Geography 130: Food and the Environment
Spring 2019
Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:30-11:00 AM, 100 Lewis Hall

INTRODUCTION

Questions surrounding food – whether we produce enough of it for growing populations; eat the right kind of it for our health, culture, or environment; and around inequality in access and outcomes – are important subjects of contemporary concern, from Berkeley to the Global South and everywhere in between. Production, distribution, and consumption of food are among the earliest and most central ways humans relate to their environment. Food thus serves as a key lens for thinking through human-environment relations, our history, and the challenges of the future.

This class explores how the increasingly global food system came to be, its social and environmental implications for different peoples and places, and how it might change – and be changed. We will deploy a historical, geographical, and critical approach – drawing on an interdisciplinary array of scholarship from the social sciences, as well as insights from the physical sciences, humanities, journalistic, and popular treatments – to better understand our present moment.

A geographical approach to food begins with the proposition that human-environment interactions are not uniform, preordained, or readily predictable. Rather, how food and other natural resources are produced, distributed, valued, consumed, conserved, and degraded are historically- and geographically-specific questions. Nonetheless, there are patterns that can be identified, discernable processes that have produced those patterns, and theories through which we might better understand and intervene around those processes.

Tacking between local and global concerns, this class will emphasize historical processes and political economic relations, while critically assessing prominent discourses around food and the environment – in particular, ideas of eco-scarcity or natural limits, on the one hand, and eco-modernization or technological optimism on the other. Our goal is to understand how these logics have and continue to shape our world, reconfiguring ecological systems, human social relations, and geographic divisions of labor, consumption, and access along the way. By exploring the linkages between food, human well-being, broader political-economic processes, and the world’s ecosystems, we hope to better understand why things look the way they do, and how they might be different.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who complete this course should:

• Gain familiarity with a geographical approach to human-environment relations;
• Learn to think critically about the food system, its history, and contemporary concerns;
• Develop skills around independent research, analyzing and synthesizing arguments, and articulating their own understandings.

1 This course owes much of its current form and content to Dr. Nathan Sayre.
INSTRUCTORS AND OFFICE HOURS

Jeff Martin (Lecturer)  j.vance.martin@berkeley.edu  W 10-11AM  195 McCone
Brigid Cakouros  bcakouros@berkeley.edu  (TBD)  (TBD)
Gabe Eckhouse  geckhouse@berkeley.edu  Tu/Th 11AM-12PM  (TBD)
Honora Montano  honoramontano@berkeley.edu  F 11AM-12PM  583 McCone
Nina Sparling  nina_sparling@berkeley.edu  (TBD)  (TBD)

SCHEDULE

Lecture  TuTh  9:30-11 AM  Jeff  100 Lewis Hall
Section 101  M  11 AM-12 PM  Honora  135 McCone
Section 102  M  12-1 PM  Nina  135 McCone
Section 103  M  1-2 PM  Nina  135 McCone
Section 104  Tu  1-2 PM  Gabe  135 McCone
Section 105  Tu  2-3 PM  Brigid  135 McCone
Section 106  W  10-11 AM  Nina  135 McCone
Section 107  W  1-2 PM  Brigid  135 McCone
Section 108  W  3-4 PM  Brigid  135 McCone
Section 109  Th  1-2 PM  Gabe  135 McCone
Section 110  Th  3-4 PM  Gabe  135 McCone
Section 111  F  10-11 AM  Honora  135 McCone
Section 112  F  1-2 PM  Honora  135 McCone

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Discussion section attendance and participation (25% of final grade):
Attendance in discussion sections is required. Students are expected to come to section on time, having completed readings and assignments, and ready to actively participate in discussion.

Mid-term exam (20% of final grade):
A take-home exam will be handed out at the end of lecture on 3/7 and will be due at the beginning of lecture on 3/12. The exam will consist of 3-4 essay questions, of which you will be asked to answer two (2). Together your essays should total 2000-2500 words (8-10 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font).

Research assignment (20% of final grade):
A research paper will be required as a part of this course, along with preceding assignments around topic development and research. Further details to be announced.

Final exam (35% of final grade):
The final exam will be given Wednesday, May 15th from 11:30 am until 2:30 pm, location TBA. The exam is cumulative, covering material from the entire semester, but will put emphasis on materials presented after the mid-term.

Please Note:
• You must complete all four components to receive a passing grade in the course!
• You are responsible for all reading material whether or not it is covered in lecture.
RESOURCES

Website
Please see the bCourses site (https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1478504) for the syllabus, announcements, and additional resources. PDFs of lecture slides will be posted here, along with supplementary materials and other items of interest.

Readings
All readings are required. A course reader will be available at Vick Copy (1879 Euclid Ave, at the corner of Hearst), but all readings will also be available as pdfs through the ‘Files’ tab on the bCourse page.

While we have tried to reduce the number of readings this year, there is still far too much material for someone to try to read (or even skim!) at the last minute – do keep up!

