

Geography 130: Food and the Environment

Spring 2019

Tuesdays and Thursdays

9:30-11:00 AM, 100 Lewis Hall

INTRODUCTION¹

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 area 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)

- Goldstein, Joyce** (2013) *Inside the California Food Revolution: Thirty Years That Changed Our Culinary Consciousness*. University of California Press. pp. vii-x, 1-38.
- Walker, Richard A.** (2004) *The Conquest of Bread: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California*. The New Press. pp. 19-47.
- Patel, Raj and Jason W. Moore** (2017) *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*. University of California Press. pp. 138-160.
- 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)

- Mazoyer, Marcel and Laurence Roudart** (2006) *A History of World Agriculture: From the Neolithic Age to the Current Era*. Earthscan. pp. 9-16; 52-70.
- Scott, James C.** (2017) *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*. Yale University Press. pp. 37-67.
- Crosby, Alfred W.** (2004) [1986] *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900, New Edition*. pp. 1-40.
- Carney, Judith A.** (2001) *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*. Harvard University Press. pp.1-8, 160-177.

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

- Smil, Vaclav** (2000) *Feeding the World: A Challenge of the Twenty-First Century*. MIT Press. pp. ix-xxviii.
- Patel, Raj** (2007) *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*. Melville House. pp. 1-19.
- Malthus, Thomas Robert** (1798) *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Selections: Preface, Chs. 1-3, 5-7, 16, selections from 11 and 14 of the revised edition of 1803.
- Foster, John Bellamy** (2002) "Malthus's Essay on Population at Age 200," in *Ecology Against Capitalism*. Monthly Review Press. pp.137-154.

2/5: Research paper assignment distributed via bCourses

Week 4: Markets and Techno-Optimism (February 11–15)

- Smith, Adam.** (1776) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Book 1, Chs. 4-8.
- Robbins, Paul, John Hintz, and Sarah A. Moore** (2014) "Markets and Commodities," in *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 31-48.
- Asafu-Adjaye, John, et al.** (2015) *An Ecomodernist Manifesto*. www.ecomodernism.org.
- Caradonna, Jeremy, et al.** (2015) "A Degrowth Response to an Ecomodernist Manifesto," Resilience.org. (Also "A Call to Look Past An Ecomodernist Manifesto: A Degrowth Critique")

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.

Foster, John Bellamy (2002) “Liebig, Marx, and the Depletion of Soil Fertility,” in *Ecology Against Capitalism*. Monthly Review Press. pp. 155-170.

Bernstein, Henry (2010) *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*. Fernwood Publishing. pp. 1-24.

Paper topics due in section this week!

II. TRANSFORMATIONS AND TRENDS

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

Polanyi, Karl (2001) [1944] *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. pp. 35-44, 71-80.

Kloppenborg, Jr., Jack Ralph (2004) [1988] *First the Seed: The Political Economy of Plant Biotechnology*. pp. 1-49.

Walker, Richard A. (2004) “Amber Waves of Labor,” in *The Conquest of Bread: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California*. The New Press, pp. 66-75.

Davis, Mike (2001) *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*. Verso. pp. 25-59, 119-121, 279-301, 306-310.

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

Kloppenborg, Jr., Jack Ralph (2004) [1988] *First the Seed: The Political Economy of Plant Biotechnology*. pp. 50-65, 91-129.

Worster, Donald. (1979) *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. Oxford University Press. pp. 3-43, 80-97, 231-243

Mazoyer, Marcel and Laurence **Roudart** (2006) *A History of World Agriculture: From the Neolithic Age to the Current Era*. Earthscan. pp. 375-381, 450-451.

Romero, Adam. (2016) “Commercializing chemical warfare: citrus, cyanide, and an endless war,” *Agriculture and Human Values*. 33(1): 3-26.

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

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

Cronon, William (1991) *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. W.W. Norton & Company. pp. 97-147.

Henderson, George (1998) “Nature and Fictitious Capital: The Historical Geography of an Agrarian Question,” *Antipode*. 30(2): 73-118.

Boyd, William and Michael **Watts** (1997) “Agro-Industrial Just-in-Time: The Chicken Industry and Postwar American Capitalism,” in David Goodman and Michael Watts (eds) *Globalising Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring*. Routledge. pp. 192–217.

Hauter, Wenonah (2012) *Foodopoly: The Battle Over the Future of Food and Farming in America*. The New Press. pp. 62-77.

3/12: Midterm exam due at beginning of lecture

Paper outline and thesis due this week!

Week 9: Agrarian Critiques (March 18–22)

Berry, Wendell (1978) *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. Sierra Club Books. pp. 39-48.

