

Sociology 4117: FOOD AND SOCIETY

Professor Jill Harrison

Office: 248 Ketchum Hall
Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 and by appointment
jill.harrison@colorado.edu
(303) 492-1605

University of Colorado at Boulder
Spring 2017
Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:15
in MUEN E113

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the sociology of food and agriculture, with emphasis on social justice and environmental sustainability. We will investigate the institutional and cultural supports of major food system problems and contemporary efforts to address those problems, including the realms of food production, processing, distribution, marketing, policy, regulation, consumption, and activism.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Much more than tractors and seeds, agriculture is a key economic sector, a way of life, a source of open space, a tremendous manipulation of natural resources, the source of essential staples and sustenance, and a space in which we interrogate and negotiate our relationship with the natural world as well as with each other. Agriculture has been conceptualized as “the middle landscape”: “that space, which is at once real and imaginary, between the city and the wilderness, wherein the agrarian and/or pastoral ideal resides, and where people live and work with nature” (Vos 2000: 246). Agricultural products provide food that not only nourish us but also play an important role in cultural traditions, identity, politics, and pleasure.

Cutting through these images, however, remain a host of problems that have become increasingly apparent in recent decades – including the economic vulnerability of many farmers, farm worker poverty, food safety crises, risky technologies, animal welfare abuses, and air and water pollution from pesticides, fertilizers, and animal waste. These problems make clear the utmost importance of thoughtful, well-informed, and interdisciplinary analysis of agrifood networks, associated dilemmas, and their potential solutions.

This course is a sociological exploration of agriculture and food networks from three distinct but interrelated vantage points: changes in the structure and dynamics of agrifood networks, historical and current social movement responses to social and ecological agrifood problems, and shifting trends in academic analysis of agrifood networks and politics. Throughout the course, we will examine the major structural forces that sociologists identify as shaping agrifood networks, paying particular attention to the associated consequences for the environment and social justice. We will also critically interrogate the struggles, accomplishments, and limitations of different efforts to address social and ecological problems in agriculture and to drive it in a more sustainable and/or socially just direction.

The problems we will confront throughout this course are complex and daunting, defying simple, ‘silver bullet’ solutions. Students should be prepared to grapple with, struggle with, consider, and deliberate multiple and often conflicting perspectives about the causes of serious agrifood problems, as well as equally varied (and inconclusive) debates about how these problems should be solved. Students should understand that I am more concerned with posing difficult questions (and showing why they matter) than with offering definitive answers. My primary goal is to help students generally develop their critical thinking skills and to be more compassionate and engaged citizens.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following books are REQUIRED for all students and can be purchased from the campus bookstore:

Michael Mayerfeld Bell. 2004. *Farming for Us All: Practical Agriculture and the Cultivation of Sustainability*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Michael Pollan. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Books.

All other readings, some lecture materials, and other key information are listed in this syllabus and are available through Desire2Learn (D2L). Please note that I will periodically assign additional short readings and make other small changes to the syllabus. You should log on to D2L and check your email regularly to stay informed of changes to the schedule and new materials.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade for this course will be based on the following requirements (1000 points total):

1. **Attendance** (60 points; 6% of final grade)

Your attendance is required this semester. You simply cannot do well without being in class and participating with the rest of us. I will use the end-of-class reflections (described below) to keep track of your attendance. You can miss up to three class meetings without penalty. After that, you will lose 5 points for each absence. Arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early will count as an absence. I will waive absences only for *documented* cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc. If you are having trouble coming to class, please come see me sooner than later. I would be glad to talk with you about it and help you think about how to address the problem.

2. **Participation** (60 points; 6% of final grade)

This course requires active participation. You need not always have something to say, but your consistent and informed participation in class is a course requirement. To get full credit for your participation, you must attend regularly, show up on time, be prepared to discuss required readings, and participate regularly in class discussions and small group discussions. In this course, you are expected to learn a body of sociological thinking about agriculture and food, regardless of your own perspectives on the issues. Therefore, I will evaluate your participation based on your engagement with the academic concepts, arguments, and evidence about food and agriculture, not on your opinions (either those in agreement or disagreement with mine).