A note on reading strategically: social science writing should not be read word for word, beginning to end. Instead, try to figure out the big argument(s) by looking for summaries at the beginning or end of a section – this will make it easier to choose what to look at carefully and what to skim. If you get bogged down and can’t figure it out after a serious try, make a note, write down some questions for class, and move on. Reading like this is a skill that you will learn by doing!

Library research
UC Berkeley has one of the best libraries in the country. The librarians are a valuable resource and are more than happy to help you learn to use the various databases and materials available:
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/help/research-help

Citations
All written work must use a proper social science citation format (e.g. Chicago). Five (5) percentage points will be deducted from any submission that lacks proper citation and a bibliography, and you run the risk of plagiarism (see ‘Academic Integrity,’ below). For guidance on attribution, citation, and citation management software, check out: lib.berkeley.edu/research-support/cite-sources.

Writing and other help
If you are worried about your writing or facing other personal challenges, please note that there are resources on campus to help you:

- The Student Learning Center (slc.berkeley.edu) offers peer tutoring, writing support, and other academic resources.
- The Disabled Students’ Program (dsp.berkeley.edu) provides a wide range of resources to ensure equal access to educational opportunities, including advising, diagnostics, note-taking services, and academic accommodations.
- Tang Center Services (uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/cps.shtml) offers short and long-term counseling services to assist students with a variety of concerns, including academic success, life management, career and life planning, and personal development.
- The cost of living here in the Bay Area is high and presents a challenge for many of us in the Berkeley community. Worrying about basic needs can impact your success as a student. If you need economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at basicneeds.berkeley.edu.
- You may also be eligible for money to buy groceries via calfresh.berkeley.edu or our Food Assistance Program (https://financialaid.berkeley.edu/food-assistance-program). If you are in immediate need of food, please visit our UC Berkeley Food Pantry (pantry.berkeley.edu).
POLICIES

Attendance
Attendance in lecture and section is required, as success in this class depends on regular attendance and participation. Students will be allowed two (2) unexcused absences from discussion section, after which their grade will fall per missed class.

Communication
Instructors are available via email, through bCourses, as well as in office hours – please attend the latter for course material-related questions or longer concerns.

Please include “GEOG 130” in the subject line of all email correspondence.

Late Assignments
Assignments (including your research paper and midterm) are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. They should be stapled and include your name as well as your GSI/section.

One letter grade will be deducted for each day past the due date that late work is submitted. If you expect a non-negotiable scheduling conflict, please let your GSI know as soon as possible in order to make appropriate alternative arrangements.

Accommodations
Please bring any special accommodation or rescheduling requirements to the attention of the Disabled Students Program office (dsp.berkeley.edu) and the lecturer as soon as possible.

Once we have heard from DSP, we will do our best to accommodate you.

Technology
Cell phones and other noise-making devices should always be silenced and out of sight. Laptops are not permitted in lecture (except by individual permission). Studies have shown that taking notes by hand is significantly more effective for learning (see Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014). If you have received permission to use a laptop, you will be required to sit in the corner of the room nearest the podium to minimize distraction to your neighbors.

Academic Integrity
You will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any test, paper, report, or other homework submitted under your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course. All words and ideas written by other people must be properly attributed: fully identified as to source and the extent of your use of their work (see ‘Citations’, above). Cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be treated in accordance with Berkeley’s Center for Student Conduct (sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity/addressing-misconduct), resulting in a failing grade on the assignment in question and a report to Student Judicial Affairs. If you have questions regarding potential plagiarism, please consult your student handbook. If you have concerns about how to properly cite material, please see your instructors in office hours.
SCHEDULE

I. FOUNDATIONS

Week 1: Introductions, local and global (January 21–25)
Purdy, Chase (2018) "The planet produces more than enough food, just not the kind people need," Quartz. 30 October 30. https://qz.com/1442190/

Week 2: Landscape Transformations (January 28 – February 1)

Week 3: Eco-Scarcity and Population (February 4–8)

2/5: Research paper assignment distributed via bCourses

Week 4: Markets and Techno-Optimism (February 11–15)
Week 5: Political Economic Critique (February 19–22)

Engels, Friederich (1844) Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy. [Link].

Marx, Karl (1867) Capital. Vol. 1., Selections: Ch.15, section 10; Ch. 25, sections 3 & 4.


Paper topics due in section this week!

II. TRANSFORMATIONS AND TRENDS

Week 6: Enclosure, Commodification, Dislocation (February 25 – March 1)


Week 7: Crises and Interventions (March 4–8)


3/7: Take-home midterm exam handed out at end of lecture

Week 8: Industrialization, Financialization, Consolidation (March 11–15)


3/12: Midterm exam due at beginning of lecture

Paper outline and thesis due this week!

**Week 9: Agrarian Critiques (March 18–22)**


III. EMERGING CONCERNS

**Week 10: Food Safety and Biosecurity (March 25–29)**


SPRING BREAK: No lecture this week; papers due after break!

**Week 11: Inequality and Access (April 1–5)**


4/2: Term papers due at the beginning of lecture
**Week 12: Meat and More-Than-Human Ethics (April 8–12)**


**Week 13: Climate and Land Use Change (April 15–19)**


