

SOCI 401.35: The Sociology of Food

Instructor: Dr. Paul Millar
Office: SS 952
Office Hours: Tuesday 4-6pm
E-Mail: pemillar@ucalgary.ca
Telephone: (403) 220-5982 (during office hours)
Lectures: SB105 Monday, Wednesday 5-8pm

Course Description

Students will be introduced to social and health issues surrounding food and its production. Some of these issues, such as vegetarianism, are mainly related to food consumption. Others like the organic food and local food movements demand an interplay between consumers and producers. Still other issues are mainly related to agriculture, for example, changes in how food is produced. All of these have implications which are not the same for all members of society.

Course Goal

The goal of this course is familiarize students with some of the current issues around food and agriculture from both a health and social point of view. Students will learn the arguments for and against vegetarianism, organic agriculture and some of the many issues arising from modern agricultural practices, such as the movement toward “slow” foods and local foods. Major changes in agriculture and food production will also be examined with a mind to how the impact of these changes bears on people in different social locations. The student will explore these topics through three influential books, a pack of readings, videos, and other materials presented in the lectures.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- explain the arguments for and against vegetarianism and other food related movements
- describe the changes in agriculture in recent decades and the benefits and risks associated with these changes
- describe the differential impact of these issues by social location
- explain the changes in food production in terms of its impact on the agricultural work force

Required Readings:

1. Pollan, Michael (2006). *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Penguin: London.
2. Schlosser, Eric (2001). *Fast Food Nation: the dark side of the all-American meal*. Houghton Mifflin/HarperCollins: New York.
3. Lappé, Frances Moore (1991 [1971]). *Diet for a Small Planet*. Random House: Toronto.
4. Course pack of readings.

Students' Responsibilities: While not required, students are expected to attend classes since material will be presented that is not contained in the readings. Attendance may be compulsory to obtain marks for certain course components. All material presented in the course, whether in the course pack, readings, in class or otherwise assigned may appear on examinations. The instructor will not provide notes for classes. If you are unable to attend class, arrange to obtain

notes from a fellow student. Late penalty for any assignment is 5% per partial or full day, including weekends. Any and all delays regarding completing course assignments and/or examinations must be accompanied by documentation (e.g., a doctor's note, obituary notice). Normally "make up" exams will not be offered: other examinations will be weighted more heavily. At the discretion of the instructor, some alterations may be made to course format, content and/or scheduling.

Marking Scale

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A+	96 – 100	B+	77 – 81	C+	67 – 69	D+	57 – 59
A	86 – 95	B	73 – 76	C	63 – 66	D	53 – 56
A-	82 – 85	B-	70 – 72	C-	60 – 62	D-	50 – 52
F	0 – 49						

Course Evaluation: Achievement in this course will be evaluated as follows:

Component	Weight	Tentative Date
1 st Midterm	20%	15 July
Presentation	15%	
2 nd Midterm	20%	29 July
Final Exam	20%	Registrar Scheduled
Term Paper	25%	12 August
Total	100%	

Note: The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and/or to conform to departmental norms.

Presentations: Presentations will be a 5-8 minute outline of your term paper, presented in seminar. Schedules for the presentations will be established in the seminar on Tuesday May 12.

Component	Weight
Clarity	5/15
Presentation Material	5/15
Presentation skills	5/15

Assessment of Term Paper: The term paper may be on any topic of your choosing that involves the material covered by the course. Topic suggestions will also be provided by the instructor. It should be 8-12 pages long, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman Font with 1” margins on all sides. All knowledge claims must be supported by evidence.

Component	Weight
Evidence	30%
Argument	40%
Writing	30%

Tentative Course Schedule

Class	Date	Material	Topic
1	6 July	Video: The World According to Monsanto	Introduction, Definitions Macro trends, Food movements
2	8 July	Diet (59-114) 55 pages	Protein efficiency Meat and scarcity
3	13 July	Diet (117-182) Drewnowski & Spector Katzmarzyk Winson 92 pages	Experimental diet changes Protein quality Poverty and obesity Food retailing and obesity
4	15 July	Midterm Video: Fast Food Nation	
5	20 July	FFN (75-87) FFN (111-166) 68 pages Video: 24 Days in Brooks	Working in fast food French fries and flavor Cattle ranching changes
6	22 July	FFN (169-222) Preibisch 86 pages Video: Apocalypse Cow	Meat packing Labour
7	27 July	Neill Nestle 61 pages Video: Frankensteer	Food Safety
8	29 July	Midterm Video: Our Daily Bread	
9	5 August	OD (15-119) 105 pages Video: Alternative Agriculture: Food For Life	Corn-based production
10	10 August	OD (123-208) 82 pages Video:	Grass-based production
11	12 August	OD (208-273) 65 pages	

Abbreviations:

OD: The Omnivore’s Dilemma

FFN: Fast Food Nation

Diet: Diet for a Small Planet

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments/exams from a public place, e.g., outside instructor's office, the department office, etc. Assignments/exams must be returned to students individually, during class or office hours. If a student is unable to pick up an assignment/exam from the instructor, s/he may provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment/exam.

Academic Accommodation: Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Exams/Papers and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.