

**University at Albany (SUNY)**  
**RPOS 399: Select Topics:**  
**The Politics, Economics, and History of Food**  
**Department of Political Science**

Spring 2011

(Monday 5:45-8:35 pm; The Patroon Room in the Campus Center)

**Instructors:**

David L. Rousseau

E-mail: drousseau@uamail.albany.edu

Office: 106 Milne Hall

Office Phone: (518) 442-5256

Office Hours:

Monday 3-5 in B16 Humanities, Uptown Campus,  
or by appointment.

Bob Comis

E-mail: stonybrookfarm518@gmail.com

Address: Stony Brook Farm

Schoharie, New York

**Mission of the Course**

The purpose of this interdisciplinary class is to expose students to the history, politics, and economics of food. The course has three goals. First, the course will provide foundational knowledge about food production, distribution, and consumption of food across space and time. Second, the course will introduce students to a wide variety of current public policy debates about food (e.g., production subsidies, genetically modified food, and obesity). Third, the course will aid students in the development of critical thinking skills by compelling them to take a position on the public policy debates and defend their position using strong written and oral arguments.

This course falls within the global politics concentration for political science majors. Although there are no prerequisites for the course, most students are expected to be advanced undergraduates with a junior or senior standing. If you have questions about the appropriateness of your background for succeeding in the course, please see the instructor during the first week of class.

**Course Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to accomplish the following activities:

1. Develop persuasive arguments that include claims, counter-claims, and evidence.
2. Assess the strengths and weakness of arguments.
3. Communicate arguments in both written and oral forms.
4. Understand the historical evolution of food production, distribution, and consumption.
5. Assess how your food choices impact your life and the lives of others around the globe.
6. Evaluate economic issues related to food such as poverty, development, trade, tariffs, subsidies, and trade treaties.
7. Evaluate public health issues associate with food such as obesity and food safety (e.g., allergies, hormones, antibiotics, and genetically modified food).
8. Evaluate the political issues associated with food such as local versus global, industrial versus organic, developed versus less developed, and capitalism versus planned.

**Instructional Strategy**

The course will be a team-based learning course in which the students will work in teams during class to answer questions on quizzes and produce arguments for policy debates. With an estimated enrollment of thirty students, the class will be divided into approximately five teams with six students on each team. The teams will be permanent (meaning your dinner table will be

your team). The philosophy behind team-based learning is that students learn best from actively engaging in small groups and applying knowledge to real world problems. Team-based learning will reduce the amount of passive lecturing in the classroom by the instructor and increase the amount of student-to-student engagement. Team-based learning shifts significant responsibility for learning to the students and requires teams to arrive in class well prepared for applying knowledge from assigning readings and films.

If you are interested in learning more about team-based learning, you can visit Dr. Larry Michaelsen's web site devoted to the topic at [teambasedlearning.apsc.ubc.ca](http://teambasedlearning.apsc.ubc.ca).

### **Course Format**

This course will have an unusual format. Given that the course is about food, it seemed natural that the course will include a meal in order to introduce students to foods from around the world, to create an environment conducive to team & community building, and to highlight particular foods in public policy discussions. Although the dinners should be fun, they will also be an important learning experience.

The course will be taught once a week in the evening during a three hour block (e.g., 5:45-8:35). In most weeks, the three hour block will be divided into three sequential parts. For example, during the weeks in which readiness assessment tests are utilized, the class will be divided as follows. Part I (the first hour of the class meeting) will focus on Individual and Team Readiness Assessment Tests. Part II (the second hour of the class) will involve dinner and a guest lecture about a food related topic. Finally, Part III (the third hour of class) will focus on a team-based activity about a food related policy issue (e.g., debating a public policy question, exploring a case study, or conducting a simulation).

### **Requirements of the Course**

Students' final grades will be based on the following assignments:

- 1) Individual Readiness Assessment Tests (15%),
- 2) Team Readiness Assessment Tests (10%),
- 3) Team Debate and other graded team work (20%),
- 4) Short papers and assignments (10%),
- 5) Midterm Exam (20%), and
- 6) Final Exam (25%).

First, in five of our class meetings (see schedule) students will complete an "individual Readiness Assessment Test" (iRATS) during the first 20 minutes of class. These assessments will be multiple choice quizzes based on the week's required readings and videos (or the relationship between the week's readings and prior weeks activities). The objective of the iRAT is to ensure that students have mastered the required materials (i.e., capable of understanding, summarizing, critiquing, connecting, and applying the readings and videos). After half the class has turned in their assessment, the remaining students will be given 3 minutes to complete the quiz. The iRAT typically takes about 15 minutes to complete. There will be no makeup iRATs.

