

SPAN 4237/6237

Food, Power and Sustainability

Dr. Vicki Galloway

Course Description

Food has been cited as the single great unifier *across cultures*. Yet, it is also perhaps the greatest source of conflict. As the world's largest industry, food --and the everyday meal itself-- serves as gateway to exploration of the making and unmaking of power relations in and with Latin America. Using a sustainable development framework, a region-by-region approach critically examines the role of foods and food associations in identity and world view and the cultural, economic, environmental and social impacts of the politics of food "ownership", control, movement, distribution, production, promotion and consumption. Areas of focus include:

- Food as image, identity and imaginary. Exploration of cultural values networks: Food and notions of self and society, man and nature, time and space. Food as cultural metaphor, patrimony, belief system, social class, age, gender, beauty, community; cultural notions of waste; food laws (implicit and explicit) and power; the messages of food-eating rituals; cultural and social determinants of taste
- Food as conflict. Globalization, agribusiness and sustainability: monoculture and *milpa*; the *ayllu* and *chakra*; social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of subsidies, transgenic seeds, overfishing; trade policies; food and migration
- Food as control. Issues of land and water control; food "ownership", bioprospecting and intellectual property; food monopolies, standardization, security and food sovereignty
- Food promotion: The selling of food; exporting values through food; cultural and social impacts of changing diets

Student research integrates perspectives from a variety of disciplines, including medicine, literature, law, economics, psychology, marketing and advertising, and combines use of literature, art and music with essays, government documents, news articles and editorials, video interviews, etc. Class activities include discussion, debates, student presentations, case study analysis. Graduate students will submit additionally three critical research reviews and a final case study paper.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course you will be able to...

- Appreciate how deeply foods are embedded in culture-specific webs of significance
- Understand how economic policies regarding food production and distribution impact all dimensions of sustainable development
- Critically examine global issues from a local culture-specific lens to imagine alternative courses of action
- Analyze current sustainability issues of Latin America from a historical and social perspective
- Understand the historical role of the U.S. in food-related dramas of Latin America
- Develop an understanding of historical and cultural contexts related to various regions, including the impact of globalization on economic, political, and social development

Graded course components

- **Participation (10%).** You are expected to participate actively in all class discussions. and in group, individual, oral and written activities. The final grade for participation will be based on substantive contributions made in Spanish by each student in every class. The grade will take into account the following aspects: 1) the frequency of communication; 2) the amount of Spanish that is used in class; 3) the ability to communicate your ideas clearly; 4) respectful attitude towards the class, peers and instructor. Participation grades will be posted monthly on Tsquare.
- **Tests (15%).** You will have two tests on course content requiring you to address learned material from a sustainability perspective.
- **Small talks (15%).** Several class sessions will begin with 4-5 student “small talks”, 3-minute mini-research reports delivered without notes on topics or readings assigned by the Instructor. Each student will select 3 smalltalk topics (5% each x 3) from a topical agenda provided by the instructor. The objective is not to provide an in-depth treatment of the topic but to select the most salient information that can be presented in 3 minutes. Evaluation: Content accuracy and relevance (50%); language use (50%).

6237 students will deliver a total of 5 smalltalks.

- **Connective summaries (10%).** You will submit 5 brief (340-400 words) summaries of class learning, approximately one every two weeks, the aim of which is to recap, connect and synthesize what you learned in class. Evaluation: content (30%); connection (40%), language use (30%).
- **Debates (10%)** You will participate on a team in two formal debates on your choice of instructor-approved topics related to class discussions. Debates consist of two parts: rehearsed presentation of argument (60%) followed by spontaneous rebuttal (40%). The rehearsed segment, limited to three minutes and delivered without notes, constitutes your baseline grade and will be evaluated on content/quality of research (50%) and language use (50%). The spontaneous segment will award one point to your baseline grade for each substantive contribution to the team rebuttal.
- **Conferencias (10%).** You will work with a partner* to deliver a 15-minute formal research presentation without notes on a topic selected from the instructor’s topical agenda. Presentations must be based on at least 4 scholarly Spanish-language sources with proper attributions. Evaluation: Content (40%), Coherence (30%), Language use (30%).

