement for economic analysis and explore different individual learning styles. Please review pre-departure materials before coming to Berkeley.

#### PRE-DEPARTURE: CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS OF FOOD PRODUCTION

Hunter, M. (2017). Do we really need to double food production by 2050? Actually, no.

[\[http://grist.org/article/do-we-really-need-to-double-food-production-by-2050-actually-no/\]](http://grist.org/article/do-we-really-need-to-double-food-production-by-2050-actually-no/)

#### SESSION 1: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FAMILY FARM?

Daniel, P. (2013). Farmland blues: The legacy of USDA discrimination. *Southern Spaces*, October 30.

[\[https://southernspaces.org/2013/farmland-blues-legacy-usda-discrimination\]](https://southernspaces.org/2013/farmland-blues-legacy-usda-discrimination)

Long, H. (2018, June 1) The Latest Blow to Struggling Family Farms: Rising Interest Rates.

*Washington Post*. [\[https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/the-latest-blow-to-struggling-family-farms-rising-interest-rates/2018/06/01/ec4d192a-5aac-11e8-b656-a5f8c2a9295d\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.c9b94a64cc9f\]](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/the-latest-blow-to-struggling-family-farms-rising-interest-rates/2018/06/01/ec4d192a-5aac-11e8-b656-a5f8c2a9295d_story.html?utm_term=.c9b94a64cc9f)

Southern Foodways Alliance [podcast]. (2015). Fighting for the promised land: A story of farming and racism. Gravy, episode 29. [\[https://www.southernfoodways.org/gravy/fighting-for-the-promised-land-a-story-of-farming-and-racism-gravy-ep-29/\]](https://www.southernfoodways.org/gravy/fighting-for-the-promised-land-a-story-of-farming-and-racism-gravy-ep-29/)

## **SESSION 2: WHO MAKES THE FARM WORK?**

Holmes, Seth. (2013). *Fresh fruit, broken bodies: Migrant farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Selected chapters: "Introduction: Worth Risking Your Life?" pp. 1-27, and "Segregation on the Farm: Ethnic Hierarchies at Work" pp. 45-87.

## **Module 2: Ecuador (16 hours)**

### **SESSION 1: WHAT IS 'THE ECONOMY'?**

Popkin, S. (1979) *The Rational Peasant*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 1: pp.1-31.  
Gibson-Graham, J.K. (1996) *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 1: Strategies pp. 1-23.

### **SESSION 2: NEOLIBERALISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

McCarthy, J. and S. Prudham (2004) Neoliberal Nature and the Nature of Neoliberalism. *Geoforum*, 35. Pp. 275-283  
Ferguson, J. (2010). The uses of neoliberalism. *Antipode* 41(1): 166-184.

### **SESSION 3: WATER: COMMODITY OR HUMAN RIGHT?**

Bakker, K. (2007). The "commons" versus the "commodity": Alter-globalization, anti-privatization and the human right to water in the global South. *Antipode* 39(3): 430-455.  
Biro, A. (2012) *Water Wars by Other Means: Virtual Water and Global Economic Restructuring*. *Global Environmental Politics*, 12:4, pp. 86-103.

## **Module 3: Malawi (16 hours)**

### **SESSION 1: THE PARADOX OF DEVELOPMENT**

McMichael, P. (2012). *Development and social change: A global perspective*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012. Selected chapters (2 and 3): "Instituting the development project" and "International framework"

### **SESSION 2: SMALLHOLDER RISK AND EFFICIENCY**

Tucker, B. (2014). Rationality and the Green Revolution. *Applied evolutionary anthropology: Darwinian approaches to contemporary world issues*. Eds. Gibson, A. Mhairi and W. David Lawson. New York, NY: Springer New York. p. 15-38.

### **SESSION 3: THE LONG GREEN REVOLUTION**

Patel, R. (2013). The Long Green Revolution. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 40(1): 1-63.

## **Module 4: Italy (16 hours)**

To read before arrival:

Black, R. E. (2012). Il Ventre di Torino: Migration and Food. In *Porta Palazzo: the anthropology of an Italian market*, University of Pennsylvania Press. pp. 93-119.

### **SESSION 1: PATHOLOGIES OF FOOD AID**

Murphy, S. and K. McAfee (2005) *U.S. Food Aid: Time to Get it Right*, Minneapolis: IATP.  
[\[https://www.iatp.org/files/451\\_2\\_73512.pdf\]](https://www.iatp.org/files/451_2_73512.pdf)

## **SESSION 2: DEMANDING SUSTAINABILITY: CORPORATE POWER VS. CONSUMER PRESSURE**

Clapp, J. (2018) Mega-Mergers on the Menu: Corporate Concentration and the Politics of Sustainability in the Global Food System, *Global Environmental Politics*, 18:2, pp.12-33.

Scott, C. (2018) Sustainably Sourced Junk Food? Big Food and the Challenge of Sustainable Diets, *Global Environmental Politics*, 18:2, pp. 93-113.

