

HTS 4013: FOOD IN THE WORLD ECONOMY

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Wednesdays, 9:05–11:55am

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Course Overview:

American supermarkets are, in many ways, the epitome of global diversity: bananas from Central America, avocados from Mexico, chocolate from Ghana, coffee from Colombia or Vietnam, wine from Australia or South Africa, and on and on. At the same time, the U.S. exports millions of tons of bulk food – corn, wheat, and rice, for example – as well as millions of dollars worth of processed foods around the globe. Critics argue, however, that this diversity is merely a facade as biotechnology and genetic engineering have actually combined to reduce the diversity of food in the world. There are fewer varieties of apples, rice, and other foods, for example. Either way, the influence of the world economy on food and vice versa has been immense.

Despite this widespread exchange of food across the globe, hunger and malnutrition persist as problems. About 1 billion people throughout the world suffer from hunger, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes everyday, and the number of people suffering from hunger is on the rise. At the same, however, the United States and other industrialized nations have begun to suffer from a variety of problems related to food: obesity, diabetes, and a variety of food-related health problems. How are these situations related?

Conditions of hunger and malnutrition, in particular, present difficulties not only for individuals but also for societies. Obviously, food is essential for human existence and individual development. But, food security is also a fundamental political and social problem. The production as well as the consumption of food is a fundamental part of social relations. When these relations around food are disrupted, the result can be political, economic, and social turmoil and even violence.

Therefore, we need to understand a variety of political and economic factors influence people's access to food and how they produce food. What is the place of food in globalized world? How do national governments shape the production and consumption of food? How does the market economy affect the production and consumption of food? Beneath our consumption patterns lies a food system that rests on how we organize our agricultural production. Tangled within this system are issues related to inequality, political and economic power, industrialization, social change, and individual identity.

Requirements:

Grades for this course will be based on several criteria: class participation, a short paper, a seminar presentation, and a research project. Students are expected to adhere to the **Georgia Tech Honor Code** (see www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Honor/). Honor code violations will be addressed appropriately and could result in an "F" on the assignment or in the course. I am happy to accommodate you if you need any special considerations due to a disability, but please let me know *as soon as possible*. You should contact the **ADAPTS Office** (see www.adapts.gatech.edu/index2.htm) if you need such consideration.

Participation (30%)

Student participation is essential for this class. Since each class session will center around discussion, make sure you *do the reading before class and come prepared to discuss*. **Do not assume that these are automatic points. You must earn them by contributing in class.** If you have a question or comment or need something clarified, raise the issue in class.

Discussion questions will be distributed prior to class meetings. These questions will focus on the central themes, concepts, and points of the readings; they should help guide you in drawing out the insights of the material. You should come to class with answers to the discussion questions.

The participation grade will not be based simply on the frequency of comments, but also upon the quality of your comments. For example, bringing up a point from the reading that was unclear or critiquing an argument in the reading is more involved (and of more quality) than merely reciting descriptive information in the text.

Attendance for seminars is mandatory. Absences will be excused only under emergency circumstances. Missing more than one class will put your grade in jeopardy.

Short Presentation (15%)

Each student will introduce the readings for one week and present discussion questions for the rest of the class. Students will present their introduction at the beginning of class. Introductions should be about 10 minutes, highlighting the major arguments and ideas of that day's readings. These introductions should also briefly address how the readings for that day relate to previous course readings.

Short Paper (10%)

Each student will engage in an exercise outside of class and write a brief (2-3 pages) paper about the experience. The activities will center on how food is experienced in a global context. Some examples include eating at an international ethnic restaurant, such as Ethiopian, Japanese, Indian, Korean, Nepali, or other cuisine. Or, you might visit the Dekalb Farmers Market, which is very international in terms of its food, workers, and customers. We will discuss acceptable activities for this assignment.

Research project (45%)

This course requires students to do a research project that culminates in a research paper. These papers need to focus on an aspect of food in the world economy. This might be changes in agricultural production or land tenure, the industrialization of food production, the use of biotechnology in food, changes in consumption, the regulation of production or trade, or food crises. ***This project must be based on primary research***, which might include oral history, interviews, archival materials, government statistics, or the like. Papers also need to draw on and incorporate concepts from the course.

The project involves essentially six assignments: a meeting with me, an individual meeting with Bruce Henson in the Library, a bibliographic exercise, a short summary, a research presentation, and a final paper. This project is meant, in part, to demonstrate to students that writing and

research are processes that do not end with the first draft (or begin the night before it is due). Also, by breaking this project into several parts, I hope to facilitate students' completion of the final paper.

First, during the fourth week of classes (**February 1-5**), students will meet individually with me to discuss ideas for the research paper. You should come to the meeting with at least one idea. Therefore, you should begin thinking about topics now. I have attached a list of possible ideas that students might consider analyzing. Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and you may choose to study a movement not on this list. Students will share their research idea in class on **February 17**.

Second, students will meet individually with Bruce Henson in the library during weeks 5 & 6, **February 8-19**. (Half the class will meet with Bruce Feb. 8-12, and the other half will meet with him Feb. 15-19.) At this meeting, you should be prepared to explain your research topic to Bruce, and he will help you find both secondary and primary sources for your project. You will need to contact Bruce on your own; his e-mail address is <bruce.henson@library.gatech.edu>. You need to have this meeting between your meeting with me and our class on February 24.

