

Food, Environment, and Development (Spring 2018)
ENV 3907

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Course Overview

The primary goal of this course is to explore the nexus of food, environment, and development in global environmental politics. The course examines the interconnected challenges of governing across trans-boundary socio-ecological systems amidst competing demands on scarce natural resources—to sustain a global food system, foster economic development, and promote equity and justice. The course aims to prepare students to engage with interdisciplinary scholarship from political science, international development, public policy, and food studies and draws on comparative cases from local to global scales, with an emphasis on Maine, the U.S., and Latin America.

Class meetings will include small group discussion, group activities, and presentations on different food commodities, presented by students in pairs. Students are expected to participate, learn from one another, and be tolerant towards a diverse perspective of opinions and ideas. Technology use (cellphones, laptops) in the classroom will be limited.

Readings and Blackboard

There are no textbooks for this class. Readings for the course will be posted to Blackboard in folders labeled for the food commodity or topic that is the focus for each class period. Course readings will cover a variety of food and development policy issues through a comparative commodity lens. It will be helpful for students to bring paper copies of readings to class in order to better engage with lecture material and participate in activities.

Assignments and Grading

The final course grade will be determined by:

- Participation
- Leading Class on Dates of Assigned Commodity Presentation
- Final research paper, centering on commodities of focus for the course, considered in comparative perspective.

Participation: Attendance and contributions to small and large group discussions are required for the course. Coming prepared having seriously considered the readings will be important to ensuring that the activities by presenters for each class period are successful and meaningful.

Leading Class: Students, in groups of two, will each be assigned a specific food commodity to present on at the beginning of one class period. Presentations should be approximately 20 minutes in length and can be based on the readings and videos within the assigned commodity folder for the specific class date (although additional research is encouraged). After the presentation, students will be required to facilitate a group activity to last the remainder of the course. This can simply entail facilitating group discussion with interesting questions based on the readings and presentation, or include an element of creativity. Debates, mock forums, and political simulations are encouraged. Shana will provide presentations on commodities over the first three weeks to provide examples of what lectures can entail and what class activities can look like. Shana will meet with students individually and in pairs outside of class to discuss ideas, review slides, or provide class activity suggestions.

Reading Assignments and Course Outline

(All readings can be found in folders labeled with the class topic and lecture date)

Course Readings:

Honey

Starobin, Shana (2018). "Beekeepers vs Biotech: Commodity Characteristics and Regulatory Interdependence in the Global Environmental Politics of Food." *Global Environmental Politics*, pp 1-19.

Strayer, Sarah (2014). "Economically Motivated Adulteration of Honey: Quality Control Vulnerabilities in the International Honey Market," pp 1-7.

Schneider, Andrew (2011). "Asian Honey, Banned in Europe, Is Flooding U.S. Grocery Shelves," pp 1-14.

Videos: Between Honeys: On Mayan honey cultivation, Ethiopia - Beekeeping as rural development opportunity for women, Bangladesh - Sundarban wild honey collecting (blackboard links)

Environment and agroecological systems

Ostrom, Elinor (2009). "A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems," pp 419-422.

Altieri, Miguel and Toledo, Victor (2011). "The agroecological revolution in Latin America: rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty and empowering peasants," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, pp 587-612.

Almonds

Cho, Austin (2017) - "California Waterfix: A Snapshot of the SWRCB Water Rights Change Hearings," pp 1-9.

Gumbel, Andrew (2015) - "Nut empire battles conservationists over water tunnel for California orchards," pp 1-4.

Kasler, Dale (2017) - "Dozens are suing to block Delta tunnels. Will it matter," pp 1-8.

Charles, Dan (2015) - "Beyond Almonds: A Rogue's Gallery of Guzzlers in California's Drought," pp 1-11.

Hamblin, James (2014) - "The Dark Side of Almond Use: People are eating almonds in unprecedented amounts. Is that okay," pp 1-13.

