

FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL & URBAN CHANGE, YORK UNIVERSITY

EVNS 5011: FOOD, LAND & CULTURE

Course Director: Dr. Martha Stiegman, HNES room 270 stiegman@yorku.ca

Office hours: Tuesdays 12-1, HNES room 270 or by zoom

<https://yorku.zoom.us/j/95368613577?pwd=HUTpaip7Ui0RpyQLryfUb6j99pIUP1.1>

**please email in advance to let me know you are coming*

Time and Location: Tuesdays: 2:30-5:30pm HNES 142

Course Description

This course examines food, land and culture from a critical interdisciplinary environmental perspective. Students will have the opportunity to pursue their own interests related to food politics, planning, education, sustainable and alternative agriculture, human-animal relationships, and ethics, from a local and/or global perspective.

Purpose and Objectives of the Course

This seminar will use food as a lens through which to examine issues of power, culture, resistance, migration, ecological sustainability and social justice within interconnected processes of colonialism, neo-liberal capitalism, white supremacy, ableism and other related forms of oppression. Through an analysis of the industrial food system, we will deepen our understanding of the nature, structure and impacts of the global economy; examine the many ways social movements are using food as a strategy of resistance and basis for community action; and develop an awareness of the ways we participate in and resist global power relations through our everyday food choices and relationship to social movements. We will examine the industrial food system as reflection of and driving force of neo-liberal globalization, with special attention to its historical roots in on-going processes of capitalism, colonization and migration flows; and its impacts on local and Indigenous food systems. We will also engage with and critically examine contemporary food movements - their goals, strategies, strengths, and contradictions.

Specific **learning outcomes** of the course include:

- A deepened analysis of the global industrial food system, as a reflection of and driving force of inter-related processes of settler colonialism, neo-liberal capitalism and related structures of power.
- The ability to critically understand, discuss and explain the concepts of food security, food justice and food sovereignty.
- The ability to critically understand, discuss and explain the concept of Indigenous food sovereignty in relation to Indigenous ways of knowing, governance and legal traditions.
- An understanding of food movements, including their goals, organizing practices, victories and contradictions.
- The ability to critically reflecting on your social location and experiences, in relation to food, land and culture, and to the systems of power these are impacted by.

Structure of the Course

This course is designed as a highly interactive seminar; please approach it as a learning community. The format for each class will vary, but will include lectures by the course instructor, student-led seminar presentations, group discussions, guest speakers, field trips, garden work-parties and films.

Participation

Your informed contributions are essential and these depend on you keeping up with the assigned readings. Students are expected to come to class having read the required texts *thoroughly*. Attendance is mandatory, and contributions to classroom discussions are expected. Please be in touch with me if you're having medical or personal obstacles to being here, and we'll work together to get you back on track.

Evaluation/Assignments:

This course will be evaluated following FES's standard S/U for the graduate program. If you would like a letter grade, please advise me at the beginning of class.

In order to complete the course, students are required to complete all of the following assignments:

1. Participation

This is a seminar, which means students are expected to come to class ready to engage in active and respectful discussion, having engaged *thoroughly* with the assigned readings. This means offering contributions to discussions that demonstrate you are grappling with the material, asking questions, and working to understand and carefully weigh the arguments and viewpoints expressed in course materials and class discussions. To prepare for class, I encourage you to take notes on the assigned materials.

2. 5 reading reflections: make an argument

For 5 of our class sessions, students will submit a 500-word analytic synthesis paper at the start of class that examines one key argument that runs throughout the assigned readings for the given class, or an argument that you craft in response to the materials presented. *Please do not provide a summary of all the readings.* I am asking you to highlight a common theme, build a larger argument, or tease out a debate between the various texts. I am open to creative/alternative formats for this assignment that better match your learning style. Please approach me at the start of the term to discuss.

The first reading reflection, due in-class on Sept 17th, will take the form of a critique of a reading reflection generated by AI that I will provide to you. Your task is to evaluate the AI-generated reflection, making note of what AI does well and what it fails to capture.

3. Class presentation & facilitated discussion

Students will give a short (roughly 10-15min) presentation based on the assigned materials, then guide a 30-45min seminar discussion. **Your presentation should do more than just summarize the readings!** Assume everyone has read the material and consider it a starting point for an analytic presentation on the topic addressed. Aim to bring out the most interesting, important, controversial or inspiring question(s) or debate(s) that run through the texts. How do they speak to each other? to the texts and debates we've encountered earlier in the term? to your own work or life? or to current events? Your facilitated seminar should engage your classmates in a structured activity that deepens their understanding of these questions or connects ideas to their diverse lived experiences. You are encouraged to get creative! Experiment with activities, role plays, caucus groups, debates, show and tell, PechaKucha, world café, share short videos or audio pieces, etc.