Second, immediately after students complete the iRAT, they will complete a "team Individual Readiness Assessment Test" (tRAT) as a group during the remainder of the first hour of the class. The iRAT and tRAT will have identical questions. The purpose of the tRAT is to foster student discussion on the best answer for each question. Experience with the method has shown that student learn by attempting to persuade others through argumentation. The tRAT will be graded immediately; student groups may create a written appeal for any question that they

received an incorrect grade. All students on the team will receive the same grade for the team test. There will be no makeup tRATs.

Third, student teams will participate in one policy debate. Developing the ability to express ideas and persuade others in an oral argument is essential to any career. In fact, whether you are an investment banker on Wall Street or a legislative aid on Capitol Hill, many if not most of your arguments will be oral rather than written. Given that there will be six teams in the class, there will be three policy debates (with two teams in each debate). During the first two weeks of class, teams will select a debate topic. Each team will prepare a 20-30 page briefing book that will include arguments in favor of the proposition, arguments against the proposition, refutations to these arguments, and counter-refutations to the refutations. On the day of the debate, a coin toss will determine which side of the proposition each team will defend. The debates will be video taped and placed on the class web page for viewing by students in the future.

Fourth, students will complete a number of short writing exercises and assignments both in class and for homework over the course of the semester. For example, students might prepare a one page policy memo outlining the advantages and disadvantages of using a Community Support Agriculture (CSA) distribution mechanism. Each assignment will be worth a set number of points (e.g., 10 points) and some will be graded on a simple satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

Finally, there will be an in-class midterm and final exams. The exams will be 40% short answer and 60% essay in which students will argue in favor or opposition to a proposition (e.g., the U.S. should enact a national soda tax). The examinations will be cumulative. Make-up exams are only available to students providing documentation signed by a doctor of an **emergency** medical situation (i.e., common colds and dentist appointments do not count). Students that feel their exams have been graded incorrectly should follow a three-step procedure. First, the student should carefully read the exam or assignment and identify the precise problem with the grading. Second, the student must send a written appeal explaining why their answer was appropriate to the instructor. Third, the instructor will meet with the student to discuss the appeal and resolve the conflict.

*Evaluation of Team Members:* Twice during the semester students will rate the performance of their fellow teammates. Based on these evaluations, the team portion of the grade (i.e., tRATs and the Debate) will be adjusted to account for an overall assessment of superior and inferior teamwork. This provision is designed to minimize free riding in teams.

*Attendance and Participation:* At the college level of education, the expectation is that students will attend **every** class session and **actively** participate in class every discussion each week. I expect students to have read and thought about the material assigned for that week. If language or some other barrier inhibits you from participating actively, you should meet with the instructor during the first two weeks of class to devise a solution. Attendance is not participation. Students missing a class session without prior approval of the instructor (or documentation of an emergency medical situation) will be penalized a third of a letter grade per missed class.

*Learning Disabilities:* Students with learning disabilities must notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the course in order to make suitable arrangements.

### **Course Websites**

This course will use a wiki page for posting materials and coordinating teams. The wiki is located at:

<http://foodandpolitics.pbworks.com>

In addition, the required readings will be posted on a Blackboard page which can be accessed at: <http://bls.its.albany.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>

### **E-mail Contact**

All students are **required** to update the Blackboard preferences with an email address that redirects all course email to their primary email account. This will ensure that they get all emails from the instructor and group members in a timely fashion. This must be done by the end of the first week of class.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

The emergence of the internet has changed our world forever. The amount of information at our fingertips has increased geometrically over the last decade. Library searches which took hours to complete in the past can be done in a matter of minutes today. Public and private documents that were difficult, if not impossible, to gain access to in the past are now a mouse click away. While this technological revolution has enhanced the learning process in many ways, it has also increased the amount of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of another's words or ideas without giving credit to that person. While this includes copying text word for word without the use of quotation marks, it also includes paraphrasing another person's work without proper citation. Intellectual honesty is a core value of university and the foundation of faculty and student development. Plagiarism, therefore, undermines the entire university community.

In the past couple of years, a number of students in political science courses have been caught plagiarizing from internet sources. The punishments have ranged from failing the assignment to failing the course to suspension from the university. This has been a painful and time consuming experience for everyone involved. In order to eliminate this problem, all students will be required to submit their written assignments electronically via the Blackboard website **prior** to handing in hard copies at the start of class. If the hard copy and the electronic copy differ in any way, the student will automatically receive a failing grade for the assignment (whether or not plagiarism is found). All paper submissions will be checked for plagiarism using the Turnitin software program (or a similar program). Your written assignments will also be placed in a database with past submissions. This database will also be searched for plagiarized material. Students guilty of plagiarizing **any** material will receive a failing grade for the **course** and the evidence will be automatically turned over to the *Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility* (i.e., judicial affairs)

All students must complete the UAlbany Library's tutorial on plagiarism entitled "Plagiarism 101" (<http://library.albany.edu/usered/ncplaga/index.html>) by the date specified on the syllabus.