Westervelt, Amy (2015) - "Is it fair to blame almond farmers for California's drought," pp 1-6.

Coffee

Ponte, Stefano (2002) - "The 'Latte Revolution'? Regulation, Markets and Consumption in the Global Coffee Chain," pp 1099-1122.

Bacon, Christopher (2004) - "Confronting the Coffee Crisis: Can Fair Trade, Organic, and Specialty Coffees Reduce Small-Scale Farmer Vulnerability in Northern Nicaragua," pp 497-511.

Wilson, Bradley (2008) - "Indebted to Fair trade? Coffee and crisis in Nicaragua," pp 84-92.

Videos: The Journey of the Coffee Bean #TheCoopWay. From the fields of Nicaragua to the store shelves in Madison, Wisconsin (blackboard links).

Chocolate

Tampe, Maja (2017) - "From Rules to Practices: Local Performances of a Sustainability Standard in Bahia, Brazil," pp 1-44.

Fair Labor Association (2012) - "Sustainable Management of Nestle's Cocoa Supply Chain in the Ivory Coast - Focus on Labor Standards," 1-67.

O'Keefe, Brian (2016) - "Inside Big Chocolate," *Fortune Magazine*.

Optional, but highly recommended - Documentary Film: The Dark Side of Chocolate

Tea

Mulley, Brad and Unruh, Jon (2004) - "The role of off-farm employment in tropical forest conservation: labor, migration, and smallholder attitudes toward land in western Uganda," 193-205.

Nel, Etienne, Binns, Tony, and Bek, David (2007) - "'Alternative foods' and community-based development: Rooibos tea production in South Africa's West Coast Mountains," 112-129.

Chan, Kathy (2015) - "What Exactly Is Matcha and Why Is Everyone Talking About It?: Everything you need to know about matcha," 1-5.

Videos: The history of tea -Shunan Teng, Uganda: Child Labour in Tea Plantations (links on blackboard).

Corn

Pollan, Michael (2006) - *Omnivore's Dilemma*, pp 86-108

Powers, Melissa () - "King Corn: Will the Renewable Fuel Standard Eventually End Corn Ethanol's Reign," pp 674-682.

Haspel, Tamar (2015) - "In Defense of Corn, the world's most important crop," pp 1-4.

Ackerman, Frank et al. (2003) - "Free Trade, Corn, and the Environment: Environmental Impacts of US - Mexico Corn Trade Under NAFTA," pp 1-24.

Rice

Suriyagoda, Lalith et al. (2018) - "Mechanisms of arsenic uptake, translocation, and plant resistance to accumulate arsenic in rice grains," pp 23-37.

Half of class as posted on blackboard read articles in GMO folder discussing benefits of GMO Rice: Search for the Rice of the Future, The 3,000 Rice Genomes Project, Lessons from Golden Rice, Toxic Side of Rice, Golden Rice Project.

Other half of class as posted on blackboard read articles focusing on small rice farmers and the environment (Greenpeace): The Future of Rice, Integrated Rice Duck Farming in Asia, Happy Hellish Lives of Cambodian Rice Farmers.

Wheat

Gonzalez, Angel (2015) - "Patterns of World Wheat Trade, 1945-2010: The long hangover from the second food regime," pp 87-111.

Pritchard, W. (1998) - "The Emerging Contours of the Third Food Regime: Evidence from Australian Dairy and Wheat Sectors," pp 64-74.

Jabr, Ferris (2015) - "Bread is Broken," 1-11.

Quinoa

Carimentrand, Aurélie and Ballet, Jérôme (2010) - "When Fair Trade increases unfairness: the case of quinoa from Bolivia," pp 1-16.

Sven-Erik, Jacobson. (2003) - "The Worldwide Potential for Quinoa," pp 167-177.

Richardson, Jill. (2014) - "The Dark Truth Behind the Popular Superfood, Quinoa," ~ 10 pages.