4. Potluck:

This assignment has three components:

- 1) students will **prepare a dish for our in-class potluck** using the "cooking as inquiry" (Brady

2011) methodology. Your dish should tell a story about who you are, where you come from, how you eat, and how you negotiate your relationship to the global corporate food system in your daily life. Students will be expected to research the history and context of their selected dish. This process may involve informal interviews or cooking sessions with (chosen) family members. Students should prepare their dish taking the consequences and impacts of their food choices into consideration (social justice, financial constraints, environmental sustainability, labor rights, corporate control, etc.) and to refer to that process in their written assignment and in their presentation of their dish.

- 2) **1000-word paper:** Your written assignment should be a creative, personal reflection on your food history and culture anchored in the dish you have selected. This could include the ways the global food system (and the systems of power it is embedded within) have impacted your food culture, the path your food takes from field to table, what it means for you to eat responsibly (or maybe you think the concept of voting with your consumer dollars is a neoliberal trap), and how that reflects the issues raised in our course. It may include the challenges you encounter in shopping for this assignment, or how this course is influencing how you eat. *Please do not simply provide a historical context or simple description of your cultural traditions! I am asking you to reflect on the ways you actively construct your cultural and political identity through food.*
- 3) **cookbook contribution:** please produce a one-page version of your recipe and story to be included in our class recipe zine/book.

5. **Research Paper/Project & Presentation:**

Write a **3000-3500 word research paper** (approx. 12-15 pages double spaced 12-point font) on a subject of your choice, in consultation with the course director. Please feel free to be creative with this assignment (ie- instead of a paper you may choose to make a podcast, short video, or pop-ed workshop for a community organization, etc). Students will give a 12-15 minute presentation on their research project at the end of term.

A service-learning option is available for up to 10 students to do 15hrs of volunteer work at a food justice organization, accompanied by a reflection paper connecting your experience there to 5 articles from the course readings, or to do applied research for Justicia for Migrant Workers. Please consult with me at the beginning of class if you would like to pursue any of these options and I will provide you with a more detailed assignment rubric.

A brief proposal (500 words) is due in class. Your proposal should include:

- your title
- your argument: your thesis statement and/or guiding question that will structure your paper, and the main points you intend to explore.
- the context: a brief summary of the background and context for the issue you wish to explore.
- Annotated bibliography (in addition to your 500 word proposal): including at least three sources from our course readings, and four additional sources, with 2-3 sentences summarizing how they are relevant to your topic and argument.

Detailed Class Schedule & Reading List

Sept 10. Class 1: Introductions.

Sept 17. Class 2: First Peoples, First Perspectives: Indigenous Food Sovereignties.

1. Morrison, D. (2020). Reflections and Realities: Expressions of Food Sovereignty in the Fourth World. In P. Settee & S. Shukla (Eds.), *Indigenous Food Systems: Concepts, Cases, and Conversations*. Canadian Scholars.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6282046>
2. C Coté, C. (2016). “Indigenizing” Food Sovereignty. Revitalizing Indigenous Food Practices and Ecological Knowledges in Canada and the United States. *Humanities (Basel)*, 5(3), 57-.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/h5030057>
3. Laduke, Winona (2012). Seeds of our Ancestors, Seeds of Life.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNlel72eQc>

Sept 24. Class 3: Toronto Treaties and Indigenous Foodways

1. Johnson, J. (2013) “The Indigenous Environmental History of Toronto, “The Meeting Place”” In Sanders, A., Bocking, Coates & Cruikshank (eds). *Urban Explorations: Environmental Histories of the Toronto Region*. Hamilton: Wilson Institute for Canadian History. pp.59-71
2. Talking Treaties Collective (2022). A Treaty Guide for Torontonians. Peoples of this Land.
<https://talkingtreaties.ca/peoples-of-this-land>
3. Miijim: Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Food Systems. (120min)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4Z1EtA91g0>
4. Simpson, Leanne. Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships. *Wicazo Sa Review*, Volume 23, Number 2, Fall 2008, pp. 29-42

Field Trip to High Park to meet withCarolynne Crawley of the Indigenous Land Stewardship Circle & msitnokmaq.com

Oct 1. Class 4: The History & Political Economy of the Global Food System

1. Pollan, M. (2006) *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: a Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Books, 33-64.
2. Patel, R. (2007) *Stuffed and Starved: Markets, Power and the Hidden Battle for the World’s Food System*. London: Portobello Books, pp.47-74.
3. Qualman, D., (2011). Advancing Agriculture by Destroying Farms? The State of Agriculture in Canada. In H. Wittman, A. Desmarais and N. Wiebe, (eds.) *Food sovereignty in Canada: creating just and sustainable foodsystems*. Halifax: Fernwood, pp. 20-42.

Oct 8. Class 5: Neo-liberalism, Displacement & Resistance

1. Wise, T. A. (2019). *Eating tomorrow: Agribusiness, family farmers, and the battle for the future of food*. The New Press, pp11-43.
2. Gálvez, A. (2018). *Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies, and the Destruction of Mexico*. University of California Press, pp13-16, 47-62.