### **Required Readings and Videos**

There is one required book for this class. The book is available from the University at Albany Book Store on the Uptown Campus. The required course pack readings are available online via the Blackboard course page.

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History Of Four Meals*. New York : Penguin Press, 2006.

The required readings marked [**R**] can be found in the Pollan book; the required readings marked with an asterisk [**R\***] can be found on the Blackboard web page. The required videos marked [**R<sup>v</sup>**] are accessible via the Blackboard web page (for material with copyrights) or a web site (for publicly available material). Finally, the required audio podcast material marked [**R<sup>a</sup>**] is accessible via the web link. The videos and podcasts are streamed which means that you can

view them but not save them. Immediately after the required readings, I have listed several suggested readings for each topic which are marked [S]. The suggested readings can be accessed via Minerva, databases, or e-journals.

The course workload is based on the assumption that you will devote at least seven hours per week engaging this class (with three hours of participation during class meetings and four hours of work outside of class). I assume that the average student can read 30 pages per hour and write original essays at a rate of approximately 300 words (or one single-spaced page) per hour (including draft, revision, and final proofreading). Thus, a combination of outside work in a week might involve one hour of streamed video, sixty pages of reading, and a one page reflective essay. Please budget your time accordingly.

### Summary Course Schedule

			History		Student	Dinner
Week		Dinner	Segment	Public Policy Issues	Assessment	Guest
1	24-Jan	Thailand	peanuts	peanut ban in schools	none	none
2	31-Jan	Chinese	rice	argumentation	RAT #1	none
3	7-Feb	Indian	potato	rise of agriculture; commodity prices	CITI training	none
4	14-Feb	Cuban	sugar	tariffs, trade & the WTO	RAT #2	Jarman
5	21-Feb	<i>vacation</i>				
6	28-Feb	Native American	corn	public health: obesity	RAT #3	DiBacco
7	7-Mar	German	pigs	ethics of food	midterm exam	Comis, Hessler
8	14-Mar	Mexican	chocolate	food security I: international	discussion board	Jarman, van der Veen
9	21-Mar	Louisiana	chickens	food security II: domestic	RAT #4 and discussion board	Stiles, Warner
10	28-Mar	Italian	cows	organic, local, and sustainable food	Debate #1	Comis, Derryck
11	4-Apr	Ethiopian	coffee	fair trade & traceability	RAT #5	tbd
12	11-Apr	Basque	cod	genetically modified food	Debate #2	Kleppel
13	18-Apr	<i>vacation</i>				
14	25-Apr	<i>vacation</i>				
15	2-May	East Africa	milk	food safety, hormones & antibiotics	Debate #3	Van Amburgh, Smith-Howard

### Outline of Classes and Required Readings

#### Week 1 (1/24): *Introduction to Course*

This class will be devoted to an overview of the class and course mechanics. By the end of this informational class, you should be able to determine if it suits your needs and interests.

#### *Assessments and Assignments Due:*

**none**

#### *Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Thailand

Key food: Peanuts

Guest lecture: none

#### *Discussion Topics:*

- *What is political about food?*
- *How might the economics of food impact the domestic political process?*
- *Why is food an international issue?*
- *Is the globalization of food a new phenomenon?*
- *Why do we need to know the history of food?*

#### *Readings:*

There are no assigned readings for the first meeting of the course.

[S] *Modern Marvels: Nuts* (2006). A history of nuts. 50 minutes.

## **Week 2 (1/31): *Argumentation***

In this class, we will discuss the subject of argumentation. In the social sciences and much of the humanities, scholars make arguments about causal claims, beliefs, values, etc. We will discuss the history of argumentation and the components of an argument.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

### **a) in class RAT #1**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Chinese

Key food: Rice

Guest lecture: none

*Discussion Topics:*

- *What is an argument?*
- *Can a definition be political?*
- *How do you diagram an argument?*
- *Can you teach argumentation?*
- *Are some arguments better than others?*

*Readings:*

[R\*] Rousseau, David L. 2008. "Argumentation Across the Social Sciences: Using Critical Thinking to Connect Theory, Evidence, and Policy." Unpublished Manuscript. Chapters 1-4.

[R<sup>v</sup>] *Food Inc.* 2008. This ninety-one minute film provides an overview of many of the topics that we will be discussing in the course.

