



Sociology of Food
Professor: Dr. Deric Shannon
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Office hours: M,W 3-4:15pm, Seney Hall 110

Course Overview:

Food is fundamental to being human and this course is a uniquely *sociological* investigation into food. The course will have a central focus on sustainability—broadly conceived—throughout the entire semester. From the waste produced by contemporary industrial food streams; to the (un)sustainability of industrial meat-based diets in the overdeveloped world; to labor issues in the food industry and the (un)sustainability of the attendant inequalities that emerge along lines of race, class, and gender in terms of food access, production, and preparation—sociological studies of food are never far from larger discussions about sustainability. Food is also central to culture and identity in interesting ways. Throughout this course, through engagements with readings, movies, critical discussions, writing, and, of course, food, students will focus on sociological themes as they relate to food.

Books:

Carolan, Michael. 2012. *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. New York: Routledge.

Patel, Raj. 2007. *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing.

Shiva, Vandana. 2000. *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Guidelines:

1. We will be discussing sensitive topics this semester and critiquing institutions and ways of life that all of us are very familiar with and some of us have a vested interest in. Please be sensitive to differences of opinion.
2. Along with number 1, remember that you can have any opinion you want on these subjects and should never hesitate to express it. This is regardless of what you think my own positions are and those of your classmates. Open dialogue is an important feature of any democracy, and we will have open dialogue in my classroom.
3. That said, there is no reason to state things in an offensive way. Be respectful.
4. Our class schedule is **SUBJECT TO CONSTANT CHANGE**. It is of the utmost importance that you come to class. If you often skip classes, this one is not for you. (Note also the attendance policy).
5. We may watch films in this class with disturbing content and images. Feel free to leave anytime if you must.
6. Try to have a good time and think critically.

Honor Code:

All aspects of the course are governed by the Oxford College Honor Code as is articulated on the relevant pages of the Oxford College Catalog.

Attendance Policy:

Everyone can miss class two times throughout the semester. Students will be penalized by 2 percentage points toward their grade for every missed class after that.

Students with Disabilities:

Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities. Students who need documentation or other disability-related services are advised to visit the Student Health/Counseling Center: <http://oxford.emory.edu/academics/catalog/educational-resources/disability-services/>.

Theory/Practice/Service/Learning (TPSL)

This class is one of Oxford College's TPSL classes. Each student will complete 18 hours of service, 10 of which will be on Oxford's organic farm, 5 of which will be spent preparing a partial farm-to-table dinner and promoting it, and 3 of which will be helping distribute food to people in need. Students are expected to be good ambassadors and reflect well on the College in their projects. Further, **THIS IS NOT CHARITY**, nor is it simply free farm labor. Rather, these are opportunities for students to interact with the food system and, importantly, reflect on those experiences in reflective papers and class discussions.

Grades:

Grades for this course will be based on a final paper, three reflection papers, one formalized reflection/midterm paper, participation, and four cumulative quizzes:

Final Paper: 25%

3 Reflections: 15%

Formalized Reflection/Midterm Paper: 10%

Participation: 10%

4 Quizzes: 40%

Reflection Papers:

Students are required to hand in three 2-4 Pp. reflection papers throughout the course. These papers can be in any format the student likes, but should be reflections on their various forms of service, connecting their work in the field with course materials and class discussions. At least two are due by Oct. 30 and all three are due by Dec. 4th. No, you may not email them to me.

Formalized Reflection/Midterm Paper: This will be a longer-form reflection paper (4-6 Pp.) and students must use at least one scholar citation in it. Consider these papers “warm ups” for your final paper. Midterm papers are due Oct. 16th and can be on any topic germane to the sociology of food. Students are encouraged to clear topics with Dr. Shannon early in the class. No, you may not email them to me.

Final Paper:

These are two 8-10 page papers. They should demonstrate critical thought and *appropriate social scientific writing*. They can take any format the student likes and students may choose any topic relevant to the sociological study of food. They should include at least four *peer-reviewed, scholarly* references and students are encouraged to clear possible topics with Dr. Shannon early in the course. Final papers are due Dec. 9th. No, you may not email them to me.

Quizzes:

Students will take four *cumulative* quizzes throughout the class in lieu of a midterm and final.

Participation:

Students will be graded on participation based on contributions to class discussions and successful introduction of topics for assigned classes.

Class Schedule:

SOF = *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture*

SH = *Stolen Harvest*

SS = *Stuffed and Starved*

Week 1 (Aug 28)– **Class introductions**

Week 2 (Sept 2 and 4)– **What is “sustainability”?** Readings: “Four Challenges to Sustainability” by David Orr

Week 3 (Sept 9 and 11)– **The Global Political Economy of Food**, Readings: SOF CH.1-2, SH Pp. 1-20

Week 4 (Sept 16 and 18)– Cont’d, Readings SOF CH. 3-4, SS CH. 1

Week 5 (Sept 23 and 25)– Cont’d, Readings SS CH. 2-3 (Quiz 1 Sept 25)

Week 6 (Sept 30 and Oct 2)– **Food and Culture**, Readings: SOF CH. 5

Week 7 (Oct 7 and 9)– Cont’d, Readings: SOF CH. 6

Week 8 (Oct 16)– Cont’d, Readings: SOF CH. 7 (Midterm papers due)

Week 9 (Oct 21 and 23)– **Food Security, Food Sovereignty**, Readings: Handout on “Food Sovereignty” (Quiz 2 Oct 23)

Week 10 (Oct 28 and 30)– Cont’d, Readings: SH Pp. 21-56 (At least two reflections due by Oct. 30)

Week 11 (Nov 4 and 6)– Cont’d, Readings: SH Pp. 57-94

Week 12 (Nov 11 and 13)– Cont’d, Readings: SH Pp. 95-124

Week 13 (Nov 18 and 20)– **Sustainability Revisted**, Readings: SOF CH. 8-10 (Quiz 3 Nov 20)

Week 14 (Nov 25)– Cont’d, Readings: SOF CH. 11, 12, 13

Week 15 (Dec 2 and 4)– Cont’d, Readings: SS CH. 9-10 (All three reflection papers due Dec 4)

Week 16 (Dec 9)– Wrap up and everything due (Quiz 4)