

## **Economics of Global Food Problems**

Syllabus

Economics 333/ Environmental Studies 333/International Studies 333

Fall 2014

Carnegie 06

**Instructor:** Amy Damon

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**Class Time:** Tuesday and Thursday: 9:40 – 11:10

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 – 2:00 pm; or by appointment. Please feel free to email me anytime.

**Preceptor:** Leia Cozier; Office hours by appointment.

### **Course Description:**

This class will examine food distribution, production, policy, and hunger issues from an economics perspective. It explores and compares food and agriculture issues in both industrialized and developing countries. Basic economic tools will be applied to provide an analytical understanding of these issues. Topics such as hunger and nutrition, US farm policy, food distribution, food security, food aid, biotechnology and the Green Revolution, the connection between food production and health outcomes, as well as others related themes will be explored in depth throughout the semester. We will be collaborating with a local CSA farm to learn about agricultural production in the US.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To learn to use economic concepts to analyze world food problems.
- To become familiar with world food problems in general and their relationship to agricultural production, development, and policies.
- Develop basic food policy analysis skills.

### **Prerequisites:**

This course applies economic concepts to global food and agriculture issues. Students should have taken principles of economics and one 200 level economics course. Students should be comfortable with concepts such as supply and demand curves, elasticities, basic consumer and producer theory.

### **Required Text:**

Readings will be available through Moodle.

**Class Requirements and Grading:** Grades will be based on the following assignments and activities:

1. **Problem Sets and Response Papers (25%):** These problem sets and writing assignments will typically be extensions of the reading assignments for a given unit. They will require you to write short essay responses to analytical questions and solve problems. Additionally, there

are several assignments related to your term project that will count toward your homework grade. Late assignments will be penalized with a 10% grade reduction for each day late. After 3 days a late assignment will not be accepted.

2. **Two exams (30%: 15% each):** Two in-class exams will be given in order to assess your understanding of the material.
3. **Term Paper (25%):** This is a semester long effort to integrate and apply the concepts you learn in class and through required readings to a particular food security issue. You will be able to choose among a list of topics. These are topics identified by stakeholders in the agricultural sector as important. You will be required to turn in portions of this paper throughout the semester. See the assignment description for more details.
4. **Student Led Class (15%):** There will be 5 themes that individuals will work on for their papers throughout the semester. You will be teamed with 1-2 other students within your theme. You and the other student are expected to become experts on that topic. In turn you will be given one class session to communicate your expertise to the class. You may have to do some additional work to bridge your two subtopics into a larger topic. This means a bit extra reading and doing some more “general” work on the topic rather than just your specific focus.
5. **Class Participation (5%):** Success in this class is dependent on class participation and interaction with your peers. It is therefore necessary that you attend class on a regular basis. You are expected to come to class prepared, having done the readings. Engaged, active, and respectful participation is expected from all class participants.

