

UEP 306: FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Course Topic: Food Systems & Food Justice

Fall 2019

T/Th 1:30-2:55pm

UEP Conference Room - 1882 Campus Rd.

INSTRUCTORS

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OFFICE HOURS

by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

This community based learning course explores a range of food systems issues from a food justice lens. The course examines how our food system has been restructured over the last century to benefit large-scale agriculture interests, creating a global food system that emphasizes convenience and fast-food solutions for consumers, often to the detriment of low-income people and communities of color. Through in-depth class discussions, on-site field trips, and in-class speakers, the class will delve into the environmental, economic, health, cultural, and social impacts of how food is grown, processed, manufactured, distributed, sold, and consumed in the U.S. The course will use the concepts of a “food system” and of “food justice” as its organizing principles, and will look at different policies, programs, political struggles, and the social and economic and cultural forces that influence and shape the food system and that generate food justice activism. The community based learning component of this course involves conducting a site analysis for the South Central Farm Restoration Committee to support them in their goal of reclaiming 14 acres of community green space in South Los Angeles. Research will include a combination of academic methods as well as engagement with community partners and agencies.

Through the course, students will:

- Gain knowledge of today’s food system, including how food is produced, distributed, consumed, and disposed of and the nature of food system problems and their possible solutions.

- Develop analytic skills to make connections between the food system and economic development, community health, the environment, neighborhood and regional planning, labor, organizing and advocacy, and local, state and federal public policy.
- Identify how and why low-income communities of color are disproportionately affected by market and policy failures to produce and distribute healthy, safe food.
- Gain understanding of the current food landscape and policy debates in Los Angeles by talking with food justice activists, planners and policy.
- Examine the role of planners/practitioners/policy makers in either hindering or promoting food justice and critically evaluate efforts – including grassroots, policy, and planning attempts – to address food issues.
- Develop new strategies and action plans toward food justice.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course will be organized into two sections. The first half of the semester will take place in the classroom and involve discussions, guest speakers from the front lines of the food justice and food systems movements in Los Angeles, and critical reflections on course readings and lectures. The second half of the course will focus on work in the community through field trips and community partner projects. **Please note, when field trips are held, class will start early at 11:45am (the beginning of the lunch period).** Weeks with a long class will only have **one class per week**. See the class schedule for specific dates and details. Community partner projects will require at least one independent site visit. Instructors will work with students to identify site visit destinations that are accessible by public transportation, if needed.

COURSE/CAMPUS POLICIES & SUPPORT SERVICES

Classroom Responsibilities

The teacher and students share the responsibility of creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class and off site field trips, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material in class and attending. Students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other, the professors and community partners. In order to ensure open, honest, thoughtful, and respectful learning, teaching, class and community discussions please:

- Use laptops, tablet, or other electronic devices only for work directly related to what we are doing in class. Do not use cell phones to talk or text. Instructors

reserve the right to confiscate electronics used in a disruptive way and return them at the end of the class period).

- Inform the professor when you may have to arrive late or leave early with advanced notice when possible;
 - As this class is community based, all field trips and guest lectures are mandatory. If you are absent for these classes, an alternative assignment must be discussed ahead of time.
- Engage in active and courteous listening to other students and community partners and contribute respectfully to class and community discussions.

Academic Integrity

As stated in the Occidental College Student Handbook, intellectual honesty is “essential to the educational purposes and fairness of the academic enterprise. Occidental College assumes that students and faculty will embrace a high ethical standard for academic work. In all work, students shall behave conscientiously, taking and giving credit where credit is due, avoiding even an appearance of impropriety, and when in doubt, consulting the instructor or other knowledgeable persons as to whether particular conduct, collaboration, and/or acknowledgement of sources is appropriate. Academic misconduct occurs when a student misrepresents others’ work as her/his own or otherwise behaves so as to unfairly advantage her/himself or another student academically. Examples of misconduct include cheating and plagiarism. If this or other misconduct occurs to any extent in connection with any academic work, it will be subject to disciplinary action.” For further information, please see the [Occidental College Student Handbook](#).

Support Services

The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this resource.

If you have specific physical or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let us know early in the semester so that we can meet your learning needs. The College’s mission is to support learning for all students and provides Disability Services for students with learning disabilities. Please contact Ericka O’Neal Howard, Associate Dean of Students at (323) 259-2969 and/or by email: or visit her in AGC 111. The Emmons Health and Counseling Center provides support for issues of stress, medical and mental health.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. PARTICIPATION – 30%

Class Engagement

As a community based learning course, class participation is critical. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class and off-site field trips, completing assignments in a timely manner, being prepared to discuss readings and materials in class, and having questions prepared for guest speakers. Students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other, the professors, and community partners.