You are required to do all required readings each week before coming to class. "Doing the readings" well means carefully reading, taking notes about the main arguments and evidence, jotting down your questions, and re-reading. Please bring the reading materials, your reading response, and your notes with you to class and be prepared to ask questions and discuss your reactions to the readings. You are expected to spend an average of six hours per week preparing for this course (outside of our time together in the classroom).

End-of-class reflections: In the last five minutes of each class, I will ask you to reflect in writing on your participation in class that day and on any questions that were raised that you'd like me to address in the next class. In doing these, I hope that you will "embrace the art of writing as the art of thinking" (Coates 2015: 51). You will turn these reflections in. Thoughtful reflections help me get to know you and build a better class, and they help you become a better class participant. Also, I will use them to track your attendance. I will read these and return them to you. You must keep them until the end of the semester.

Many absences will affect your participation grade, to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3. **Reading Responses** (200 points total; 20% of final grade)

Most weeks, you can submit a reading response that addresses the reading questions posted on D2L about that week's readings. These reading responses will help you prepare for class discussions, help you stay on top of the readings, and help me gauge your comprehension of the readings. These are due on Tuesdays before class starts. I will count the highest 10 scores you receive on these. Each is worth up to 20 points. [Exception: In the weeks we discuss an entire book, you are required instead to write a "Book Response" – see below.]

Your reading responses must demonstrate meaningful engagement with the reading(s) and the reading questions. Your responses can be up to 4 pages in length (double-spaced), professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point font, and formatted with 1-inch margins. Submit each to that week's dropbox on D2L before class on Tuesday. Submit these as .pdf, .doc, or .docx files. Do not copy and paste your essay into the 'comments' box in D2L; rather, you must upload the document.

Each reading response is worth up to 20 points. I will grade reading responses as follows:

- Full credit (20 points) for responses that demonstrate a "high" level of engagement with the reading(s), address the reading questions posted on D2L, and follow the assignment guidelines.
- Partial credit (10 points) for responses that demonstrate a "medium" level of engagement with the reading(s), address only some of the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or incompletely follow the assignment guidelines
- Zero credit (0 points) for responses that demonstrate little or no engagement with the reading(s), do not answer the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or do not follow the assignment guidelines.

Late policy for reading responses: I will only accept late reading responses for *documented* cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc.

4. **Book Responses** (80 points; 8% of final grade)

In addition to our other readings, we will read two full-length books this semester. On each of the two weeks I have assigned those books, you are required to submit a book response in which you respond to the reading questions posted on D2L. Each book response must demonstrate meaningful engagement with the book and the reading questions posted on D2L. Your responses must be approximately 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced), professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point font, and formatted with 1-inch margins. Submit each to that week's dropbox on D2L before class on Tuesday.

I will grade book responses as follows:

- Full credit (40 points) for responses that demonstrate a "high" level of engagement with the book, address the reading questions posted on D2L, and follow the assignment guidelines.
- Partial credit (20 points) for responses that demonstrate a "medium" level of engagement with the book, address only some of the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or incompletely follow the assignment guidelines
- Zero credit (0 points) for responses that demonstrate little or no engagement with the book, do not answer the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or do not follow the assignment guidelines.

Late policy for book responses: I will only accept late book responses for *documented* cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc.

5. **Tests** (600 points total; 60% of final grade)

This semester, there will be three tests.

Test #1 (200 points): 2/23 in class

Test #2 (200 points): 4/6 in class

Test #3 (200 points): Distributed in class on 5/4, and due by 5/8 at 7:00pm to the D2L dropbox.

Note: On the day I return the first and second tests in class, I will collect them from you before you leave the room. If you do not return your test to me before you leave the room, you will earn a zero on that test.

