

**Brandon University - Department of Geography**  
**38:350 Food, Communities, and Justice: Geographies of food**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is about the production and consumption of food at global and local scales. The course examines how food production has become increasingly globalized and industrialized and the implications for environmental sustainability and social justice. Recent alternatives to the industrialization and globalization of food are explored, including movements for food sovereignty and food justice, local food initiatives, fair trade, and organic food. This is a seminar-style class, with regular participation and critical discussion and analysis of class material expected.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Apply key geographical concepts (e.g. place, scale, landscape, human-environment interactions) to the study of food systems
- To critically interrogate the state of food systems, our relationships with food, and share critiques and experiences through written reflections and class discussions
- To gain an appreciation of the food system in our local area, including opportunities for community engagement
- Contribute to an enjoyable, respectful, and engaged learning community

**PREREQUISITES**

38:180 or 3 credit hours of 100 level Sociology or permission of Instructor

**COURSE TEXT**

Koc, Sumner, & Winson, Eds. (2017). *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies: Second Edition*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

The course text will be supplemented with additional journal articles and book chapters as outlined in the course schedule below.

**COURSE ASSESSMENT**

**Reading presentations (10%):** Over the course of the term, you are responsible for doing two (5% x 2=10%) reading presentations. Presentations should be approximately 15-20 minutes in length and provide a summary of content along with your critical reflections (e.g. do you agree with the author's argument? What ideas resonated with you the most? The least? Was

anything unclear to you? What would you like to know more about?). You should conclude your presentation by posing some discussion questions to the class. A schedule for reading presentations will be posted on Moodle.

**Food auto-biography (10%):** For this first assignment, you are asked to describe your relationship with the food system in approximately 750-1000 words. What led you to take this class? How would you describe your relationship to food production and consumption? Has this changed over time? What values shape your understanding and beliefs about the food system? Lastly, what do you hope to get out of this class? At some point in the text, please also tell me where you are from/where you grew up. Due January 22.

**Written reflections (40%):** Four written reflections approximately 1000 words each are to be submitted throughout the term (10% x 4 = 40%). These are an opportunity for you to critically reflect on class material, considering it in relation to other ideas/content we have covered and your own experiences. It is up to you what weeks of the course you choose as the basis for your reflections; however, at least one reflection must be based on a class field trip. Reflections are due at the start of the following week's class. For example, if you want to submit a written reflection about food localization in week 3, this is due by the start of class in week 4. The following questions can help guide your reflections: what ideas did you find most helpful to your thinking about food systems? Why? Did the material make you think about issues in a new way? How so? Did they reinforce your existing ideas and experiences? How so? What information did you disagree with and why?

**Research paper (40%):** You will prepare a research paper on an aspect of food geographies. While a range of topics are possible, following are some suggestions to get you started:

- Research a food: Explore its changing cultural meanings/politics.
- Research a food policy: Assess its implications for the production and consumption of food in one or more case studies.
- Research a food issue: Look at the debate surrounding it and how it is playing out in a particular place(s) (e.g. GMOs in Europe, food localism in Canada).

There are three evaluation components:

- A paper outline due February 26 (10%): The outline should include a research question, your main argument, and the key sources you plan to draw on. It should be approximately 500 words and include a bibliography of at least ten sources. Appropriate sources include books, academic journals, popular magazines, newspapers, cookbooks, government documents and data, and archival material (please avoid citations from Wikipedia and encyclopedias). At least half of your sources should be scholarly books and articles.
- A final paper due April 2 (20%): It should be approximately 3000 words (excluding references). It should have an expanded bibliography of at least fifteen sources, with at least eight of these being scholarly books and articles. Please use APA style.
- A 15-minute presentation of your research paper during the final week of class (10%). See Moodle for full assignment guidelines and evaluation criteria.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

To be read in conjunction with the General Regulations in the Brandon University Undergraduate Calendar.

### **Submitting work**

- All class work is due via Moodle by the due dates indicated in the course schedule.
- Work submitted late will be subject to a penalty of 10% if submitted before graded work is returned; work after that point will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the course instructor.
- Students are expected to make every effort to inform the instructor, where possible, before a deadline will be missed. If alternate arrangements are required, the student shall submit proper documentation to justify the circumstances before a grade will be recorded.

### **Accessibility**

Brandon University values diversity and inclusion, recognizing disability as an aspect of diversity. Student Accessibility Services (SAS) is the office that works with students who have permanent, chronic, or temporary disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g. mental health, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical or temporary), you are invited to contact Student Accessibility Services to arrange a confidential discussion at (204) 727-9759 or [magnussonm@brandonu.ca](mailto:magnussonm@brandonu.ca) If you are registered with SAS and have a letter requesting accommodations, you are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the term to discuss the accommodations outlined in your letter. Additional information is available at the Student Accessibility Services website.