This Week in Food

During the first half of the course, each class will begin with a review of “This Week in Food.” Students will upload a food-related article to Moodle from a news source such as the LA Times, New York Times, or other reputable source. The article should relate to a topic that will be covered in class that week.

Assignment: Post the title and link to your article on Moodle the night before class and come prepared with a brief summary and personal reflection to discuss with the group.

Journal Reflections

A journal assignment will be due each week that will reflect on:

- Classroom presentations
- Field Trips
- Writing Prompts
- CBL Experience

Assignment: Post your journal reflections on Moodle responding to the listed prompt.

2. FOOD JUSTICE ORGANIZATION ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT – 30%

Midterm Research Paper- (20%)

On the second day of class, students will sign up to research a prominent food justice organization in Los Angeles. In addition to researching the organization’s background and focus, an interview must be conducted with a key employee. Findings will be analyzed in a 4-6 page paper that includes a minimum of five references. Two must be from journals or other academic sources (APA format - see details in assignment description). A summary of the interview must also be included as an appendix. Papers should address the following topics and questions:

- Food justice / food system issue
- Mission and background of organization
- Analysis

** see assignment on Moodle for detailed description*

Due Dates:

- *Choose an organization - 8/29/19*
- *Final paper due - 10/11/19*

PowerPoint Presentation- (10%)

This will be a 5-minute presentation summarizing your food justice organization research and analysis. The presentation should have 3-6 slides and include references.

Assignment: Presentations will be given in class on Thursday Oct. 10, and the PowerPoint or pdf must be posted to Moodle before midnight on Oct 9.

3. COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING PROJECT – 40%

Reclaiming the South Central Farm; an initiative to preserve and restore green space for urban agriculture in the South Central community (30%)

In the wake of the 1992 Los Angeles uprising, the South Central community transformed the City's most neglected food desert area into a lush, green urban farm that fed thousands of families fresh, locally grown, and culturally diverse organic food. The South Central Farm flourished from 1992 to 2006 as the largest urban farm in the country. It provided 14 acres of beautiful open green space tended by 350 families. The South Central Farm addressed food insecurity while also serving as a vital community space hosting cultural gatherings, festivities, sharing of knowledge, and community empowerment.

On June 13, 2006 the South Central Farm was evicted from their land despite a massive outpouring of support and resources to preserve the farm. The struggle attained international attention and helped redefine land usage, local food production, and environmental justice across the nation. The South Central Farm's vision of providing healthy food and open green space did not end there. A coalition of South Central Farmers and activists challenged the eviction and fought a legal battle for over 13 years to win back the land. The fight was finally lost in the summer of 2019, however, this also marked the start of the South Central Farm Restoration Committee (SCFRC). This iteration of the coalition incorporated into a nonprofit with the mission of promoting food justice, clean air, environmental justice, and open green space for all communities. Their primary

goal is to acquire 14 acres of land in South Central Los Angeles (replacing the acreage lost in the struggle) to be converted into productive urban agriculture and community green space.

For this community based learning project, students will support the SCFRC, in partnership with the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT), to identify and vet parcels that could feasibly contribute to SCFRC's mission of reclaiming community land in South Central Los Angeles. Students will work in teams of 2 to investigate a prospective parcel and analyze the degree to which it would be a feasible addition to the South Central Farm Restoration Committee Land Trust. Teams will be decided in class on October 3rd.

The field research component of the project requires that students visit their prospective parcels and conduct a minimum of one interview with a relevant stakeholder. Teams will first submit a project proposal (5%) and then a final writeup of their site analysis (15%) as well as a summary of their interviews, site visits, and other research findings (10%). A summary of the site analysis and research findings will be shared with the class in a final presentation.

Group Presentation (10%)

This will be a 10-minute presentation summarizing the team's findings from the site analysis and research investigation. The presentation should have 5-10 slides and include references.

Assignment: Presentations will be given in class on Tuesday November 26th, and must be submitted on Moodle the night before.