The Economist (2016) - "Against the grain: the fad for the Andean superfood has not hurt the poor," ~ 5 pages.

Fisheries/Tuna

Baird, Ian and Quastel, Noah (2011) - "Dolphin-Safe Tuna from California to Thailand: Localisms in Environmental Certification of Global Commodity Networks," pp 1-19.

Havice, Elizabeth and Campling, Liam (2010) - "Shifting Tides in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean Tuna Fishery: The Political Economy of Regulation and Industry Responses," pp 89-114.

NPR Podcast (2018) - "Was Your Seafood Caught With Slave Labor? New Database Helps Researchers Combat Abuse."

Strawberries and Blueberries

Wells, Miriam (1996) - *Strawberry Fields: Politics, Class, and Work in California Agriculture*, pp 1-3, 166-173.

Holmes, Seth (2007) - "Oaxacans Like to Work Bent Over: the Naturalization of Social Suffering Amongst Berry Workers," 39-68.

Lee, Esther - "Berry Farmworkers Toil 12 Hours a Day for \$6. Now They are Demanding a Raise," ~ 4 pages.

Video: Driscoll Workers Call for Global Boycott Over Alleged Abuses at World's Biggest Berry Distributor

Skim/Recommended:

Sanchez-Torres, Joanna (2014) - "Why Campesinos Sometimes Win: Leadership, Organization, Strategy, and Indigeneity in the Western Washington Farm Worker Movement," pp 1-22.

French Beans

Fischer, Edward (2005) - "Something Better - Hegemony, Development, and Desire in Guatemalan Export Culture," pp 3 - 20.

Freidberg, Susanne (2003) - "French beans for the masses: a modern historical geography of food in Burkina Faso," 445-463.

Dugger, Celia (2004) - "Supermarket Giants Crush Central American Farmers," 1-6.

Skim/Recommended

Minten, Bart (2009) - "Global Retail Chains and Poor Farmers: Evidence from Madagascar," pp 1728-1741.

Avocados

Althaus, Dudley and Steven, Dudley (2018) - "Mexico's Security Dilemma: Michoacan's Militias," pp 1-12 (stop at 12).

Barsimantov, James (2012) - "Forest cover change and land tenure change in Mexico's avocado region: Is community forestry related to reduced deforestation for high value crops," pp 844-853.

Gilbert, Sophie (2017) - "The Political Saga of Avocados," *The Atlantic* (~ 4 pages).

Henderson, Violet (2017) - "The True Cost of Our Avocado Obsession," ~ 4 pages.

Meat

Bidgood, Jess. "Oxen's Possible Slaughter Prompts Fight in Vermont." *The New York Times*, October 28, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/29/us/oxens-possible-slaughter-prompts-fight-in-vermont.html>

Bidgood, Jess. "A Casualty Amid Battle to Save College Oxen." *The New York Times*, November 12, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/us/vermont-college-euthanizes-one-ox-spare-another.html>.

Keck, Nina. "Despite Protest, College Plans to Slaughter, Serve Farm's Beloved Oxen." *Vermont Public Radio*, October 19, 2012. Podcast.

Pluhar, Evelyn B. "Meat and morality: Alternatives to factory farming." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 23, no. 5 (2010): 455-468.

Premack, Rachel. "Meat is horrible." *The Washington Post*, July 3, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/06/30/how-meat-is-destroying-the-planet-in-seven-charts/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.a5dd002dfe17.

Riely, Andrew. "The Grass-fed cattle ranching niche in Texas," Geographical Review 101, no. 2 (2011): 261-268.

Weyman-Jones, Laura. "INFOGRAPHIC: Save the Earth: - Go Vegan!" PETA Australia, June 5, 2017. <https://www.peta.org.au/news/can-whats-on-your-plate-really-help-the-environment/>.

Additional Commodities:

Bananas

Soy

Eggs/Chicken

Dairy

Olive Oil

Palm Oil