

Economics of Global Food Problems

Syllabus

Economics 239/ Environmental Studies 239/International Studies 239

Fall 2022

Carnegie 304

Instructor: Amy Damon

E-mail: adamon@macalester.edu

Office Phone: 696-6862 (office)

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday: 1:20-2:50

Office Hours: [Office Hour Appointments](#): Wednesday 10:00 - 11:45 ; Thursday 3:00 - 4:00 [Zoom link to Amy's Office Hours](#)

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 (ECON 119). 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 (30%):** 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. All problem sets and response papers will be graded on a pass/revise basis.

2. **Summative Essays or Run a class (25% each):** You will have the option to write a series of take-home summative short essays about topics within the class OR you can choose a class in which you will be in charge of the class plan in collaboration with me. You will need to choose this early in the semester to ensure you have ample pick of your preferred topic.
3. **Term Project (35%):** This is a semester long effort to integrate and apply class concepts to a particular issue in agricultural economics. You will be able to choose a topic of your choice. You will be required to turn in portions of this project throughout the semester. See the assignment description for more details and the grading rubric.
4. **Class Participation (10%):** 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. I expect you to come to class prepared, having done the readings. Engaged, active, and respectful participation is expected from all class participants. When formal responses are not due, I will often begin class with a write-pair-share. This will allow us to understand what you took away from the articles and points of confusion.

[Tokens](#)

You currently all have 3 [tokens](#). Each token is worth either a 48 hour extension (no questions asked) or a revision. If you receive an unsatisfactory on either a problem set or term paper intermediate assignment, you can use a token to implement a revision and the assignment will be reconsidered. When you use a token, please write TOKEN across the top of the assignment.

[Tokens](#) cannot be used for an extension on your final paper or for extensions on your midterm or final exams.

Given the unpredictability of COVID, there may be times when you are unable to attend class for chunks of time. My intention is to support you as a human and as a learner. There will be times when you will have to be distance, or I will, or both. I will open a Zoom link for each class.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected not to cheat. Cheating includes copying another student's homework, looking at another student's paper during a test, copying another author's work without proper citation. In this class it also includes using another student's do file, or other analytical work. Please do not do any of these. Doing so will result in an F in the course and more problems than the cheating is worth. Please talk to me if you have any questions about this, or if you feel so swamped that cheating looks appealing.

Accommodations: I am committed to ensuring access to course content for students. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Contact the Office of Student Affairs, 651-696-6220 to schedule an appointment

and discuss your individual circumstances. It is important to meet early in the semester; this will ensure that your accommodations can be implemented early on.