## Tentative Schedule: Fall 2014

Date	Topic	Due	Readings
2-Sep	Introduction/ State of Food Insecurity		In-Class Video: State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009 (FAO)
4-Sep	Consumers and Demand for Food in the Global South		PAW Chapter 3; Poor Economics: Chapter 2
9-Sep	Nutrition Transition		(1) Popkin, B. M., 1999. Urbanization, Lifestyle Changes and the Nutrition Transition. <i>World Development</i> . 27(11), 1905 – 1916. (2) The nutrition transition and obesity in the developing world
11-Sep	Nutrition Transition/ Long term effects of malnutrition	Response paper	(1) The Impact of Early Childhood Nutritional Status on Cognitive Development: Does the Timing of Malnutrition Matter? (2) Guo, Xuguang, Thomas A. Mroz, Barry M. Popkin, Fengying Zhai. (2000). "Structural Change in the Impact of Income on Food Consumption in China, 1989–1993" <i>Economic Development and Cultural Change</i> , 48:737–760, July
16-Sep	Famines - Entitlements		(1) Sen Chapters 7 ; (2) Where will we find enough food for 9 billion?: <i>National Geographic Magazine</i>
18-Sep	Economics of Famine/ International Food Aid	Proposal Due	Ravallion, Martin. <i>Famines and Economics Source: Journal of economic literature</i> yr:1997 vol:35 iss:3 pg:1205 -42
<b>19-Sep</b>	<b>Dinner at Common Harvest Farm</b>		
23-Sep	International Food Aid	Response paper	Food Aid's Intended and Unintended Consequences.
25-Sep	Basic Elements of Production Agriculture: Guest Lecture Dan Guenther		TBD
30-Sep	Agriculture in Economic Transformation and Growth/ Models of Ag Development	HW 1	(1) Food Economics, Chapter 3. "The Food Sector During Economic Development"; (2) Norton, Alwang, and Masters chapter 11.
2-Oct	Production Theory and Policy		(1) "Agriculture's Performancy, Diversity and Uncertainty" Chapter 2 <i>World Development Report 2008</i> ; (2) Food Production and Supply Policies by Pinstrup-Anderson and Watson: pgs 174-197
7-Oct	Green Revolution and Biotechnology	Literature Review	Freedom from Famine: The Normal Borlaug Story ( <a href="http://youtu.be/IjeqOmsZp6w">http://youtu.be/IjeqOmsZp6w</a> )
9-Oct	Land and Labor Markets (Case study: Land Tenure in Sub-Saharan Africa)		(1) Property rights in a very poor country: tenure insecurity and investment in Ethiopia; (2) The Next Bread Basket: <i>National Geographic Magazine</i>
14-Oct	Structure of US Agricultural Production		(1) Handbook of Agricultural Economics Chapter 5: Structural change in agricultural production; (2) Haymakers chapters 1&5
16-Oct	US Agricultural Production and Food Marketing	HW 2	(1) An assessment of the impact of food industry market power on US consumers; (2) From Farm to Table Building local infrastructure to support local food.
<b>18-Oct</b>	<b>Field Trip to Common Harvest Farm, Osceola WI</b>		
21-Oct	Alternative Production Structures	Data section	(1) The Impacts of Local Markets: A Review of Research on Farmers Markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) <i>AJAE</i> , 2008: 90(5) (2) Use of Direct Marketing Strategies by Farmers and Their Impact on Farm Business Income, Ag Resource and <i>Economic Review</i> 2011: 40(1) 1-19
23-Oct	<b>Fall Break</b>		

28-Oct	Economics of Local Foods	Response paper	(1) The energy efficiency of local food systems: A comparison between different modes of distribution; (2) Farm costs and food miles: An assessment of the full cost of the UK weekly food basket
30-Oct	Exam		
<b>SPECIAL TOPICS</b>			
4-Nov	US Consumers and Food Security in the US		(1) Trends in US home food preparation and consumption: analysis of national nutrition surveys and time use studies from 1965/66- 2007/08.; (2) Hunger in America: National Geographic Magazine; Sugar Love: National Geographic Magazine
6-Nov	Obesity Epidemic: US and Global	Outline of teaching plan (include readings)	(1) The World-Wide Growth in Obesity: An Economic Research Agenda (2) Does Supermarket Purchase Affect the Dietary Practices of Households? Some Empirical Evidence from Guatemala
11-Nov	HIV/AIDS and Food Security	Response paper	(1) "Risking death for survival: Peasant responses to hunger and HIV/AIDS in Malawi" (2) HIV/AIDS, food security and rural livelihoods: understanding and responding (pgs 1-28)
13-Nov	Student Led Class	Draft of Paper	TBD
18-Nov	Student Led Class		TBD
20-Nov	Student Led Class		TBD
25-Nov	Student Led Class		TBD
27-Nov	Thanksgiving		
2-Dec	Student Led Class		TBD
4-Dec	Women and Agriculture	Final Paper	Quisumbing, Agnes. "Male-Female Differences in Agricultural Productivity: Methodological Issues and Empirical Evidence" <i>World Development</i> , Vol. 24, No. 10, pp. 1579-1595, 1996.
9-Dec	Exam 2		