Make-up policy for tests: If you miss one of the tests due to a death in your family, a medical emergency, a court date, a religious conflict, or your participation in a university-supported activity in which you are obligated to participate, you must provide me with written documentation of that conflict in order to take the make-up exam. Such documentation must be provided prior to your absence. Or, if the situation is an emergency that prohibits prior notice, you must provide documentation within one week of your absence. I will then allow you to take a make-up exam during the scheduled final exam period. The make-up final exam will be an essay exam that will test your comprehensive understanding of *all* course material.

GRADES

In sum, your final grade will be based on the following:

60 points	Attendance
60 points	Participation
200 points	Reading responses
80 points	Book responses
600 points	Tests
<u>1000 points total</u>	

Your total points earned will correspond to the following final letter grades:

930-1000	A	800-829	B-	670-699	D+
900-929	A-	770-799	C+	630-669	D
870-899	B+	730-769	C	600-629	D-
830-869	B	700-729	C-	0-599	F

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability accommodations: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that we can figure out how to address your needs. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Their contact information is 303-492-8671 and dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website (<http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/>) and discuss your needs with me.

CU-Boulder Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic

sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>

Plagiarism is one important aspect of this honor code. All work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this mandate appears straightforward, I am well aware of how murky the task can be. Wherever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come see me to figure out the best strategy. If you want to cite an idea I proposed in lecture, cite it accordingly with an in-text citation such as (lecture 1/31/13). If you want to cite a direct quote from a Powerpoint slide, put it in quotes.

Discrimination and harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/>

Respectful classroom environment: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Observance of religious holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I will make every effort to accommodate all students who have such conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments, or attending class; students must notify me of such absences by the second week of the semester.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Absences: When you are absent, you are responsible for taking the initiative to find out what you missed. You should obtain notes from a fellow classmate; you may then come ask me about updates to the syllabus and clarifications on specific points that you do not understand. I will not post or otherwise share my slides or lecture notes.

Punctuality: It is very important that you arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class, as arriving late and leaving early are disruptive and distracting. Come see me ASAP if you anticipate that you will regularly be late. If you must leave early, sit near the door and slip out quietly.

D2L troubles: It is your responsibility to make sure that you are able to successfully upload your essays to the appropriate dropbox on D2L. Double-check to make sure that each submission actually gets uploaded to D2L, and keep documentation of each successful submission. If you have troubles with D2L, contact the CU IT Service Center at 303-735-4357. Because D2L could have problems, be sure to download your readings ahead of time, and keep copies of your own essays and course readings on a flash drive or other backup device.

Grades: I will grade your work very carefully and try to be as transparent as possible about my grading decisions. If you want to discuss the grade you received on one of your essays or exams, you must put your concerns into writing, send it to me, and request an appointment to meet in office hours. If you decide to dispute a grade, I reserve the right to alter the grade as I see fit (i.e., either up or down).

Laptops, cell phones, and other electronic communication devices: Because the use of laptops, cell phones, and other such devices distracts both the user and other students, I generally do not allow their use in the classroom and require that they be stored out of sight during class. If I see you checking your cell phone, I will ask you to leave. There are two exceptions to the laptop rule. First: If you believe that you must use a laptop during class, please talk to me privately about this, bring documentation from the appropriate authority (e.g., Disability Services, or your doctor) stating that you need to use a laptop every day, and keep in mind that, if I decide to permit you to use it, you may only do so for taking notes. Second: When we are discussing a particular required reading, and you have it available in electronic form instead of in hard copy, you may use your laptop or other electronic communication device to view the required reading.

Classroom behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards will be subject to discipline. If you fall asleep, text, or chat during class, I will ask you to leave. If I have to do so more than once, I will drop you from the course. Such behaviors are disruptive to me and others around you and send a message of disrespect. Save your conversations for after class, and raise your hand to ask me questions when you need clarification or want to comment on course material.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

Please note: I may periodically assign additional short readings and make other small changes to the syllabus.

