

# ENVS 411: FOOD SYSTEMS FROM THE GROUND UP

Fall 2014 – TR / 10:00-12:00 / Columbia 142

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<http://blogs.uoregon.edu/foodsystems/>

**Course Description** - A plethora of popular films and books have documented the environmental and social problems inherent in the industrial agri-food system; however, much of the discourse is centered on policies and regulations on the national scale. While these are valid and necessary critiques, they tend to overlook fundamental insights from a bottom-up systems perspective. This course, then, will work to map food systems from the ground up by exploring the emerging social movement towards sustainable and just food systems, and to prepare students for leadership roles through exercises in systems thinking and meaningful, active engagement in local community projects. Through readings on agroecology, social systems, food justice, and governance, you will become familiar with the various, interrelated perspectives that set the groundwork of our food system. To develop truly sustainable solutions, it is vital to recognize that food systems are diverse, complex, and interconnected and cannot be addressed by any single perspective or rule of thumb.

**Learning Objectives** - By the end of this course, students will:

1. Be able to define the food system using principles in community building, social justice, and ecological sustainability.
2. Be able to apply systems, interdisciplinary, participatory, and multi-stakeholder approaches to investigating issues in food systems.
3. Be able to define the impact of policy on agriculture, food systems, and human and ecological health.
4. Develop skills in critical thinking, leadership, team building and problem solving in a multicultural and diverse context.
5. Participate effectively in a group of learners and apply skills to community-oriented projects.

## **Course Requirements**

**Attendance (10%)** – Students will be expected to attend every class. Attendance scores will not be affected by one unexcused absence; however, this absence will negatively affect their participation grade. Beyond this, for each unexcused absence students will incur a two percentage point deduction to their overall grade. If they have a legitimate scheduling conflict (such as a doctor's appointment or family emergency) students should talk to one of the instructors *beforehand*.

**Participation (20%)** – Students will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. During class they will be expected to actively contribute to both small group and class discussion. Students will be evaluated on the quality as well as quantity of their engagement during class time.

**Discussion Questions (10%)** – Students are expected to submit one discussion question on the course blog by 9AM every class session that critically engages with the readings. Students will be assessed

on both quality and quantity of questions submitted.

**Current Event Report (5%)** - Students will be expected to keep up with current events related to local and global food systems throughout the course. Each student will be required to research and present one current event during the term.

**Reading Response Blogs (10% total, 10% each, 5% peer feedback)** – This course is community learner oriented and therefore we will have a collective online blog. Students will be required to write and submit two response blogs throughout the term. Instructors will provide students with topic prompts to encourage them to think critically about the readings, to respond to class discussions and to analyze their own learning process, thereby developing their own perspectives and visions. Each response must be approximately 600 words (about two pages, standard font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) and is due one week from the original date the reading was assigned. Blogs will be evaluated on demonstrated understanding of and engagement with the course material and process, thoughtfulness, creativity, grammar, and spelling. Proper in-text citation and a Works Cited page are required. Twice during the term, students will leave feedback on a peer's blog post (either a comment or question that engages critically with the post).

**Integral Project (30%)** – In their Integral Teams, students will work on a project that fills a need identified by a real community organization throughout the term. We will work with local organizations to define the scope of the projects ahead of time. The materials evaluated for students' Integral Projects will be divided into two components: an individual paper (15% of the final grade) reflecting on their experiences and a group presentation of the project (15% of the final grade). See accompanying handout for more details on the Integral Project.

### **Course Websites**

- The course blog is located on the University of Oregon's blog system (<http://blogs.uoregon.edu/foodsystems/>). The course syllabus, readings, food news, jobs/internships, classmate blogs, and other materials will be posted here. Please check the course blog frequently for updates.
- Grades and emergency class announcements can be found on the University of Oregon's Blackboard page (<https://blackboard.uoregon.edu>). You will be alerted via email of any last minute class updates.

### **Course Policies**

**Email and Technology Policy** – Please allow instructors up to 24 hours to respond to any emails or requests. It is important to plan ahead if you have a question or to visit office hours for one-on-one communication. Please do not use your cell phones during class unless we are on a break.

**Discrimination** – All students are expected to adhere to University of Oregon policies related to discrimination based upon ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

**Documented Disability** – If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in

the course, please make the necessary arrangements. You may contact Disabilities Services at (541) 346-1155. Also, please contact the instructor early in the term so that your learning needs are appropriately met.