Classroom Inclusion: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

Tentative Schedule: Fall 2022

DAY	DATE	Topic	Assignment Due	Reading
Thursday	1-Sep	Introduction/ State of Food Insecurity		In-Class Video: State of Food Insecurity in the World 2019 (FAO)
Tuesday	6-Sep	Global Food Situation - Brutish Overview		Poor Economics: Chapter 2
Thursday	8-Sep	Consumer Demand Theory		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
Tuesday	13-Sep	Nutrition Transition	Response paper	(1) Popkin, B. M., 1999. Urbanization, Lifestyle Changes and the Nutrition Transition. <i>World Development</i> . 27(11), 1905 – 1916.
Thursday	15-Sep	Agricultural Production and Farming Systems		(1) NAM chapters 7-8 (2) Milu Muyanga, T S Jayne, Revisiting the Farm Size-Productivity Relationship Based on a Relatively Wide Range of Farm Sizes: Evidence from Kenya, <i>American Journal of Agricultural Economics</i> , Volume 101, Issue 4, July 2019, Pages 1140–1163, https://doi.org/10.1093/ajae/aaz003
Tuesday	20-Sep	Correlation vs. Causation (RCTs and reading regression output)	PS1: Principles Review Problem Set	https://dss.princeton.edu/online_help/analysis/interpreting_regression.htm ; Poor Economics Chapter 1
Thursday	22-Sep	Project Discussion/ Famines - Entitlements		Sen Chapters 7: "Famines and Other Crises"
Tuesday	27-Sep	Economics of Famine/ International Food Aid	Response paper	Ravallion, Martin. Famines and Economics Source: <i>Journal of economic literature</i> yr:1997 vol:35 iss:3 pg:1205 -42
Thursday	29-Sep	International Food Aid	Term Project Proposal (see instructions)	Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian "US Food Aid and Civil Conflict" <i>American Economic Review</i> 2014, 104(6): 1630–1666
US Agriculture and its discontents				
Tuesday	4-Oct	US Agricultural Production and Food Marketing		Handbook of Agricultural Economics Chapter 5: Stuctural change in agricultural production; Haymakers chapters 1&5
Thursday	6-Oct	Guest Speaker: Lisa Moldan, (Pork Producer)		TBD
Tuesday	11-Oct	Food Prices		(1) Why are food prices rising (2) Clapp, J. (2017). Food self-sufficiency: Making sense of it, and when it makes sense doi://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2016.12.001 (3) The Atlantic Article on Moodle
Thursday	13-Oct	Guest Speaker: Dan Guenther (CSA Farmer)		Readings TBD
SATURDAY	15-Oct	FIELD TRIP TO COMMON HARVEST FARM		MEET AT 8:30 on the street side of Carnegie. Return at 3:30
Tuesday	18-Oct	Debate: What does our food future look like?	PS2: Position Paper - 2 pages arguing your assigned side.	(1) A critic: Jayson L. Lusk, Evaluating the Policy Proposals of the Food Movement, <i>Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy</i> , Volume 39, Issue 3, September 2017, Pages 387–406, https://doi.org/10.1093/aapp/ppx035 (2) An assessment of the impact of food industry market power on US consumers (3) The Case for Industrial Food <i>The Atlantic</i> December 2021
Thursday	20-Oct	FALL BREAK		
Global Food Problem Topics				
Tuesday	25-Oct	Agriculture in Economic Transformation and Growth		Food Economics, Chapter 3. "The Food Sector During Economic Development"
Thursday	27-Oct	Term Project Check In	Term Project: Phase 1	
Tuesday	1-Nov	Obesity & Overweight		(1) Soda tax article (2) LA winning the war on obesity (Washington Post)
Thursday	3-Nov	Long term effects of malnutrition		The Impact of Early Childhood Nutritional Status on Cognitive Development: Does the Timing of Malnutrition Matter?
Tuesday	8-Nov	Green Revolution and Biotechnology		Freedom from Famine: The Normal Borlaug Story (http://youtu.be/IjeqOnsZp6w)
Thursday	10-Nov	Land Markets		(1) Keswell, M., & Carter, M. R. (2014). <i>Poverty and land redistribution</i> doi://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2013.10.003 (2) Carter, M.R. and A. Michuda (forthcoming). "The Distribution of Productive Assets and the

				Economics of Rural Development and Poverty Reduction” in M. Nissanke and J. Ocampo eds., The Palgrave Handbook of Development Economics (Springer).
Tuesday	15-Nov	Gender and Agriculture: Aine McCarthy	PS 4: Peer Review of the Age and Agency	Age and Agency: The Impact of an Agriculture and Credit Program on Women's Empowerment in Pastoralist Tanzania
Thursday	17-Nov	Term Project Check In	Term Project: Phase 2	
Tuesday	22-Nov	Implications of Climate Change in Developing Countries.		Burke, M., S.M. Hsiang, E. Miguel. (2015). "Climate and Conflict", Annual Review of Economics. DOI: 10.1146/annurev- economics-080614-115430. ; Edward Miguel Ted Talk (link on Moodle) (3) Noah Diffenbaugh and Marshall Burke. 2019. Global warming has increased global economic inequality. PNAS 116 (20) 9808-9813.
Thursday	24-Nov	THANKSGIVING		
Tuesday	29-Nov	Term Project Presentation		
Thursday	1-Dec	Term Project Presentation	Summative Essays Assigned	
Tuesday	6-Dec	Term Project Presentation	Summative Essays Due	
Thursday	8-Dec	Term Project Presentation		