[R\*] Debate Instructions on Blackboard

[S] Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2003. *The Craft of Research. 2nd Edition.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

[S] Freeley, Austin, J. and David L. Steinberg. 2000. *Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson.

[S] Huhn, Wilson. 2002. *The Five Types of Legal Argument.* Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

[S] Walton, Douglas. 2006. *Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

[S] Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava and David Nachmias. 2007. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition.* New York: Worth Publishers. Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

[S] Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

## **Week 3 (2/7): *The Rise of Agriculture and States***

This class will explore the emergence of agricultural production and its impact on the distribution of power and food across. In many food related debates, the focus of discussion is almost exclusively on conflict in the present moment. However, the structure of this conflict is often influenced by historical roots tracing back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Although history does not determine outcomes in the present, it is important to recognize the role of historical trends play in current debates.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

### **a) complete "human subjects training" prior to attending class. Go to**

**<http://www.albany.edu/research/compliance/Training.htm> and then scroll down to**

**Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI). You must complete the training module for "Group 4: Undergraduate Students.**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: India  
Key food: Potato  
Guest lecture: none

*Discussion Topics:*

- *Where agriculture first emerge and why?*
- *How did this first emergence influence state building and power distribution?*
- *How did colonialism impact food production, consumption, and distribution?*
- *What caused the Great Irish Potato Famine?*
- *Why do food famines persist?*
- *Why food prices vary so much?*

*Readings:*

- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Guns, Germs and Steel* (2005). Streamed Video. Opening segment on the origins of agriculture. 60 minutes.
- [R\*] Pollan, Michael. 2002. *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World*. New York: Random House. Chapter 4: Desire Control/ Plant: The Potato. pp. 181-238.
- [R\*] Diner, Hasia R. 2001. *Hungering For America: Italian, Irish, And Jewish Foodways In The Age Of Migration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 4: "Outcast from Life's Feast: Food and Hunger in Ireland". pp. 84-112.
- [S] Fair, Chris. 2008. *Cuisines of the Axis of Evil and Other Irritating States: A Dinner Party Approach to International Relations*. Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press. Chapter on India.
- [S] Diamond, Jared. 1997. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- [S] Hobhouse, Henry. 2005. *Seeds of Change: Six Plants that Transformed Mankind*. Berkeley, CA: Shoemaker & Hoard. Chapter on potato.
- [S] Doyle, Michael W. 1986. *Empires*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- [S] Crosby, Alfred W. 1986. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge University Press.

**Week 4 (2/14): Tariffs, Trade, and the World Trade Organization (WTO)**

This class will examine the logic behind free trade, the impact of protectionism, and the history of trade during the last century. Proponents of free trade argue that it is the key for developing countries to lift themselves out of poverty; anti-globalization opponents of free trade argue that it systematically impoverishes the poor and the vulnerable.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

- RAT #2**
- Plagiarism Tutorial Must Be Completed for CREDIT at <http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/index.html>.**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Caribbean  
Key food: Sugar  
Guest lecture: Dr. Holly Jarman, Political Science, University at Albany

*Discussion Topics:*

- *Why do people and states trade?*
- *Who are the winners and losers in a free trade?*

- Does protectionism make states richer?
- What are tariffs, quotas, VERs, OMTAs and subsidies?
- What are the impacts of trade organizations like GATT and the WTO?
- Should the US eliminate all food related trade barriers?
- How is the stalemate in the Doha Round of the WTO related to food and agriculture?

*Readings:*

- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Inside the Global Economy: 1) Trade -- An Introduction and 2) Protectionism* (1994). 120 minutes. Streamed Video. Two one-hour segments on the economic rationale for trade and the causes and consequences of protectionism.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Modern Marvels: Sugar* (2006). A history of sugar. 50 minutes.
- [R\*] Mark A. Groombridge. 2004. "America's Bittersweet Sugar Policy." In Philip King and Sharmila King (eds.) *International Economics and International Economic Policy: A Reader*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill/Irwin. pp. 46-54.
- [S] [www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org). Pages outline history and dispute resolution mechanisms.
- [S] Fair, Chris. 2008. *Cuisines of the Axis of Evil and Other Irritating States: A Dinner Party Approach to International Relations*. Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press. Chapter on Cuba.
- [S] Hobhouse, Henry. 2005. *Seeds of Change: Six Plants that Transformed Mankind*. Berkeley, CA: Shoemaker & Hoard. Chapter on sugar cane.
- [S] Mintz, Sidney W. 1986. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin.
- [S] Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. 1992. *History of Food*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 16: The Lure of Sugar, pp. 552-564.
- [S] McGee, Harold. 2004. *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*. New York: Scribner. Chapter 8: Sugars, Chocolate and Confectionery.