Due Dates:

- *Project Teams - 10/3/19*
- *Project Proposal - 10/24/19*
- *Final Presentation - 11/25/19*
- *Final Site Analysis & Research Summary - 12/3/19*

CLASS SCHEDULE

PART I: CLASSROOM

Week 1 - 8/27 & 8/29

Tuesday Aug. 27: *Class Overview*

Thursday Aug. 29: *Introduction to Food Systems and Food Justice*

Assignments Due:

- "This week in food" #1 (due 8/28 before midnight)
- Journal Entry #1 (due 8/28 before midnight)

Week 2 - 9/3 & 9/5

Tuesday Sep 3: *From the Rise of "Big Ag" to a Movement for "Local" Food: environmental, economic, and cultural shifts over the last century*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (**please note, all readings and media will be posted on moodle but are not listed in the syllabus*)
- "This week in food" #2

Thursday Sep. 5: *The history of agriculture in Los Angeles County*

*** Guest Speaker:** *Rachel Surls, UC Cooperative Extension*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #2

Week 3 - 9/10 & 9/12

Tuesday Sep 10: *Power in the Industrial Global Food System: Consolidation, GMOs, and diet trends*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- "This week in food" #3

Thursday Sep. 12: *Food insecurity and food assistance*

* **Guest Speaker:** *Frank Tamborello, Hunger Action Los Angeles*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #3

Week 4 - 9/17 & 9/19

Tuesday Sep 17: *The Farm Bill: implications for food assistance and food insecurity*

* **Guest Speakers:** *Gabriella Tilley, California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA)*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- "This week in food" #4

Thursday Sep. 19: *Food and Gentrification*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #4

Week 5 - 9/24 & 9/26

Tuesday Sep 24: *Food & Climate*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- "This week in food" #5

Thursday Sep. 26: *School Food & Institutional Purchasing: Farm to School (K-12)*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #5

Week 6 - 10/1 & 10/3

Tuesday Oct 1: *School Food & Institutional Purchasing: Higher Education*

** Guest Speaker: Amy Munoz, Oxy Campus Dining*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- "This week in food" #6

Thursday Oct 3: *Labor in the food system & project check-in*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #6

Week 7 - 10/8 & 10/10

Tuesday Oct 8: *Labor in the Food System*

* **Guest Speaker:** *Joann Lo, Food Chain Workers Alliance*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)

Thursday Oct 10: — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Food Justice Organization Analysis Presentations

Assignments Due:

- Food Justice Topic Presentation (PowerPoint or pdf on Moodle 10/9 before midnight)
- Food Justice Topic Paper (due 10/11 before midnight)

PART II: FIELD TRIPS & COMMUNITY PARTNER PROJECT

Week 8 - 10/17

Tuesday Oct. 15 → FALL BREAK - NO CLASS

Thursday Oct. 17: *Introduction to Community Partner Project*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #6

Week 9 - 10/24

Tuesday Oct. 22 — NO CLASS MEETING

Thursday Oct. 24 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Urban Ag and Access to Land

Field Trip: *South Central Farm site / Central Avenue Farmers' Market / All People's Community Garden*

** Host/Speakers: TBD*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #7

Week 10 - 10/29

Tuesday Oct. 29 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Community Food Access Solutions: Hunger & Homelessness

Field Trip: Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN)

* Host/Speaker: Steve Diaz

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #8

Thursday Oct. 31 — NO CLASS MEETING

Week 11 - 11/7

Tuesday Nov. 5 — NO CLASS MEETING

Thursday Nov. 7 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Food Access Solutions

Field Trip: Community Services Unlimited (CSU)

* Host/Speaker: TBD

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #9

Week 12 - 11/14

Tuesday Nov. 12 — NO CLASS MEETING

Thursday Nov. 14 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Community Food Solutions at Schools

Field Trip: *Fremont High School*

** Host/Speaker: TBD*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #10

Week 13 - 11/19 & 11/21

Tuesday Nov. 19 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Food Security and Urban Agriculture

Field Trip: *Grow Good*

** Host/Speaker: TBD*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects

Thursday Nov. 21: *Community Partner Project check-in meetings & Course Review*

Assignments:

- Work on community partner projects and presentations
- Community partner check-in meeting with professors
- Journal Entry #11

Week 14 - 11/26

Tuesday Nov. 26 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Community Partner Project Presentations

Assignments Due:

- Final Group Presentation (PowerPoint or pdf due on Moodle 11/25 before midnight)

Thursday Nov. 28 — THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - NO CLASS

Week 15 - 12/3

Tuesday Dec. 3 — NO CLASS MEETING

Community Partner Project

Assignments Due:

- South Central Farm Site Analysis (due Tuesday 12/3)
- South Central Farm Research Summary (due Tuesday 12/3)
- Journal Entry #12 (due Thursday 12/5)