

## **GEOG 3445F: Global Agriculture and Food Systems**

### **Course Outline: Section 001 – Fall 2018**

#### **1. Course Information**

##### 1.1. Classroom Location:

Wednesdays, 12:30-2:30pm, room: UCC-54A

Thursdays, 2:30-3:30pm, room: SSC 3006

##### 1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Tony Weis

Office: SSC 1413

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:40-4:30pm or by appointment

Phone: 661-21411 x87472

Email: [tony.weis@uwo.ca](mailto:tony.weis@uwo.ca)

#### **2. Calendar Description**

##### 2.1. Course Description

Food is a basic human need and agriculture is one of the most fundamental ways that societies interact with their habitats. This course examines the diversity of world agriculture and the rise of a dominant industrial system, focusing on both the social and environmental dimensions of agrarian change.

Prerequisite(s): Third or fourth year status at the University

##### 2.2. Senate Regulations

Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

#### **3. Overview**

Agriculture and food starkly reflect global inequalities: nearly 1 billion people are chronically hungry or food insecure, many of them small farmers, while roughly 2 billion people are obese or overweight. World markets in food products and agricultural inputs are increasingly dominated by a small number of very large transnational corporations, and world food security has become ever more tied to industrialized agriculture, much of which is heavily subsidized and entails large resource budgets and pollution loads. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the world’s farming population lives in the Global South, constrained by marginal land access, limited capital and technology, and almost no state support. Almost everywhere, small farm livelihoods are becoming more and more precarious.

This course focuses on key dynamics shaping contemporary agriculture and food systems, which have increasingly global dimensions that play out in very uneven ways and pose momentous environmental questions. The first half of the course focuses on the increasing control of transnational corporations over food retailing, distribution, processing, and packaging, as well as agricultural inputs and other aspects of farm production. The second half of the course focuses centrally on the environmental impacts of agriculture and food systems and the precarious biophysical conditions of the current trajectory; in short, why the cheap food we take for granted is not so cheap. The ultimate aim is to provide a framework for understanding both contemporary problems and possibilities, and to contextualize struggles to build more socially just and sustainable agro-food systems.

#### 4. Format

3 lecture hours per week. You are expected to regularly attend class and keep up with assigned weekly chapters. I will follow the thematic and reading outline, subject to some flexibility with notice. Evaluation is based on a research paper, a mid-term text, and final exam.

#### 5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should:

- be able to understand and explain major social and ecological dynamics of agrarian and dietary change;
- be able to critically engage with debates, conflicts, and policy issues surrounding agriculture and food systems;
- have a conceptual basis for further studies in subjects relating to agriculture and food;
- have advanced their analytical and communication skills;
- be challenged to think about food choices, agrarian struggles, and ‘food movements’ in an ongoing way.

#### 6. Textbooks

Alistair Fraser, *Global Foodscapes: Oppression and Resistance in the Life of Food*. 2017. ISBN 978-1-138-19248-5.

Colin Sage, *Environment and Food*. 2012. ISBN 978-0-415-36312-9.

#### 7. Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Sep 12/13	Course Introduction	Fraser, 1-18 Sage, 1-12
Sep 19/20	The rise of globalized agro-food systems	Sage, 15-40
Sep 26/27	Power and value beyond the farm: inputs	Fraser, 20-48 Sage, 41-49
Oct 3/4	The polarization of farming	Fraser, 52-83
Oct 8-12	<b>Fall Reading Break</b>	

Date	Topic	Readings
Oct 17-18	Power and value beyond the farm: processing <b>Proposal due</b>	Fraser, 52-83 Sage, 49-55
Oct 24/25	Power and value beyond the farm: retailing	Fraser, 116-38 Sage, 55-64
Oct 31	<b>Mid-Term Test</b>	
Nov 1, 7, 8	Environmental dimensions of agro-food systems	Sage, 67-110
Nov 14/15	Intensifying environmental challenges: agriculture	Sage, 111-154
Nov 21/22	Intensifying environmental challenges: food consumption	Sage, 156-208
Nov 28/29	Global food security in a world of 9+ billion <b>Final Paper Due</b>	Sage, 209-247 Fraser, 142-158
Dec 5/6	Dimensions of more equitable and sustainable agro-food systems	Sage, 250-296
Dec 10-21	<b>Final Exam Period</b>	

## 8. Evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Research paper proposal	10%	Thurs., Oct. 18
Mid-term test	20%	Wed., Oct. 31
Final paper	35%	Thurs., Nov. 29
Final exam	35%	In exam period: Dec. 10-21

### Midterm test (20%) and Final Exam (35%)

The midterm test is a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and paragraph questions, and the final exam combines multiple choice, short answers, and an essay question. Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings. More detailed instructions will be given in advance of both mid-term and final.

### Research Paper (45%)

Information on the research paper will be provided on the OWL course site and discussed in class.

The **proposal (due Thursday, October 18)** will indicate a preliminary outline, lines of exploration, and an annotated bibliography of at least 5 academic sources. The proposal counts for 10 of the 45% total assignment grade.

The **final paper (due Thursday, November 29)** will be evaluated based on the quality of the introduction, clarity of the thesis, support for the argument, analysis, overall style (organization, grammar, and concision of writing), and conclusions. The final paper counts for 35 of the 45% total assignment grade. *Length: no more than 2500 words.*

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text.

### **Extensions**

Medical documentation is required for an extension. This documentation must be submitted directly to the Social Science Dean's office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

**Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: You are responsible for your grades in this course.**

## **9. Make-up Examinations**

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided the Academic Counselling Office and Instructor within 48 hours of the scheduled exam. For missed exams, you must take your documentation to Academic Counselling within 48 hours of the exam. Otherwise, the instructor will assign a grade of zero. The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

For Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC please refer to the [Academic Handbook](#).

## **10. Use of Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

## **11. Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

## **12. Western's Commitment to Accessibility**

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish

to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "[Accessibility at Western](#)" is available.

### 13. Medical Issues

You can find Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC) in the [Academic Handbook](#). Student Services also provides information about the University's policy on [medical accommodation](#).

If you are seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for a missed test, exam, or assignment you must apply to the Academic Counselling office in your home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or by the Geography department.

In the event of illness be sure to contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. Counsellors will determine whether or not accommodation should be requested and will contact instructors about the accommodation. Once a decision about accommodation has been made, the student should contact instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

### 14. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

### 15. Support Services

[Student Support Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

### 16. Important Dates

September 6: Classes resume

September 14: Last day to add a full course or a second term half course

October 8: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

October 9-12: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

**October 24: Geo 3445 mid-term**

November 12: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

**November 29: Geo 3445 research paper due**

December 7: Classes end

December 8 and 9: Study days

December 10-21: Examination Period

December 21: Fall term ends