Week 1 (1/17 and 1/19): Introduction to Sociology of Agrifood Systems

- Michael Carolan. 2012. Selection from *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. London: Earthscan, 1-8.
 Michael Carolan. 2011. Selection from *The Real Cost of Cheap Food*. London: Earthscan, 115-139.
 Deborah Fitzgerald. 2003. The industrial ideal in American agriculture. From *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 10-32.
 Steinmetz, George. 2016. "Super Size: The Dizzying Grandeur of 21st-Century Agriculture."
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/09/magazine/big-food-photo-essay.html?_r=0

Week 2 (1/24 and 1/26): Agricultural Policy

- Jennifer Clapp. 2012a. Selection from *Food*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 24-33.
 James MacDonald, Robert Hoppe, and David Banker. 2006. Growing farm size and the distribution of farm payments. USDA Economic Research Service. Economic Brief No. 6.
 Tom Philpott. 2008. A reflection on the lasting legacy of 1970s USDA Secretary Earl Butz. *Grist*. February 8.
<http://grist.org/article/the-butz-stops-here/>
 Jim Hightower. 1973. Selections from *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.

Week 3 (1/31 and 2/2): Agricultural Science and Technology

- Jennifer Clapp. 2012b. Selection from *Food*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 33-43.
 Norman E. Borlaug. 2000. Ending world hunger: The promise of biotechnology and the threat of antiscience zealotry. *Plant Physiology* 124: 487-490.
 Food First. 2006. Twelve myths about hunger. *Food First Background*.
 Nathanael Johnson. 2013. Selections from "Panic-free GMOs." *Grist*. <http://grist.org/series/panic-free-gmos/>

Week 4 (2/7 and 2/9): Neoliberalism and Livelihoods in the Global South

- Liam Downey. 2015. Selection from *Inequality, Democracy, and the Environment*. New York: NYU Press.

- William G. Moseley, Judith Carney, and Laurence Becker. 2010. Neoliberal policy, rural livelihoods, and urban food security in West Africa: A comparative study of The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(13), 5774-5779.
- Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Douglas S. Massey. 2007. Borders for whom? The role of NAFTA in Mexico-U.S. Migration. *Annals of the American Academic of Political and Social Science* 610: 98-118.

Week 5 (2/14 and 2/16): Corporate Consolidation Among Off-Farm Actors

- Jennifer Clapp. 2012c. Selection from *Food*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, Chapter 4.
- Tom Philpott. 2013a. Does corporate farming exist? Barely. *Mother Jones*. September 25.
<http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2013/09/does-corporate-farming-exist-barely>
- Tom Philpott. 2013b. Why commodity farming is a tough row to hoe. *Mother Jones*. September 26.
<http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2013/09/tragedy-industrial-farming-charts>
- Charles Fishman. 2003. The Wal-Mart you don't know. *Fast Company*. December.
<http://www.fastcompany.com/47593/wal-mart-you-dont-know>
- Michael Mayerfeld Bell. 2009. Selection from *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, 58-67.
- Steve Striffler. 2004. Undercover in a chicken factory. *Utne Reader*, January/February.

Week 6 (2/21 and 2/23): Introduction to Food System Workers, and Test #1

- The Economist*. 2010. Fields of tears. December 16. <http://www.economist.com/node/17722932>
- Richard Marosi and Don Bartletti. 2014. Product of Mexico, Part I: Hardship on Mexico's farms, a bounty for U.S. tables. *Los Angeles Times*. Article, photos, and video. <http://graphics.latimes.com/product-of-mexico-camps/>
- Food Chain Workers Alliance and Solidarity Research Cooperative. November 2016. No Piece of the Pie: U.S. Food Workers in 2016. Los Angeles, CA: Food Chain Workers Alliance. (Read Executive Summary and Introduction; skim the rest.)