**Week 5: UAlbany Vacation: no meeting on Week 4 (2/21)**

**Week 6 (2/28): *The Industrialization of Food***

This class will discuss the industrialization of food production. Why does the modern farm in Iowa, with row after row of corn attended by big machines and few farmers, look the way it does? Why has corn come to dominate the dinner plate? The emergence of industrial food production is closely related to the obesity crisis in the United States and the spread of this crisis throughout the world.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

**a) in class RAT #3**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Native American

Key food: Corn

Guest lecture: Stephanie DiBacco, Sage College and Chartwells

*Discussion Topics:*

- What is the industrialization of food? Why has this occurred?
- How should we measure agricultural efficiency?
- What are positive and negative externalities?
- How is corn related to obesity?
- Why is obesity on the rise among children?
- Should the federal government tell you what to eat?
- Do cities have the right to ban trans fats?

- *Should UAlbany limit access to highly sweetened drinks?*

*Readings:*

- [R] Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York : Penguin Press. Part I: Industrial Corn (Chapters 1-7). pp. 15-122.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Modern Marvels: Corn* (2006). A history of corn. 50 minutes.
- [S] Smith, Tim. "Food Marketing to Children." Rudd Center Podcast.  
[www.yaleruddcenter.org/podcasts.aspx](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/podcasts.aspx). (use the "find" command to search for Tim)
- [S] Foxhall, Kathryn. 2006. "Beginning to Begin: Reports From the Battle on Obesity." *American Journal of Public Health*, 96/12 (December), 2106-2112.
- [S] Koplan, Jeffrey et al. (eds.). 2005. Chapter 6: Local Communities. *Preventing childhood obesity: Health in the balance*. Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine. "Built Environment" portion of chapter, pp. 204-217.
- [S] Davison, Kirsten K. & L. L. Birch. 2001. "Childhood Overweight: A contextual Model and Recommendations for Future Research." *Obesity Reviews*. 2/3 (May), 159-171.
- [S] *Frontline: The Persuaders*. 2003. (60 minutes). Available online <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/>
- [S] Rozin, Paul, Kabnick, K., Pete, E., Fischler, C., & Shields, C. 2003. "The ecology of eating: Part of the French paradox results from lower food intake in French than Americans, because of smaller portion sizes." *Psychological Science*, 14, 450-454.
- [S] Rozin, Paul. 2007. "Food and eating." Chapter in: S. Kitayama & D.Cohen (eds.). *Handbook of Cultural Psychology*, pp. 391-416. New York: Guilford.
- [S] *Fast Food Nation* (Video, 113 minutes, 2007). UAlbany University Library Media DVD at Circulation Desk first floor, call number: TX 943 S345V 2006A. Three-day loan.
- [S] Schlosser, Eric. 2001. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- [S] *Supersize Me* (Video, 100 minutes, 2004). UAlbany University Library Media DVD at Circulation Desk first floor, call number: RA 645 N87 S828V 2004A. Three-day loan.
- [S] Runge, C. Ford. 2007. "Economic Consequences of the Obese." *Diabetes* 56/11, 2668-2672.
- [S] *Frontline: Fat*. 1998. One hour segment on the global obesity crisis. (60 minutes)

**Week 7 (3/7): *The Ethics of Food***

This class will discuss the ethical dimensions of food production and consumption. Do animals have rights? Does this prohibit humans from consuming animals or simply limit them to treating the animals humanely? What does human treatment entail (e.g., what they eat? how much access they have to pastures? how they are killed?)? Is it possible to treat animals humanely in any large scale production facility? If not, does food have to be more expensive and what are the impacts of this for the ethical treatment of humans?

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

**a) midterm exam**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: German

Key food: Pigs

Guest lecturers: a) Bob Comis, Stony Brook Farm, Schoharie County, New York.

b) Dr. Kristen Hessler, University at Albany, Philosophy

*Discussion Topics:*

- *Do animals have rights?*
- *Should we all be vegetarians? Vegans?*
- *Can vegetarianism save the planet from global warming?*
- *Can animals be humanly raised on a large scale?*
- *Why are some foods taboo?*

*Readings:*

- [R] Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History Of Four Meals*. New York : Penguin Press. Chapters 16-18. pp. 287-363.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Modern Marvels: The Pig*. A history of pigs. 50 minutes.
- [R\*] Harris, Marvin. 1998. *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Chapter 4: The Abominable Pig, pp. 67-87.
- [S] Kurlansky, Mark. 1999. *The Basque History of the World*. New York: Penguin. Postscript: Death of a Basque Pig, pp. 352-359.
- [S] Niman, Nicolette Hahn. 2009. *Righteous Porkchop: Finding a Life and Good Food Beyond Factory Farms*. New York: HarperCollins.
- [S] National Geographic. *Taboo: Delicacies (i.e., Food)*. (DVD, Season I of Taboo).