3. *La Comida*. (n.d.). Earth to Tables Legacies. Retrieved April 28, 2022, from <https://earthtotables.org/essays/la-comida/>

Guest lecture – Ivan Madgyman - Tortillero - Molinero – Sembrador, Maizal.ca

READING WEEK

Oct 22. Class 6: Labour & Migrant Justice: Seasonal Agricultural Workers

****research paper/project proposal due in-class*

1. Binford, A. L. (2019). Assessing temporary foreign worker programs through the prism of Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program: Can they be reformed or should they be eliminated? *Dialectical Anthropology*, 43(4), 347–366. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-019-09553-6>
2. The Globe and Mail. (2022). *Filling Canada's labour gaps with migrant workers* [Broadcast]. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/podcasts/the-decibel/article-filling-canadas-labour-gaps-with-migrant-workers/>
3. Sook Lee, Min (2015) *Migrant Dreams* [documentary film]
Feature-length version:
<https://www.tv.o.org/video/documentaries/migrant-dreams-feature-version>
60-min version:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_8bjt37xYo

Guest Lecture: Gabriel Alladua, former SAWP worker and outreach worker with Justicia 4 Migrant Workers

Oct 29. Class 7: Food, Farming & the Climate Crisis

1. Global Alliance for the Future of Food. (2022). *Untapped Opportunities for Climate Action: An Assessment of Food Systems in Nationally Determined Contributions*. Global Alliance for the Future of Food. (p. 1-19)
<https://futureoffood.org/insights/food-systems-in-nationally-determined-contributions/>
2. Global Alliance for the Future of Food. (2022). *Untapped Opportunities: Assessment Food Systems in Nationally Determined Contributions. Country Assessment: Canada*.
<https://futureoffood.org/insights/untapped-opportunities-for-climate-action-food-systems-in-nationally-determined-contributions/>

Nov 5. Class 8: Food & Cultures: In-class Pot-luck

****Pot-luck presentation & reflection paper due in-class*

1. Brady, J. (2011). Cooking as Inquiry: A Method to Stir Up Prevailing Ways of Knowing Food, Body, and Identity. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(4), 321–334.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691101000402>
2. Myers, L. (2012) Serving it Up, *The Senses and Society*, 7:2, 173-195
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/174589312X13276628771523>
3. Goldenberg, K. (2018, December 14). If you go vegan, can you take your meat-loving

community with you? *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2018/dec/14/vegan-culture-community-dominican>

Nov 12. Class 9: Food Justice by and for Racialized Communities

1. Black Creek Food Justice Network. "Fighting for Food Justice in the Black Creek Community: Report, Analyses and Steps Forward." Black Creek Food Justice Network, 2016.
2. Guthman, J. (2008). Bringing good food to others: investigating the subjects of alternative food practice *Cultural Geographies*.15: 43. pp431-447 <http://cgj.sagepub.com/content/15/4/431>
3. Block, D. R., Chávez, N., Allen, E., & Ramirez, D. (2012). Food sovereignty, urban food access, and food activism: Contemplating the connections through examples from Chicago. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 29 (2), 203–215.

Field Trip: Black Creek Community Farm, 4929 Jane St

Nov 19. Class 10: Urban Food Movements & Strategies for Change

1. McClintock, N. (2013). Radical, reformist, and garden-variety neoliberal: coming to terms with urban agriculture's contradictions. *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, DOI:10.1080/13549839.2012.752797.
2. City of Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit (2021) *Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan* <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-170565.pdf>
3. Stiegman, M. (2022). Seizing this COVID moment: What can Food Justice learn from Disability Justice? *Canadian Food Studies / La Revue Canadienne Des Études Sur l'alimentation*, 9(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v9i1.525>
4. Kirkpatrick, S. & Tarasuk, V. Food Insecurity and Participation in Community Food Programs among Low-income Toronto Families. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, March/April 2009 p. 135-139. <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/wp-content/uploads//2011/06/Kirkpatrick-Tarasuk-2009-Food-Insecurity-Low-income-Toronto-Families.pdf>

Guest Lecture: Melana Roberts - Chair, Food Secure Canada; City of Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit

Nov 26. Week 11: Student Presentations

Dec 3. Week 12: Student Presentations

For details on Grading Schemes, Assignment submissions, Lateness Penalties, Missed Tests, Group Work, Inclusivity in EUC, Religious Observance Days, Academic Honesty, Intellectual Property Notice, Student Conduct, Student Support and Student Accessibility Services. See <https://euc.yorku.ca/academic-policies-procedures-petitions/>

Assignment Submission

Students should turn in assignments in Microsoft Word (or equivalent software format – NOT a PDF) via eclass BEFORE NOON on the due date specified for the assignment.

Lateness Penalty

Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 5% of the value of the assignment *per day* that the assignments are late. For example, if an assignment worth 20% of the total course grade is a day late, 1 point out of 20 (or 5% per day) will be deducted. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc. will be considered.

Use of Generative AI

Please note that the use of AI for the writing of class assignments is NOT permitted. Students will be expected to draft the following assignments using Google Docs so the instructor is able to view the document history: Research paper, Research Paper Proposal, Potluck reflection paper, 5 Reading reflection papers.

Student Accommodations

Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course requirements are encouraged to discuss the matter with the me as soon as possible. Student with physical, learning or psychiatric disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods should discuss this with the me early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made.