

Food Security, Nutrition, and Sustainable Development

IBPH 3000 (3 credits)

Italy: Food Security and Nutrition

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This seminar examines food security¹ and nutrition in the perspective of sustainable development and social stability, taking into account the role of financial markets, agri-business industries and international food-, land-, and commodity trading, while connecting these factors to broader global challenges such as food sovereignty, public health, climate change, complex emergencies, and forced migration.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze strategic goals of food security and nutrition, alongside the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and global health;
- Examine issues of food security in the context of complex emergencies, fast urbanization, and dynamic changes in people's lifestyles in both developed and developing countries;
- Understand the impact of financial and commodity markets on food, nutrition, water, and arable land, and explain ways of sustainable agricultural development for current and future generations;
- Produce an independent research project on a theme discussed in this course.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey,

¹ The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life." (Source: WHO website).

Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; “knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Food Security and Nutrition in a Framework of Sustainable Development

This module introduces the issue of food security in a global perspective, taking into account nutrition, development, and agricultural policies, and the role of modern and alternative technologies as a means to contributing to the alleviation of hunger and food insecurity.

Session 1: Global Challenges to Food Security and Nutrition

This session takes stock of the Second International Conference on Nutrition of 2014 in Rome and explores ways of achieving food and nutrition security in the post-2015 development framework.

Required Reading:

Second International Conference on Nutrition. (2014). Outcome Document, *Rome Declaration on Nutrition*. Rome, 19-21. Retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml542e.pdf>

World Health Assesmbly. (2014). Food and Nutrition Security in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Retrieved from: http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/Beyond2015_FNSPositionPaper_FINAL_0.pdf

Recommended Readings:

Pingali, P., Alinovi, L., & Sutton, J. (2005). Food security in complex emergencies: enhancing food system resilience. *Disasters*, 29(s1), 5-24.

World Food Programme (WFP): *Emergency Field Operations Pocketbook*, Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/WFP_manual.pdf

Session 2: ‘Food Sovereignty’ and Socio-Political Stability

This module elaborates on the multifaceted meaning of 'food security', how the term has evolved over the 20th century, how it was linked to the so-called green revolution, and examines how the liberalization of food markets and international trading has affected both food sovereignty and socio-political stability, with special attention to developing countries.

Required Readings:

Barrett, C. B. (Ed.). (2013). *Food security and sociopolitical stability*. OUP Oxford, 1-34.

Carolan, M. (2013). *Reclaiming Food Security*. Routledge / Earthscan: London / New York, 1-35.

Recommended Readings:

El-Zein, A., Jabbour, S., Tekce, B., Zurayk, H., Nuwayhid, I., Khawaja, M., ... & Hogan, D. (2014). Health and ecological sustainability in the Arab world: a matter of survival. *The Lancet*, 383(9915), 458-476.

Rydin, Y., Bleahu, A., Davies, M., Dávila, J. D., Friel, S., De Grandis, G., ... & Lai, K. M. (2012). Shaping cities for health: complexity and the planning of urban environments in the 21st century. *Lancet*, 379(9831), 2079.

Session 3: Sustainable Development and the 'Right to Food'

This session critically evaluates the post-2015 sustainable development goals, taking into account environmental sustainability, equitable development, and further elaborating on the human right to food and adequate nutrition.

Required Reading:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Civil Society Reflection Group on Global Perspectives. (2013). *Towards a Framework of Universal Sustainability Goals as Part of a Post-2015 Agenda*.

De Schutter, O. (2014). UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food. *Report on agroecology and the right to food*.

Recommended Readings:

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). (2012). Summary of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). *Negotiations Bulletin*, Vol. 27, No. 51, 25. Retrieved from: <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb2751e.pdf>

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). (2012). *The Future We Want*. Outcome Document, A/Conf.216/L.1, 19. Retrieved from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&referer=/english/&lang=E

Module 2: Agriculture, International Trade, and Food Markets

This module examines the impact of international trade and financial- and commodity markets on global and local food systems, as well as the role of modern technology in agricultural development and in the perspective of the need to feed an ever-growing world population.

Session 1: Impact of the Financial Crisis on Food Security

This session examines the impact of the liberalization of international food and agricultural markets to food security.

Required Readings:

Infosources. (2009). When Food Markets do not Provide for Enough Food: Lessons from the Recent Price Crisis. *Focus*, No. 1/09, Retrieved from:

http://www.inforesources.ch/pdf/focus09_1_e.pdf

Margulis, M. E. (2014). Trading out of the global food crisis? The World Trade Organization and the geopolitics of food security. *Geopolitics*, 19(2), 322-350.

Recommended Readings:

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP): Trade and Global Governance Program. (2008). Commodity Markets Speculation: The Risk to Food Security and Agriculture.

Retrieved from: http://www.iatp.org/files/451_2_104414.pdf

Von Braun, J. (2008). *Food and financial crises: Implications for agriculture and the poor* (Vol. 20). Intl Food Policy Res Inst. Retrieved from:

<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/jvbagm2008.pdf>

Session 2: Impact of Land Grabbing on Food Security

This session evaluates the complex interconnection between agriculture, land, and renewable energy such as biofuels and its implication on food security.

Required Reading:

Cotula, L. (2012). The international political economy of the global land rush: A critical appraisal of trends, scale, geography and drivers. *The journal of peasant studies*, 39(3-4), 649-680.

Recommended Readings:

Cotula, L., Dyer, N., & Vermeulen, S. (2008). *Fuelling Exclusion?: The Biofuels Boom and Poor People's Access to Land*. Retrieved from: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/12551IIED.pdf>

Cotula, L. (2009). *Land grab or development opportunity?: agricultural investment and international land deals in Africa*.