****Thursday: Test #1 in class****

Week 7 (2/28 and 3/2): Nativist Immigration Politics, the Agrarian Ideal, and U.S. Farmworker Precarity

- Jill Lindsey Harrison and Sarah E. Lloyd. 2012. Illegality at work: Deportability and the productive new era of immigration enforcement. *Antipode* 44(2): 365-385.
- Additional reading TBA.

Week 8 (3/7 and 3/9): Worker Justice Activism

- Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka. 2000. Organizing U.S. farm workers: A continuous struggle. From *Hungry for Profit*, 161-174.
- Additional reading TBA.

Week 9 (3/14 and 3/16): Organic Agrifood Systems

- Brian Obach. 2015. Selections from *Organic Struggle: The Movement for Sustainable Agriculture in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Beth Hoffman. 2013. Who owns organic brands and why you should care. *Forbes Magazine* May 25.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/bethhoffman/2013/05/25/who-owns-organic-brands-and-why-you-should-care/>
- Christy Getz, Sandy Brown, and Aimee Shreck. 2008. Class politics and agricultural exceptionalism in California's organic agriculture movement. *Politics and Society* 36: 478-507.
- Julie Guthman. 2004. Selections from *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Agriculture in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 10 (3/21 and 3/23): Farming Culture and Farmer Networks

Michael Mayerfeld Bell. 2004. *Farming for Us All: Practical Agriculture and the Cultivation of Sustainability*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Week of March 27th: Spring Break**Week 11 (4/4 and 4/6): Introduction to Local Food Systems, and Test #2**

Jack Kloppenburg, Jr., John Hendrickson, and George W. Stevenson. 1996. Coming in to the foodshed. *Agriculture and Human Values* 13 (3): 33-42.

Film "Fresh". Film is available for online streaming through D2L (click on Content and then on Films).

****Thursday: Test #2 in class****

Week 12 (4/11 and 4/13): Food System Localization Critiques, and Environmental Justice Activism

Branden Born and Mark Purcell. 2006. Avoiding the local trap: Scale and food systems in planning research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26: 195-207.

Jill Lindsey Harrison. 2011. Selections from *Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 13 (4/18 and 4/20): Food Culture and Diet Reformism

Michelle Szabo. 2011. The challenges of 're-engaging with food': Connecting employment, household patterns and gender relations to convenience food consumption in North America. *Food, Culture, and Society* 14(4): 547-566.

Julie Guthman. 2008. Bringing good food to others: Investigating the subjects of alternative food practice. *Cultural Geographies* 15: 431-447.

Paul Campos, Abigail Saguy, Paul Ernsberger, Eric Oliver, and Glenn Gaesser. 2006. The epidemiology of overweight and obesity: Public health crisis or moral panic? *International Journal of Epidemiology* 35: 55-60.

Deborah Lupton. 2013. Selections from *Fat*. London: Routledge.

Week 14 (4/25 and 4/27): Hunger and Food Justice

Tuesday: *No class*. Instead, watch "A Place at the Table" on your own and complete film worksheet. Film is available for online streaming through D2L (click on Content and then on Films). Worksheet is available on D2L (click on Content and then on Handouts).

Goode, Erich. 2015. Poverty and disrepute. From *Deviant Behavior*, 10th Ed. Pearson.

Janet Poppendieck. 2000. Want amid plenty: From hunger to inequality. From *Hungry for Profit: The Agribusiness Threat to Farmers, Food, and the Environment*, ed. Fred Magdoff, John Bellamy Foster, and Frederick H. Buttel. New York: Monthly Review Press, 189-202.

Jennifer Clapp. 2012d. Selection from *Food*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 176-181.

Week 15 (5/2 and 5/4): Telling Agrifood Stories to Mainstream Audiences

Michael Pollan. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Books.

May 8: Test #3 (take-home exam) due to D2L dropbox by 7pm