**Inclusion Statement** – Environmental Studies is a community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs, and traditions. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact your instructors and/or the department head. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their website at <http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html>.

**Readings and Assignments**

All readings are located on the course blog. There are no required textbooks for this course.

<p><b>Week One</b></p> <p>Food and Perspectives</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, September 30</b></p> <p>Course Introduction</p> <p>Place and Identity</p>	<p><b>Thursday, October 2</b></p> <p>Social and Ecological Perspectives</p> <p><i>Guest speakers: Megan Kemble and Lynne Fessenden, WFFC</i></p> <p><u>Required:</u> Henderson, Mann, Parasecoli</p>
<p><b>Week Two</b></p> <p>Community Food Systems</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, October 7</b></p> <p>Community Food Systems</p> <p><u>Required:</u> Lyson, Friedman</p> <p><u>Recommended:</u> Raja</p>	<p><b>Thursday, October 9</b></p> <p>Local Food Systems in the Willamette Valley</p> <p><i>Guest Speaker: Dan Armstrong, Willamette Valley Bean and Grain Project</i></p> <p><u>Required:</u> Allen, Giombolini, Berry</p>
<p><b>Week Three</b></p> <p>Connecting Past and Future Food</p>	<p><b>Tuesday, October 14</b></p> <p>Reclaiming Indigenous Food</p>	<p><b>Thursday, October 16</b></p> <p>Resilience and Food</p>

Systems	Systems <u>Required:</u> Burke, Norgaard	Production <u>Required:</u> Holt-Geménez, Trosper
<b>Week Four</b> Food Justice	<b>Tuesday, October 21</b> Food Justice Theory  <u>Required:</u> DuPuis et al., Mares and Peña	<b>Thursday, October 23</b> Food Justice in Practice <i>Guest Speaker: Jorge Navarro, Huerto de la Familia</i>  <u>Required:</u> Slocum, Guthman 2008
<b>Week Five</b> The Power of Knowledge, Expertise, and Technology	<b>Tuesday, October 28</b> Modern and Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge Systems  <u>Required:</u> Altieri, Carolan 2006	<b>Thursday, October 30</b> Agricultural Technology: Boon or Bane?  <u>Required:</u> Leach, "Farmhack"  <u>Recommended:</u> Jefferson
<b>Week Six</b> The Real "O.G.": Ecological and Evolutionary Approaches to Growing Food	<b>Tuesday, November 4</b> Ecological Agriculture in Theory and Practice  <u>Required:</u> Guthman 1998, Ferguson	<b>Thursday, November 6</b> Agrobiocultural Diversity and Seed Stewardship  <u>Required:</u> Carolan 2012  <u>Recommended:</u> Howard
<b>Week Seven</b> The Importance of Region in Remaking the Food System	<b>Tuesday, November 11</b> Urban Food Systems and Access  <u>Required:</u> Block et al., Alkon 2008, Steel	<b>Thursday, November 13</b> Rural Food Systems and Access  <u>Required:</u> Brown and Getz, Gilbert and Sharp

	<u>Recommended:</u> Agyeman, Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project, Policy Link, Urban Vitality Group	<u>Recommended:</u> Oregon Food Bank & RARE Video
<b>Week Eight</b>  Mobilizing and Organizing in Food Movements	<b>Tuesday, November 18</b>  Food Movement Networks  <u>Required:</u> Gimenez, Wekerle  <u>Recommended:</u> Van Bommel and Spicer	<b>Thursday, November 20</b>  Food, Media, and Technology: How do we initiate community-level dialogue?  <u>Required:</u> Valenzuela
<b>Week Nine</b>  Institutions and Practices to Remake the Food System	<b>Tuesday, November 25</b>  Food Policy and the Farm Bill  <u>Required:</u> IATP, Nestle	<b>Thursday, November 27</b>  NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING
<b>Week Ten</b>  Institutions and Practices to Remake the Food System (continued)	<b>Tuesday, December 2</b>  Food Democracy and Food Policy Councils  <i>Guest Speaker – Melissa Wischerath, Center for Sustainability Law</i>	<b>Thursday, December 4</b>  <b>Final Presentations &amp; Class Celebration</b>  Project Papers due on 12/11 @ 1 pm (Final Exam time)