Third, a bibliographic assignment is due by **March 3**. For this exercise, you need to find 4 academic sources (e.g., journal articles, books) and 3 primary sources (e.g., newspaper articles, Congressional hearings, government statistics) to use in your research paper. (Websites do *not* qualify as academic sources.) The primary sources should come from the era in which the social change occurred. For example, if you analyze abolition, the primary sources might be articles from the *New York Tribune*, the Congressional Record, or *Harper's Magazine* during the 1850s. Further, you need to provide a 2-3 page summary of your sources and provide the cites in bibliographic form.

Fourth, you will need to turn in a paper summary or outline on **March 31**. This paper should be about 5-7 pages (typed, double-spaced). In it, you will want to describe your research idea, give some background on the topic, and state what data you are collecting. You should include a brief bibliography with this paper.

Fifth, students will present their research to the class on **April 7, 14, and 21**. These presentations will follow the standard at academic conferences: about 15 minutes. We will discuss this further as the semester progress.

Finally, you need to turn in a final paper. This paper should be approximately 20-25 pages long. This paper should have at least 10 academic sources and several primary sources. The final paper is due by noon on **Tuesday, May 4**.

Summary of grade breakdown:	Participation.....	30%
	Short presentation.....	15%
	Short paper.....	10%
	Research Project.....	<u>45%</u>
	Total.....	100%

Readings:

Several required books are available at the **Engineer’s Bookstore at 748 Marietta Street**:

Jaffe, Daniel. 2007. Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival.
 Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. 1848. The Communist Manifesto.
 Mintz, Sidney. 1985. Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History.
 Paarlberg, Robert. 2001. Starved for Science: How Biotechnology Is Being Kept Out of Africa.
 Polanyi, Karl. 2001. The Great Transformation.
 Shiva, Vandana. 2002. Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit.
 Winders, Bill. 2009. The Politics of Food Supply: US Agricultural Policy in the World Economy.

There is also one recommended book for the class:

Bello, Walden. 2009. The Food Wars.

We will be reading each of the books, as indicated in the reading schedule below. We will also read several articles or book chapters that can be found on electronic reserve at the library.

Weekly Schedule

An asterisk (*) indicates that a reading is located on T-Square. All other readings can be found in the course texts.

Week 1: January 13

Course introduction: Why food? Why the world economy? Why national policy?

Part I: Class, Market, and State

Week 2: January 20

Class and Market: How do they shape agriculture?

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1889. The Communist Manifesto. Part I (“Bourgeois and Proletarian”), and Part II (“Proletarians and Communists”).

*Marx, Karl. Critique of Political Economy. Preface.

*Marx, Karl. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. Excerpt in On Historical Materialism: A Collection, pages 120-133, 695-697.

*Kolko, Gabriel. 1963. The Triumph of Conservatism. Ch 4 ("Roosevelt as Reformer"), p98-112 only.

Week 3: January 27

The Market Economy: What's the relationship between agriculture and the economy?

Polanyi, Karl. 2001. The Great Transformation. Chapters 3-8, 11-18.

Jaffey, Daniel. 2007. Brewing Justice. Chapter 1.

Week 4: February 3

International Context: How does the world economy shape agriculture?

*Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1979/1993. The Capitalist World-Economy. Ch 2 ("Three Paths of National Development"), p37-48.

*Friedmann, Harriet. 1990. "The Origins of Third World Food Dependence." Pages 13-31 in The Food Question: Profits Versus People, edited by Henry Bernstein, Ben Crow, Maureen MacKintosh, and Charlotte Martin. New York: Monthly Review Press.

*McMichael, Philip. 1998. "Global Food Politics." Monthly Review. 50(3):97-111.

Winders, Bill. 2009. The Politics of Food Supply. Chapter 1.

*****Schedule an individual meeting with Dr. Winders between February 1 and 5 to discuss ideas for your seminar research project.*****

Part II: Food Production and Consumption in the World Economy

Week 5: February 10

Commodification and the World Economy: Water

Shiva, Vandana. 2002. Water Wars.

*****Schedule an individual meeting with Bruce Henson at the Tech library between February 8 and 19 to discuss your research project.*****

Week 6: February 17

Changing Consumption in the World Economy: Sugar

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. Sweetness and Power.

Week 7: February 24

Fair Trade in the World Economy: Coffee

Jaffe, Daniel. 2007. Brewing Justice.

Week 8: March 3

No Class: Work Week (focus on research project)

Part III: Regulating Food in the World Economy

Week 9: March 10

U.S. Agricultural Policy in the World Economy: Grains and Cotton

Winders, Politics of Food Supply.

Week 10: March 17

Biotechnology and Food in the World Economy: The Case of Africa
Paarlberg, Robert. 2009. Starving for Science.

Week 11: March 24

No Class – Spring Break

Part IV: Student Research on Food in the World Economy

Week 12: March 31

Prepare for Presentations

Week 13: April 7

Student Presentations

Week 14: April 14

Student Presentations

Week 15: April 21

Student Presentations

Week 16: April 28

NO CLASS: Revise Research Papers

Week 17: May 4 (Tuesday, Finals Week)

DUE: Research Papers (due by *noon*)

Resources

Bread for the World (www.bread.org)

UN's World Food Programme (www.wfp.org/hunger/stats)

Articles:

*Ransom, Elizabeth and Keiko Tanaka. 2008. "Consumers and Citizens in the Global Agrifood System: The Case of New Zealand and South Africa in the Global Red Meat Chain." Pp. 247-272 in The Fight Over Food, edited by Wynne Wright and Gerad Middendorf.

*Smith, Jenny. 2009. "Empire of Ice Cream: How Life Became Sweet in the Postwar Soviet Union." Pp. 142-157 in Food Chains, edited by Warren Belasco and Roger Horowitz.