



# FRE 460: The Economics of Food Consumption

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## COURSE INFORMATION

**Instructor:** Raahil Madhok  
**Contact Info:** madhokr@mail.ubc.ca

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**Lectures:** Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 – 2:00 pm  
**Location:** Neville Scarfe (SCRF), Room 1004

**Office hours (in person):** Tues 2:30-3:30 pm | Thurs 2:30-3:30 pm | MCML 233

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**TA:** Elyse Adamic (**Office hours:** Fri 1-2pm | MCML 192)  
**Contact Info:** elyse.adamic@alumni.ubc.ca  
**TA:** Dennis Engst (**Office hours:** Fri 1-2pm: | MCML 192)  
**Contact Info:** engstd@student.ubc.ca

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## ASSESSMENT

4 Homework Assignments		50%
Debates	Annotated slide deck	25%
	Peer Review	5%
	Debate	15%
	Participation in other debates	5%
Total		100%

**Homework Assignments** are individual work and must be handed in on the date of the deadline. Each assignment is worth 12.5% of your course grade.

### Debates:

- Students will submit and vote on debate questions via Piazza.
- Students will be assigned to a topic/team by September 26th, 2022

- Using a framework to be distributed, each team will prepare points arguing **both sides** of their assigned question; two annotated slide decks---one for each side---are to be submitted by November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Debates will take place during scheduled class times Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>-Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. Remaining time will be used for lecture material.
- Teams will learn which side they will be arguing at the start of their debate. Grades for the debate will be based on the following:
  - Instructors' evaluations of substance (especially in submitted materials) and style (especially during actual debate).
  - Participating as an audience member in other debates
- More details will be provided in an instructions document on Canvas.

**Turnitin:** Turnitin will be used to check for work originality. Please sign up using the following information:

**Math Review:** See link in the Resources module on Canvas.

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## Academic Conduct<sup>1</sup>

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism are taken very seriously in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and can result in a range of disciplinary actions. It is each student's responsibility to review and understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and plagiarism and how to avoid them.

Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of UBC as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.

Academic misconduct that is subject to disciplinary measures includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- **Plagiarism**, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. In many UBC courses, you will be required to submit material in electronic form. In such cases, you will not be permitted to use any work not your own without appropriate credit given to the rightful owner. Plagiarism includes, but is not

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<sup>1</sup> Statement of Academic Conduct paraphrased from the UBC Calendar and the MFRE Program

limited to, cutting & pasting text---even when that text is patchedited---without using quotation marks to indicate that the text has been copied/patchedited from an external source. Each instance of cut/paste/patchedited plagiarism will incur a 2 percentage point penalty; a student/submission with 4 or more instances will be referred to the program for disciplinary action.

- **Cheating**, which may include, but is not limited to falsification of any material subject to academic evaluation, unauthorized collaborative work, or use of unauthorized means to complete an examination.
- **Submitting others work as your own**, may include but not limited to i) using, or attempting to use, another student's answers; ii) providing answers to other students; iii) failing to take reasonable measures to protect answers from use by other students; or iv) in the case of students who study together, submitting identical or virtually identical assignments for evaluation unless permitted by the course instructor.
- **Resubmission of Material**, submitting the same, or substantially the same, essay, presentation, or assignment more than once (whether the earlier submission was at UBC or another institution) unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor(s) to whom the assignment is to be submitted.
- **Use of academic ghostwriting services**, including hiring of writing or research services and submitting papers or assignments as his or her own.

Student Responsibility: Students are responsible for informing themselves of the guidelines of acceptable and non-acceptable conduct for examinations and graded assignments as presented via the course syllabus and instructors; and UBC academic misconduct policies. Review the following web sites for details:

UBC Academic Misconduct and Discipline

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>

UBC Learning Commons Web-based Academic Integrity

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic>

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty: The integrity of academic work depends on the honesty of all those who work in this environment and the observance of accepted conventions. Academic misconduct is treated as a serious offence at UBC and within the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. Penalties for academic dishonesty are applied at the discretion of the course instructor. Incidences of academic misconduct may result in a reduction of grade or a mark of zero on the assignment or examination with more serious consequences being applied if the matter is referred to the Dean's office and/or President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline.

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This term we will be using Piazza for class discussion. The system is highly catered to getting you help fast and efficiently from classmates and the teaching team. **Rather than emailing questions to the teaching staff, we encourage you to post your questions on Piazza.**

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**Important Dates**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Sept 20 <sup>th</sup>	Debate Topics – deadline for proposing questions for debates
Sept 21st-22nd	Vote for Debate Topics
Sept 27 <sup>th</sup>	Assignment 1 Due at start of class
Oct 11 <sup>th</sup>	Debate Teams - Work Plan & Outline due
Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>	Assignment 2 Due at start of class
Nov 15 <sup>th</sup>	Assignment 3 Due at start of class
Nov 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Annotated Slide Decks due on Canvas by 11:59 PM
Nov 24 <sup>th</sup> -Dec 6 <sup>th</sup>	Debates
Dec 6th	Assignment 4 Due at start of class

## Lecture Outline (Approximate)

Week of	Topic
Sept 5 - 9	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- MPD, Demand Curves, and Consumer Surplus.</li><li>- MPC, Supply Curves and Producer Surplus.</li><li>- Deadweight Loss and Distortionary Taxes.</li><li>- Discounting (First Pass).</li></ul> Structure of Debates.
Sep 12 - 16	Why we keep bad (food) habits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Present Discounted Utility.</li><li>- Hyperbolic Discounting.</li><li>- Time Inconsistent Preferences.</li></ul>
Sep 19 - 23	The Economics of Obesity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Timeline.</li><li>- Health Costs.</li><li>- Obesity Paradox.</li><li>- Labour Market Penalties.</li><li>- Statistical Interlude #1.</li></ul>
Sep 26 - 30	The Economics of Obesity Continued. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sprawl.</li><li>- Food Deserts.</li><li>- Changing Food Prices.</li><li>- Statistical Interlude #2.</li></ul>
Oct 3 - 7	The Economics of Obesity Continued. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Externalities and Internalities.</li><li>- Sugar and Corrective Taxes.</li><li>- Review: Elasticities.</li><li>- Unintended Consequences.</li><li>- Rise in Variety.</li></ul>
Oct 10 - 14	Risky Foods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Risk Perceptions.</li><li>- Expected Utility.</li><li>- Decision Trees and Uncertainty.</li></ul>
Oct 17 - 21	Behavioural Economics of Food consumption. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Heuristics.</li><li>- Mental Accounting.</li><li>- Food Stamps.</li><li>- Experiments.</li></ul>

Oct 24 – 28	Advertising. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Credence, Search and Experience Goods.</li> <li>- Signaling.</li> <li>- Banning Food Advertising to Kids.</li> </ul>
Oct 31 – Nov 4	Labeling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labels versus Bans and Technology Restrictions</li> <li>- Fair Trade</li> </ul>
Nov 8	Labeling continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organics</li> </ul>
Nov 14 - 18	Labeling continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GMOs</li> <li>- Nutritional Labelling</li> </ul>
Nov 21 - 25	Food Waste (time permitting)
Nov 28 – Dec 1	Changing Nutritional Content of Food (time permitting)
Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup>	TBD