***SPAN 6237 will give an individual presentation.**

- **Impact assessments (30%).** You will develop two impact-assessment papers (approx. 1000 words each), analyzing the impacts of a food-related policy, situation or scenario from a 4-dimensional sustainability perspective (environmental, economic, social, cultural). You may select from a list of scenarios or develop your own in consultation with your instructor. Please refer to the guidelines on T-square. Evaluation: emic understanding of problem (30%), completeness and depth of analysis (40%); accuracy of language use.

SPAN 6237. In addition to the two impact assessments, which will be valued together at 15% of your grade, you will submit a region-focused final project case study of approximately 1500 words. For your case study you will a) select a food-based conflict or controversy of a particular region in consultation with your instructor (e.g. transgenic seeds in Mexico; shrimp farming in Ecuador); b) research the history/background of the

controversial policy or practice in the region and the conflicting perspectives of its stakeholders [using only scholarly sources in Spanish]; and c) demonstrate your understanding of the interdependence of the four dimensions of sustainability, by providing a balanced assessment of the impacts of the policy or practice the region's economy, environment, society and culture. Evaluation: quality of research (30%); depth and balance of analysis (40%); quality of communication (30%).

Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All source texts and support resources are posted on T-square. Films will be found either in the "Digital Media" section or in the folder bearing the film's name. All films will be viewed outside of class.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Attendance Policy

- Your **final grade** will be lowered **one point** for each unexcused absence **in excess of 2**.
- To have an absence excused, you must: (1) receive prior approval or (2) bring documentation of a medical or comparable emergency to **the class directly following your absence**. A visit to the clinic does not constitute a medical emergency unless homestay is prescribed

Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. Please refer to the Institute Attendance policy in the catalog: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek.

COURSE CALENDAR SPANIS 4235/6235	
Week 1 Image, Identity and Imaginary. Introduction to food as metaphor; sayings and myths; foods and meal protocols as reflection of value networks: Humans and nature, food and social class, power, age, gender, beauty, community, ostracism	Debate 1, Group 2 Submit summary 3
	Week 7. Impact Assessment 1: Maize and Migration
	TEST 1
Week 2 Kitchen as theater. Cultural “grammar” of a meal: syntax, pragmatics, punctuation and context scripts. Cultural perceptions of space and time; relationships, rules, hierarchies revealed by cooking space and tools. Car dining and U.S. individualism.	Week 8. Where’s the Beef? Cattle farming in the Amazon and the impacts of deforestation Debate 2, Group 1
Week 3 Gastronome, gastronomoyou: Conditioners of taste: geographical, social, ideological, technological, spiritual, sensorial, economic, political, aesthetic. Submit summary 1	Week 9 Potato guardians. Pablo Neruda’s <i>Oda a la papa</i> ; the potato in Andean identity and cosmovision; the <i>ayllu</i> , the <i>chakra</i> and man-nature relationship; <i>minga</i> , <i>ayni</i> and the <i>pagapu</i> ; food as medicine
The Foodprint of globalization: Globalization and values consumption; importing/exporting values through food and food advertising; impact of multinationals and standardization; patrimony, proprietorship and food fights	Week 10. Potato guardians. biodiversity and biopiracy in the Andes; Peru’s Potato Park and the sustainability agenda; <i>Sumak Kawsay</i> in Ecuador
Week 4 Under the Bun: dark side of the “Happy Meal” Intro to interconnectedness of social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Constructing an impact assessment. Deconstructing the Happy Meal: cattle farming and deforestation, fructose industry; NAFTA tomato fights, food standardization/uniformity, etc	Week 11 <i>Ojala que llueva café.</i> Coffee and climate change in Colombia; free trade, fair trade and Café Rebelde. Submit summary 4
	Debate 2, Group 2
	Week 12. "Banana Republics" Pablo Neruda, “The United Fruit Company” Discussion of film, <i>Silencio de Neto</i> : case study Guatemala
Case Study: Polithink and the sugar tax in Mexico Debate 1, Group 1 Submit summary 2	Week 13. "Banana Republics" Land distribution reform and US overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz Impact assessment 2
Week 5: Morphology and metaphor of maize Student presentations: Mexican maize as myth, memory <i>milpa</i> , <i>mestizaje</i> , marginalization	Week 14. Bittersweet memories The sugar trade; Post-soviet Cuba in social and economic transition Submit summary 5
Week 6. Morphology and metaphor of maize Student presentations: Mexican maize monopoly, monoculture, Monsanto, genetic modification, social movement migration	Week 15 TEST 2 6235: Case study presentation