**Week 8 (3/14): Food Security I: Hunger Around the Globe**

This is the first of two weeks on food security (i.e. availability and accessibility of sufficient nutritious food). A course on food and politics must inevitably confront the issues of undernourishment, malnutrition, and poverty. This week we will discuss poverty around the globe. We will also examine the effectiveness of public policies designed to confront this poverty (e.g., food aid in the developing world). Finally, we will exam how food and agricultural policies at home impact the poor around the globe.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

- a) Global Solidarity Network (GSN) Discussion Board: Students will participate in the on-line discussion of the GSN with college students from around the United States.**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Mexico  
 Key food: Chocolate  
 Guest lecturers: Dr. Maurits van der Veen, College of William and Mary  
 Dr. Holly Jarman, Political Science, University at Albany

*Discussion Topics:*

- *Do people have to go hungry? At home? Around the globe?*
- *Can free markets fix the poverty problem?*
- *What is the difference between mal-nourishment and undernourishment?*
- *Does foreign aid undermine or help development?*
- *Can we eliminate poverty at home and abroad?*

*Readings:*

- [R\*] Global Solidarity Network Readings To Be Determined
- [R\*] Lappe, Frances Moore, Joseph Collins, and Peter Rosset. 1998. *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Grove Press. pp. 41-121.
- [R\*] Kristof, Nicholas D. and Sheryl WuDunn. 2009. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women World Wide*. New York: Vintage Books. Chapter 11: "Microcredit: The Financial Revolution." pp.185-198.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Life and Debt*. 2003. 80 minutes.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Modern Marvels: Chocolate* (2006). A history of chocolate. 50 minutes.

- [S] Flannery, Matt. 2007. "Kiva and the Birth of Person-to-Person Microfinance." *Innovations*, Winter & Spring, pp. 31-56.
- [S] Flannery, Matt. 2009. "Kiva at Four." *Innovations*, Special Issue for Skoll World Forum 2009, pp. 29-47.
- [S] Runge, C. Ford 2003. *Ending Hunger in Our Lifetime: Food Security and Globalization*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [S] Hobhouse, Henry. 2005. *Seeds of Change: Six Plants that Transformed Mankind*. Berkeley, CA: Shoemaker & Hoard. Chapter on cocoa.
- [S] Brenner, Joel Glenn. 2000. *The Emperors of Chocolate: Inside the Secret World of Hershey and Mars*. Broadway.
- [S] Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. 1992. *History of Food*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 18: Chocolate and Divinity, pp. 574-580.
- [S] Sachs, Jeffrey D. 2005. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Times*. New York: Penguin Press.

### **Week 9 (3/21): Food Security II: Hunger at Home**

In this second week focusing on food security we will add poverty in the United States to the discussion. We will also examine the effectiveness of public policies designed to confront this poverty (e.g., food stamps in the United States and food aid in the developing world). Finally, we will exam how food and agricultural policies at home impact the poor around the globe.

#### *Assessments and Assignments Due:*

- a) **Global Solidarity Network Discussion Board: Students will continue to participate in the on-line discussion of the GSN with college students from around the United States.**
- b) **RAT #4**

#### *Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Louisiana

Key food: chicken

Guest lectures: a) Debra Stiles, Salvation Army, Albany, New York

b) Dr. Lynn Warner, University at Albany, Social Welfare

#### *Discussion Topics:*

- *How does the American food stamp program work?*
- *What is the school lunch program?*
- *Where is poverty in the United State located? Why is it concentrated here?*
- *Are poverty programs in the US a failure?*

#### *Readings:*

[R\*] Poppendieck, Janet. 2010. *Free for All: Fixing School Food In America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 26-83.

[R\*] Center on Budget Policy and Priorities. Policy Basics: Introduction to the Food Stamp Program. 7 pages.

[R\*] Kimbro, Rachel Tolbert and Elizabeth Ribgy. 2010. "Federal Food Policy and Childhood Obesity: A Solution or Part of the Problem?" *Health Affairs* 29/3, 411-418.

[R<sup>v</sup>] Center on Budget Policy and Priorities. Video: Making America Stronger: U.S. Food Stamp Program. <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1274>. 15 Minutes.

