

UEP 306: FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Course Topic: Food Justice

Fall 2017

T/Th 1:30-2:55pm

UEP Conference Room - 1882 Campus Rd.

INSTRUCTORS

Sharon Cech, MA Urban Planning; Rosa Romero, MEd

EMAIL

cech@oxy.edu and rromero@oxy.edu

OFFICE HOURS

by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

This community based learning course explores a range 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 to 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 will involve project work with local farmers’ markets initiatives focused on stabilizing markets and serving low-income consumers.

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 class schedule for specific dates and details. Additionally, community partner projects will require at least one independent visit to a Los Angeles farmers' market. All of these destinations can be reached by bus or car.

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 (10%)

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 (6%)

During the first half of the course, each class will begin with a review of “This Week in Food.” Students will upload one article to moodle from a news source such as the LA Times or New York Times, for food-related news.

Assignment: Post the title and link to your article on Moodle by Monday night. Come prepared to class with a brief summary and personal reflection to share orally.

Journal Reflections (14%)

A journal assignment will be due each Friday 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 TOPIC RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT – 35%

Midterm Research Paper- (20%)

Students will sign up for a food justice research topic on the second day of class. Midterm research papers should be 4-6 pages in length with a minimum of six references. Papers should address the following questions:

1. What is the issue, including historical context, and what part of the supply chain is most affected?
2. What is the power struggle involved in the issue and who are the key players?
3. How is it a food justice issue?

Due Dates:

- *Choose topic - 8/31/17*
- *Final paper due - 10/5/17*

PowerPoint Presentation- (15%)

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

Assignment: Presentations will be given in class on Thursday Oct. 12, and presentations must be posted to Moodle after class.

3. COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING PROJECT – 35%

Deliverable to Community Partner (20%)

Community Project: Farmers' Market Snapshot/Map

In teams of 2-3 students, sign up to profile 1-2 Los Angeles Farmers' Market (list to be provided). Students will be required to visit the market and retrieve information on vendors (farm locations, size, crops). Students will also collect data on neighborhood demographics and competitive landscape (i.e. nearby grocery stores). Students are encouraged to engage the market managers and explore the surrounding neighborhoods. Findings will be summarized in the final presentation to the class and journal assignment.

Group Presentation (15%)

This will be a 5- minute presentation summarizing the findings from the community partner farmers' market project. The presentation should have 5-10 slides and include references.

Assignment: Presentations will be given in class on Tuesday Dec. 5, and must be posted to Moodle after class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 - 8/29 & 8/31

Topic: Introduction to Food Systems and Food Justice

Tuesday Aug. 29

Class Overview:

- Review syllabus

Thursday Aug. 31

Assignments Due:

- "This week in food" #1
- Journal Entry #1 (Due Friday 9/1)

Week 2 - 9/5 & 9/7

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

Tuesday Sep. 5

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. 7

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

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #2 (Due Friday 9/8)

Week 3 - 9/12 & 9/14

Topic: Impacts of the Industrial Global Food System: connections to the modern diet, food environments, and the need for food system literacy

Tuesday Sep. 12

Assignments Due:

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

Thursday Sep. 14

** Guest Speaker: Megan Bomba, UEPI*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #3 (Due Friday 9/15)

Week 4 - 9/19 & 9/21

Topic: Food Insecurity and Food Assistance

Tuesday Sep. 19

** Guest Speakers: Frank Tamborello, Hunger Action Los Angeles & Matthew Sharp*

Assignments Due:

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

Thursday Sep. 21

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #4 (Due Friday 9/22)

Week 5 - 9/26 & 9/28

Topic: School Food from PreK to Higher Education

Tuesday Sep. 26

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

Assignments Due:

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

Thursday Sep. 28

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #5 (Due Friday 9/29)

Week 6 - 10/3 & 10/5

Topic: Labor in the Food System

Tuesday Oct. 3

Assignments Due:

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

Thursday Oct. 5

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

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Food Justice Topic Paper

Week 7 - 10/12

Topic: Food Justice Topic Presentations

Tuesday Oct. 10 — FALL BREAK - NO CLASS

Thursday Oct. 12 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Assignments Due:

- Food Justice Topic Presentation

Week 8 - 10/17 & 10/19

Topic: Food and Gentrification

Tuesday Oct. 17

Field Trip: York Blvd

** Host/Speaker: Valerie Lizarraga, Occidental*

** Meet at 1541 Campus Rd at 1:30pm*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)

Thursday Oct. 19

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Journal Entry #6 (Due Friday 10/20)

Week 9 - 10/26

Topic: Urban Agriculture and Access to Land

Tuesday Oct. 24 — NO CLASS MEETING

Thursday Oct. 26 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Field Trip: Community Services Unlimited

** Host/Speaker: Neelam Sharma*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #7 (Due Friday 10/27)

Week 10 - 10/31

Topic: Farmers' Markets

Tuesday Oct. 31 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Field Trip: Highland Park Farmers' Market

** Host/Speaker: tbd...*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #8 (Due Friday 11/3)

Thursday Nov. 2 — NO CLASS MEETING

Week 11 - 11/7

Topic: Food Waste & Good Jobs

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

Field Trip: LA Kitchen

** Host/Speaker: Robert Egger*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #9 (Due Friday 11/10)

Thursday Nov. 9 — NO CLASS MEETING

Week 12 - 11/16

Topic: Hunger and Homelessness in Los Angeles

Tuesday Nov. 14 — NO CLASS MEETING

Thursday Nov. 16 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

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

** Host/Speaker: Eric Ares*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #10 (Due Friday 11/17)

Week 13 - 11/21

Topic: Garden to Cafeteria

Tuesday Nov. 21 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Field Trip: Pasadena Unified School Garden

** Host/Speaker: Katia Ahmed*

Assignments Due:

- Readings and media (on moodle)
- Work on community partner projects
- Journal Entry #11 (Due Wednesday 11/22)

Thursday Nov. 23 — THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - NO CLASS

Week 14 - 11/28 & 11/30

Topic: Community Partner Projects

Tuesday Nov. 28 / Thursday Nov. 30 — NO CLASS MEETING

Assignments:

- Work on community partner projects and presentations
- Community partner check-in meeting with professors

Week 15 - 12/5

Topic: Community Partner Project Presentations

Tuesday Dec. 5 — LONG CLASS (11:45am-2:55pm)

Assignments Due:

- Journal Entry #12 (Due Friday 12/8)
- Final Group Presentation