### **Grading system**

According to Section 3.12.3 of the 2018-2019 Brandon University General Calendar, a letter grade system is currently used to assess student grades. Since in this course student marks are calculated on a percentage system, as per Department of Geography policy, the following shows the conversion of percentage grades into letter grades and grade points:

A+ 90-100	4.30 Grade Points	C+ 67-69	2.30 Grade Points
A 85-89	4.00 Grade Points	C 63-66	2.00 Grade Points
A- 80-84	3.70 Grade Points	C- 60-62	1.70 Grade Points
B+ 77-79	3.30 Grade Points	D 50-59	1.00 Grade Points
B 73-76	3.00 Grade Points	F 0-49	0.00 Grade Points
B- 70-72	2.70 Grade Points		

### **Academic Integrity**

See section 3.14 (Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct) of the Undergraduate Calendar or section 3.9 (Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct) of the Graduate Calendar. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, cheating, falsification of records or research misconduct

will result in disciplinary action. A student who is determined to be responsible for academic dishonesty or misconduct may be subject to the imposition of one or more of the following:

- a. Requirement to repeat the assignment or examination, with or without grade reduction
- b. Assignment of a grade of zero in the assignment, test or exam
- c. Assignment of "F-AD" in the course in which the offence is committed
- d. Suspension from some or all courses in which a final grade has not been entered and the assignment of "F-AD" in all such courses
- e. Suspension from all Brandon University teams, clubs or like organizations for a period of 1 to 5 years
- f. Suspension from the faculty for a period of 1 to 5 years
- g. Expulsion from the faculty
- h. Suspension from the University for a period of 1 to 5 years
- i. Expulsion from the University
- j. Cancellation or revocation of degree

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Readings and assignment deadlines
Week 1: Jan 8	<p><b>Introduction: What is the food system? Sustainability and justice considerations</b></p> <p>This week introduces the concept of the food system, looks at key trends in the dominant food system, and poses considerations for sustainability and justice.</p>	<p>Chapters 1 &amp; 9 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies</p> <p>Goodman, D. &amp; Watt, M. Global appetite, local metabolism: nature, culture, and industry in <i>fin-de-siècle</i> agro-food systems. In <i>Globalising Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring</i>, edited by David Goodman and Michael J. Watts. Read pages 1-16. Available as an E-book from the Brandon University library.</p> <p>Video: Food, Inc (excerpts)</p>
Week 2: Jan 15	<p><b>Food system governance</b></p> <p>Who makes decisions about food systems? How is civil society engaging? And what are some pathways for achieving a more democratic and just food system?</p>	<p>Andrée, P., Clark, J., Levkoe, C., &amp; Lowitt, K. (2019). Civil society and social movements in food systems governance. Routledge Press. Read the Introduction.</p> <p>Case studies from the book will also be assigned in advance and should be read for this week. Available on Moodle.</p>
Week 3: Jan 22	<p><b>Food localization</b></p> <p>A key concern for consumers involves finding more about where and how their food was produced. The academic literature provides</p>	<p>Chapters 21 &amp; 22 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies.</p>

	interesting insights on what the local means.	<p>Feagan, R. (2007). The place of food: mapping out the 'local' in local food systems. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 31(1), 23-42, 33-42.</p> <p>DeLind, L.B. (2010). Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars? <i>Agriculture &amp; Human Values</i> 28(2):273-283.</p>
Week 4: Jan 29	<p><b>Food and culture</b></p> <p>Food is an important means of practicing and retaining cultural identities. This week we will look at how people use food to define themselves as individuals, groups and entire societies.</p>	<p>Chapters 3 &amp; 14 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies.</p> <p>Turner, N. &amp; Turner, K. (2008). "Where our women used to get the food": Cumulative effects and loss of ethnobotanical knowledge and practice; case study from coastal British Columbia. <i>Botany</i> 86, 103-115.</p>
Week 5: Feb 5	<p><b>Livelihoods</b></p> <p>We will look at some of the livelihood challenges facing farmers, farm labourers, and fish harvesters in the dominant food system and opportunities for enhancing equity.</p>	<p>Chapters 10 &amp; 12 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies.</p> <p>Weiler, A. M., Levkoe, C. Z., &amp; Young, C. (2016). Cultivating equitable ground: Community-based participatory research to connect food movements with migrant farmworkers. <i>Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development</i> 6(2). Available at <a href="https://www.foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/article/view/449">https://www.foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/article/view/449</a></p>
Week 6: Feb 12	<p><b>Fair trade and organic food</b></p> <p>This week we look at debates over organic agriculture and fair trade: Do they offer real alternatives to the dominant food system?</p>	<p>Chapter 16 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies.</p> <p>Guthman, J. (2004). The trouble with 'organic lite' in California: A rejoinder to the 'conventionalisation' debate. <i>Sociologia Ruralis</i> 44(3), 301-316.</p> <p>Naylor, L. (2017). Auditing the subjects of fair trade coffee. <i>Environment and Planning D</i> 35(5), 816-835.</p>
Week 7: Feb 19 - STUDY BREAK		

Week 8: Feb 26	<b>Food security and sovereignty</b> We will examine the different histories, limitations, and opportunities of these key organizing frames within food movements towards sustainability and justice.	Chapters 15, 18, & 24 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies.  Chapter 2 from Chappell, J.M (2018). <i>Beginning to End Hunger: Food and the Environment in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and Beyond</i> . Oakland, California: University of California Press. Available on Moodle.  Kepkiewicz, L. and Dale, B. (2018) Keeping 'our' land: property, agriculture and tensions between Indigenous and settler visions of food sovereignty in Canada. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> .
Week 9: March 5	<b>Community Field Trip #1:</b> Brandon Food Policy Council (TBC)	
Week 10: March 12	<b>Community Field Trip #2:</b> Samaritan House (TBC)	
Week 11: March 19	<b>Cultural politics of food and eating</b> This week we think about the different types of food environments we encounter in our daily lives and the politics of eating.	Chapters 5 Critical Perspectives in Food Studies.  Guthman, J. & Dupuis, M. (2006). Embodying neoliberalism: economy, culture, and the politics of fat. <i>Environment and Planning D</i> 24(3), 427-448.
Week 12: March 26	<b>Community Field Trip #3:</b> Assiniboine Food Forest (Confirmed)	
Week 13: April 2	<b>In-class presentations of research papers</b>	