- [S] Wagner, Barbara, Benjamin Senauer, and C. Ford Runge. 2007. "An Empirical Analysis of and Policy Recommendations to Improve the Nutritional Quality of School Meals," *Review of Agricultural Economics* 29/4 (Winter):672-688.
- [S] Levine, Susan. 2008. *School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- [S] Nestle, Marion. 2007. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. Revised Edition. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

**Week 10 (3/28): *Organic, Local and Sustainable Food***

The class will discuss the definition of organic food, the implications of buying local versus non-local food products, and the feasibility of sustainable agriculture. Organic food is one of the fastest growing segments of the food industry and large multinational corporations are increasing becoming involved in organic agriculture. During this week we will discuss the possible tension between choosing organic, local, and environmentally sustainable products.

*Assignments Due:*

**a) Student Debate #1**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Italian

Key food: Cows and Chickens

Guest lecture: a) Dennis Derryck, New School and Corbin Hill Farm

b) Bob Comis, Stony Brook Farm, Schoharie County, New York.

*Discussion Topics:*

- *How is organic defined? Should this definition be changed?*
- *Are definitions such as "organic" political?*
- *Does organic imply sustainable?*
- *Is local food always cheaper? More healthy? More sustainable?*
- *Can a lower middle class family or lower income family eat organically"?*
- *Can processed food be organic?*

*Readings:*

- [R] Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History Of Four Meals*. New York : Penguin Press, 2006. Part II: Pastoral Grass (Chapter 8-13). pp. 123-261.
- [S] Diner, Hasia R. 2001. *Hungering For America: Italian, Irish, And Jewish Foodways In The Age Of Migration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 2: "Black Bread, Hard Bread: Food, Class and Hunger in Italy". pp. 21-47.
- [S] Schlosser, Eric. 2001. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All American Meal*. Houghton-Mifflin. Chapter 8: The Most Dangerous Job, pp169-192.
- [S] Sinclair, Upton. 1906. *The Jungle*. Available online through the Project Gutenberg ([www.gutenberg.org/etext/140](http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/140)). A free audio version of several chapters is available at LibriVox.org.
- [S] Striffler, Steve. 2007. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- [S] Wal-Mart's Global Sustainability Report, 2009. (Although the document is 111 pages long, it should only take an hour or so to read carefully due to the large number of images and tables.) Available at [walmartstores.com/Sustainability/7951.aspx](http://walmartstores.com/Sustainability/7951.aspx).
- [S] Rosenbloom, Stephanie. 2009. "At Wal-Mart, Labeling to Reflect Green Intent." *New York Times*. 16 July 2009.

[S] Freidberg, Susanne. 2009. *Fresh: A Perishable History*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

**Week 11 (4/4): *Coffee and the Fair Trade Debate***

This week we will discuss how "information" can allow consumers to shape production decisions by voting with their cash and credit cards. We begin with the topic of fair trade and focus on the area of coffee. Then we expand the discussion to explore how information about the environmental stability, labor practices, gender equality, etc. can be transmitted via labels and bar codes. The entire discussion centers on the best means for achieving the desired end: government regulation or market action.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

**a) in class RAT #5**

*Dinner Menu:*

Geographic focus: Middle Eastern

Key food: Coffee

Guest lecture: tbd

*Discussion Topics:*

- *What is fair trade?*
- *How does fair trade differ from free trade?*
- *Who benefits and who loses from fair trade?*
- *Can free trade be fair trade?*
- *How can consumers influence the production process?*
- *Would giving consumers more information*

*Readings:*

[R<sup>v</sup>] *Black Gold*. 2006. Streamed Video. A documentary on the injustice of the coffee trade. 60 minutes.

[R<sup>v</sup>] *Modern Marvels: Coffee* (2005). A history of coffee. 50 minutes.

[R\*] Fridell, Gavin. 2007. *Fair Trade Coffee: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Market-Driven Social Justice*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 22-100.

[S] Magera, Anna and Sadie Beaton. 2009. *Food Traceability in Canada: Traceability Systems, Certification, Eco-Labeling and Standards for Achieving Sustainable Seafood*. Canada: Ecology Action Centre. selections.

[S] Thøgersen, John. 2002. "Promoting "Green" Consumer Behavior with Eco-Labels." In Thomas Dietz and Paul C. Stern (eds.) *New Tools for Environmental Protection: Education, Information, and Voluntary Measures*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

[S] Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. 1992. *History of Food*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 19: Coffee and Politics, pp. 581-595.

**Week 12 (4/11): *Genetically Modified (GM) Food and Organisms***

Technology change has driven the rise in productivity of agriculture since the dawn of agriculture. The mouldboard plow in the middle ages and the tractor in the 1930's are just two of many examples. More recently, the ability to modify genes holds the promise to radically alter the production and distribution of food. However, critics of the new technology argue that its many dangers far outweigh any promised increases in productivity, safety, or sustainability.

*Assignments Due:*

### a) Student Debate #2

#### Dinner Menu:

Geographic focus: Basque

Key food: Cod

Guest lecture: Dr. Gary Kleppel, University at Albany, Biological Sciences. Director of the Biodiversity Conservation & Policy Program.