## **SESSION 3: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

# **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

## **ASSESSMENT TASKS**

### **Reading, preparation, and participation**

This course depends on you being prepared for class discussion. For each class, you should read the assigned readings, prepare one or two questions, and raise them in class. These may be clarifying, reflective, or provocative questions about the readings, and can relate to your experiences outside the classroom. You will be assessed based on your contribution to group discussions, including your questions and responses to peers' questions, as well as your active listening and sharing of air-time.

### **Class writing**

These are writing exercises that I will use at the beginning of each class to assess reading comprehension. You will be asked to define concepts and/or connect the readings to larger class themes expressed in site visits and lectures. Each exercise will be no longer than 10 minutes.

### **Group Inquiry Projects**

When we arrive in Ecuador, you will participate in an Open Space activity and form inquiry groups based on shared interests. Each group will formulate a research question and conduct/create stakeholder profiles and interviews related to your theme in each country. Furthermore, you should seek information related to your research question during site visits and classes. The final presentation (described below) should be more than a summary of interviews and stakeholder profiles from all three countries. You should present a thesis statement that answers your research question and present supporting data, analysis, and conclusions that draw on only the most relevant aspects from activities during the semester.

### **Memos**

You will write four memos throughout the semester documenting the evolution of your research question and preliminary findings. Your group must meet with me prior to writing and submitting each memo.

Memo 1: You will write and submit your first memo one week after the Open Space session. This memo should include a) your overarching research question; secondary questions, accompanied by brief explanations of how each question or set of questions will help answer your overarching question; b) notes about the site visits that you expect will be most relevant to each question or set of questions; c) your hypothesized answer to your overarching question and secondary questions; d) a list of readings that you expect will be most relevant and a brief explanation of how you think they will be helpful; e) a work plan for stakeholder profile, including an interview protocol for each site visit.

**Due Date: TBD**

Memos 2 and 3: In addition to the information above, the second and third memos should also include: e) your preliminary answers to your research questions based on experiences in the previous country,

including a list of most relevant site visits, guests speakers, activities, etc. and a brief explanation of their relevance; f) revisions to your research question and an explanation of why your questions changed. These are due one week after arriving in Malawi and Italy. In addition to talking with me, you must also discuss your interests with the country coordinators to better understand upcoming site visits and guest lectures.

**Due Date: TBD**

Memo 4: The fourth memo is due one week before your final presentation. This memo must include your final research question and secondary questions; an explanation of the evolution of the questions; an explanation of the connection between the questions; a thesis statement answering your research questions; a list of activities from throughout the semester that contributed to your answer and brief explanation of why each activity, site, lecture, etc. was helpful; and a work plan for preparing your final presentation.

**Due Date: TBD**

### **Stakeholder profiles**

You will create three stakeholder profiles, each worth 10% of your grade. In each country outside the USA, ask to interview someone you meet or learn about through our field trips or guest lectures who is engaged with a theme relevant to your final project. You should prepare an interview protocol with questions; however, you should also determine whether it is more appropriate to conduct the interview formally or informally (as a conversation). Based on the information you learn about this person, create a profile. The profile may include: the person's name, background demographics (e.g. age, occupation, education, farm size), a photograph, affiliations, their motivation to engage with the theme of your project, the specific ways they engage with the theme, what is unique about their perspective or work, their goal(s), and challenges they face. You must share the profile with the person and incorporate their feedback before submitting it for a grade. Please provide evidence that you did this. During your interview, be sure to ask how to share the profile and what an appropriate timeline for feedback is. Each profile should be visually compelling, easy to read, and highlight key pieces of information. Ideally, the format of each of your profiles is similar enough so that the collection is cohesive. You may not profile IHP faculty and staff. Do not exceed 1000 words.

**Due Date: TBD**

### **Presentation**

Prepare a **twenty-minute** group presentation in which you present an original argument about the theme of your inquiry project. Your presentation should draw on, integrate, compare, and contrast the stakeholder profiles, field trips, and program activities from each country. Be sure to rehearse your presentation and include appropriate visual materials. You will present in the final class session.

### **ASSESSMENT**

40% Reading, preparation, participation

    Class participation 20%

    Class writing 20%

60% Group inquiry

    Memos 10%

    Stakeholder profiles 30%

    Presentation 20%

## Grading Scale

94–100%	A
90–93%	A-
87–89%	B+
84–86%	B
80–83%	B-
77–79%	C+
74–76%	C
70–73%	C-
67–69%	D+
64–66%	D
below 64%	F

## Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared.
- Complete assignments on time.
- Be attentive, engaged, and respectful with hosts, lecturers, and everyone else you meet.
- Do not cheat or plagiarize.
- Respect difference.
- Take ownership of your own learning as an individual and as a group.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disability\\_services@sit.edu](mailto:disability_services@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at: [www.studyabroad.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.studyabroad.edu/disabilityservices).