Danbom, David (1991) “Romantic agrarianism in twentieth century America,” *Agricultural History*. 65(4): 1-12.

Stock, Catherine McNicol (1996) *Rural Radicals: Righteous Rage in the American Grain*. pp. 143-176.

Wuthnow, Robert (2018) *The Left Behind: Decline and Rage in Rural America*. Princeton University Press. pp. 1-12.

III. EMERGING CONCERNS

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

DeLind, Laura B. and Philip H. **Howard** (2008) “Safe at any scale? Food scares, food regulation, and scaled alternatives,” *Agriculture and Human Values*. 25: 301-317.

Stuart, Diana (2011) “‘Nature’ is Not Guilty: Foodborne Illness and the Industrial Bagged Salad,” *Sociologia Ruralis*. 51(2): 158-174.

Blanchette, Alex (2015) “Herding Species: Biosecurity, Posthuman Labor, and the American Industrial Pig,” *Cultural Anthropology*. 30(4): 640–669.

Baur, Patrick, Christy **Getz**, and Jennifer **Sowerwine** (2017) “Contradictions, Consequences and the Human Toll of Food Safety Culture,” *Agriculture and Human Values*. 34: 713-723.

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

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

Norgaard, Kari Marie, Ron **Reed**, and Carolina **Van Horn** (2011) “A Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional Justice on the Klamath,” in Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman (eds) *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. pp. 23-46.

McClintock, Nathan (2011) “From Industrial Garden to Food Desert: Demarcated Devaluation in the Flatlands of Oakland, California,” in *Cultivating Food Justice*. pp. 89-120.

DuPuis, E. Melanie, Jill Lindsey **Harrison**, and David **Goodman** (2011) “Just Food?” in *Cultivating Food Justice*. pp. 283-307.

Jayaraman, Saru (2014) “Shelved: How Wages and Working Conditions for California’s Food Retail Workers Have Declined as the Industry has Thrived,” Report, Food Labor Research Center, University of California, Berkeley.

4/2: Term papers due at the beginning of lecture

Week 12: Meat and More-Than-Human Ethics (April 8–12)

- Bourdain**, Anthony (2001) “Where Food Comes From,” in *A Cook’s Tour: In Search of the Perfect Meal*. Bloomsbury. pp. 15-28.
- Nadasdy**, Paul (2003) “It’s Not Really “Knowledge” at All, It’s More a Way of Life’,” in *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon*. UBC Press. pp. 60-113.
- Ogle**, Maureen (2013) *In Meat We Trust: An Unexpected History of Carnivore America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. pp. 123-152.
- Greenberg**, Paul (2010) *Four Fish: The Future of the Last Wild Food*. Penguin. pp. 245-256.
- Watts**, Michael J. (2000) “Afterword: Enclosure,” in Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, eds. *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*. Routledge. pp. 292-303

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

- Pyne**, Stephen J. (1995) *World Fire: The Culture of Fire on Earth*. University of Washington Press. pp. 299-327.
- Tilman**, David, et al. (2009) “Beneficial Biofuels—The Food, Energy, and Environment Trilemma,” *Science*. 325: 270-271.
- White**, Robin R. and Mary Beth **Hall** (2017) “Nutritional and greenhouse gas impacts of removing animals from US agriculture,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. E10301-E10308.
- Pearce**, Fred (2018) “Sparing vs Sharing: The Great Debate Over How to Protect Nature,” *Yale Environment* 360. 3 December. [\[link\]](#)

IV. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Week 14: (April 22–26); Week 15: (April 29 – May 3)

- Hauter**, Wenonah (2012) *Foodopoly: The Battle Over the Future of Food and Farming in America*. The New Press. pp. 98-115; 279-310.
- McClintock**, Nathan (2014) “Radical, reformist, and garden-variety neoliberal: coming to terms with urban agriculture’s contradictions.” *Local Environment*. 19(2): 147-171.
- Altieri**, Miguel A. (1995) “Toward Sustainable Agriculture,” in *Agroecology: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture*. Second Edition. Westview Press. pp. 367-379.
- Holt-Gimenez**, Eric (2011) “Food Security, Food Justice, or Food Sovereignty? Crises, Food Movements, and Regime Change,” in Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman (eds) *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. pp. 309-330.

Please note: the final weeks of the course will be devoted to revisiting major analytical themes raised during the course. Readings and/or activities in addition to those listed here will thus be added later via bCourses.

RRR Week (May 6–10)

Review session: 5/9, 10 AM (to be confirmed)

Final Examination: Wednesday, May 15, 11:30 am - 2:30 pm, location TBA