#### Discussion Topics:

- *What is the lesson of the cod?*
- *Why is it hard to save the cod?*
- *Is fishing sustainable?*
- *What is genetically modified food?*
- *How safe are genetically modified fish and corn?*
- *Who wins and who loses from the spread of genetically modified food?*
- *Does GM food raise or lower the cost of food on a families table?*
- *What are the environmental implications of GM food?*
- *What are the health implications of GM productions?*

#### Readings:

[R<sup>v</sup>] *Frontline: Harvest of Fear*. 2001. Streamed Video. A documentary exploring the debates about genetically modified food. (120 minutes)

[R\*] Tiberghien, Yves. 2009. "Competitive Governance and the Quest for Legitimacy in the EU: the Battle over the Regulation of GMOs since the mid-1990s." *Journal of European Integration* 31/3 (May), 389-407.

[R<sup>v</sup>] *End of the Line*. 2009. 90 minutes.

[S] Kurlansky, Mark. 1997. *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*. New York: Walker and Co.

[S] McHughen, Alan. 2000. *Pandora's Picnic Basket: The Potential and Hazards of Genetically Modified Foods*. London: Oxford University Press.

[S] Biotechnology Industry Organization. <http://www.bio.org/about.asp>. Explains the industry's position.

[S] Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. 1992. *History of Food*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 10: The History of Fish, 296-335.

[S] Comstock, Gary L. (ed.) 2002. *Life Science Ethics*. Ames, IO: Blackwell-Iowa State Press.

[S] *Modern Marvels: Salt*. A history of salt. 50 minutes.

[S] Kurlansky, Mark. 2002. *Salt: A World History*. New York: Penguin.

**Week 13: UAlbany Vacation: no meeting on Week 13 (4/18)**

**Week 14: UAlbany Vacation: no meeting on Week 14 (4/25)**

### **Week 15 (5/2): Food Safety: Hormones, Antibiotics, and Allergies**

How safe is your food? This week we look at the issue of food safety. Although safety has always been an issue, the industrialization of the food supply chain has brought a host of issue to the forefront. Are hormones in our meat and dairy harmful to humans? Are there problems associated with the mass distribution of antibiotics on a regular basis? Has there been a rise in food allergies and what might account for this change?

#### Assessments and Assignments Due:

### a) Student Debate #3

#### Dinner Menu:

Geographic focus: East Africa

Key food: Milk

Guest lecture: a) Dr. Kendra Smith-Howard, University at Albany, History Department

b) Paul and Phyliss Van Amburgh, Dharma Lea Farm, Sharon Springs, NY

*Discussion Topics:*

- *Should dairy cows be given hormones and antibiotics?*
- *Does the regular use of antibiotics in animal feed stocks pose a threat to humans?*
- *Is food safety a national security issue?*
- *Has food safety declined recently? Why?*
- *What would it cost to make American food safe?*
- *Have food allergies been on the rise? Why?*
- *Should schools be "nut free" environments?*

*Readings:*

- [R\*] Smith-Howard, Kendra. 2009. "Antibiotics and Agricultural Change: Purifying Milk & Protecting Health in the Postwar Era." Unpublished manuscript.
- [R\*] Moss, Michael. 2009. "E. Coli Path Shows Flaws in Beef Inspection." *New York Times* 4 October 2009.
- [R\*] Miller, Judith, Stephen Engelberg, and William Broad. 2001. *Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Chapter 1: The Attack, pp. 15-33.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Frontline: Modern Meat: Have the Dramatic Changes in the U.S. Meat Industry Compromised the Safety of America's Beef?* 2002. 60 minutes.
- [R<sup>v</sup>] *Modern Marvels: Milk* (2008). A history of milk. 50 minutes.
- [S] Nestle, Marion. 2003. *Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology and Bioterrorism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- [S] Garrett, Laurie. *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.
- [S] Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne. 1992. *History of Food*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 5: The History of Dairy Produce, pp. 104-124.
- [S] Harris, Marvin. 1998. *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Chapter 7: Lactophiles and Lactophobes: Milk Lovers and Milk Haters, pp. 130-153.
- [S] *Food, Inc.* 2009. A film expose of the highly mechanized food industry.
- [S] Weber, Karl (ed.). 2009. *Food, Inc: A Participant Guide: How Industrial Food is Making Us Sicker, Fatter, and Poorer – and What You Can Do About It*. New York: Public Affairs.
- [S] Sinclair, Upton. 1906. *The Jungle*. Free copy at Project Gutenberg.

**FINAL EXAM** (Scheduled for Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 5:45 to 7:45)