FAO. (2008). The State of Food and Agriculture–Biofuels: Prospects, Risks and Opportunities. Retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i0100e.pdf>

Session 3: Towards Sustainable Agriculture Development

This session examines the role of public and private investments as well as research and development in the promotion of fortified food products and the use of pesticides within agricultural and food production supply chains. At the same time, it discusses alternative, ecological ways of addressing sustainable agriculture, food systems, and land use.

Required Reading:

United Nations Secretary General Report. (2012). Agricultural Development and Food Security. Retrieved from:

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/294&Lang=E

Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC. (2013). Strategic Framework 2013-2017: Global Program Food Security. Retrieved from: https://www.eda.admin.ch/.../strategic-framework-food-security-2013-2017_EN.pdf

Elver, H. (2017). UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Report on the impact of pesticides. United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/34/48.

Recommended Readings:

Tilman, D., Balzer, C., Hill, J., & Befort, B. L. (2011). Global food demand and the sustainable intensification of agriculture. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(50), 20260-20264. Retrieved from:

<http://www.pnas.org/content/108/50/20260.full.pdf+html>

Ronald, P. (2011). Plant genetics, sustainable agriculture and global food security. *Genetics*, 188(1), 11-20.

Module 3: Nutrition for Human Health and Sustainable Development

This module examines the relationship between nutrition and health and studies how addressing food security and diet could be used as means of achieving global health targets.

Session 1: Breast Feeding, Public Health and Human Development

This session introduces the relevance of breastfeeding in the field of nutrition and health.

Required Reading:

Rollins, N. C., Bhandari, N., Hajeebhoy, N., Horton, S., Lutter, C. K., Martines, J. C., ... & Group, T. L. B. S. (2016). Why invest, and what it will take to improve breastfeeding practices?. *The Lancet*, 387(10017), 491-504.

Recommended Readings:

World Health Organization. (2000). Nutrition for health and development: a global agenda for combating malnutrition. Retrieved from:

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.385.768&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Greiner, T (ed.). (2014). The Advantages, Disadvantages and Risks of Ready-to-Use Foods. Breastfeeding Briefs, No. 56757.

Lhotska, L. (2008). Whatever happened to Health for All? Ups and downs of protection of breastfeeding, regulation of transnational corporations and Health for All. *Whatever happened to Health for All? Ups and downs of protection of breastfeeding, regulation of transnational corporations and Health for All*.

Session 2: Nutrition and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

This session examines the relationship between nutrition, diet, lifestyle, and the growing global problems constituted by non-communicable diseases. It addresses opportunities and challenges of nutrition and food preferences as a means of preventing the spread of chronic and non-infectious diseases.

Required Reading:

Darnton-Hill, I., Nishida, C., & James, W. P. T. (2004). A life course approach to diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases. *Public health nutrition*, 7(1A; SPI), 101-122.

Popkin, B. M., Adair, L. S., & Ng, S. W. (2012). Global nutrition transition and the pandemic of obesity in developing countries. *Nutrition reviews*, 70(1), 3-21.

Recommended Readings:

- Bloom, D., Cafiero, E., Jané-Llopis, E., Abrahams-Gessel, S., Bloom, L., Fathima, S., ... & O'Farrell, D. (2012). *The global economic burden of noncommunicable diseases*. Program on the Global Demography of Aging.
- El Rhazi, K., Nejjari, C., Zidouh, A., Bakkali, R., Berraho, M., & Gateau, P. B. (2011). Prevalence of obesity and associated sociodemographic and lifestyle factors in Morocco. *Public health nutrition*, 14(01), 160-167.
- Kain, J., Cordero, S. H., Pineda, D., de Moraes, A. F., Antiporta, D., Collese, T., ... & Rivera, J. (2014). Obesity prevention in Latin America. *Current obesity reports*, 3(2), 150-155.

Session 3: Nutrition and Infectious Disease

This session evaluates the interplays between malnutrition and infectious disease.

Required Reading:

- Katona, P., & Katona-Apte, J. (2008). The interaction between nutrition and infection. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 46(10), 1582-1588.
- Dora, C., Haines, A., Balbus, J., Fletcher, E., Adair-Rohani, H., Alabaster, G., ... & Neira, M. (2015). Indicators linking health and sustainability in the post-2015 development agenda. *The Lancet*, 385(9965), 380-391. Retrieved from: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)60605-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60605-X)

Recommended Readings:

- Tulchinsky, T. H., & Varavikova, E. A. (2010). What is the "new public health"?. *Public Health Reviews*, 32(1), 25-53.

Module 4: Individual Research Project

Students will complete an individual research project addressing the themes discussed in this course and building on site visits, class discussions, and course readings.

Potential field visits and partners include:

1. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)
2. World Food Program (WFP)
3. IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development
4. Local organizations, urban gardens, and farms working on food security
5. La Giunta Regionale Toscana: One hundred thousand gardens in Tuscany

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Papers will be graded on style and structure, depth of analysis, and synthesis of secondary and primary sources.

Description of Assignments:

- 1) Individual Research Paper (60%)

Based on required readings, lectures, field visits, and conversations with local experts students will write a 8 - 10 page individual research paper analyzing food security and nutrition from the perspective of sustainable development.

2) (3) Quizzes (30%)

There will be one quiz after the completion of each module. Each quiz will be worth 10% of the final grade.

3) Participation (10%)

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment:

Individual Research Paper – 60%
Three Quizzes – 30%
Participation – 10%

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

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components

and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, papers, case studies, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program. Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Program Expectations

In this space, Instructors should include course-specific individual and community standards that apply to students and their interactions within the course. Sample examples are provided below as possible policies.

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the

course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.

- **Content Considerations:** Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- **Classroom recording policy:** To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.