May 2010

Hunger and Food Security in Global Perspective
Summer Course in Ghana

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This class provides students with an introduction to the politics, economics, and policies associated with the global crises of hunger, undernutrition, and food security. While the analytical perspectives provided will be comparative and historical, the course intends to ground discussion with practical exposure to the Ghana contexts. Students will have an opportunity to have a field experience for two-three days with an NGO on a specific food security-oriented project. The goal of the field experience is for students to talk with organizations about the rationales for their current programs, to learn how the programs were designed, and to document what types of outcomes and impacts have been measured and evaluated. A particular focus is on the politics of these programs, both internally within communities and with respects to engaging other actors (supply chains, states, etc). During this time, there will be additional sessions for students to share their internship experiences with one another and reflect on how the material learned in the classroom can be used in practice. Prior to the course (and during the course itself) we will also facilitate contacts with organizations for students interested in pursuing longer internships over the summer in Ghana.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Explain various perspectives on the origins of the contemporary global food crisis as well as the state of knowledge regarding the inter-related food, fuel, and finance crises
- Be conversant with key terms in the field of food security and political economy of hunger and malnutrition
- Understand issues associated with the current food aid regime
- Understand the ethical issues associated with rights-based and welfarist approaches to food security
- Understand the costs and benefits of fair trade initiatives
- Understand the basic elements of a commodity chain analysis
- Develop a detailed understanding of how one NGO in Ghana is addressing issues relating to food security

Outline of Class: Most class days will be divided into two parts. The morning session will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, while the afternoon sessions will largely focus on a specific case exercise or a site visit. We encourage everyone to complete as much of the reading as possible in advance so that you can take advantage of being in Ghana as much as possible. You should plan on bringing copies of your readings in hard copy or on a laptop if you plan to bring one, as internet access can not be reliably guaranteed while in Ghana.

Class participation will constitute a significant percentage of the final grade.
Syllabus: The syllabus is large in order to provide students with a larger bibliography of key materials and resources in the field. This may be helpful if you are interested in a particular topic and would like to explore it in more depth, as an initial starting point for papers, or simply as a reference for things you should get around to reading in your career.

GRADES

There is no curve in this course. Everyone may receive an A or everyone may receive an F. This course will abide by the Wagner School’s general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity.

   Incomplete Grades: http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/incompletes.php
   Academic Honesty: http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/

Course Requirements:
1. Participation: (30%) The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants. This will occur in four ways:

   a). Class Participation (20%): Class participants are expected to come to class having read and digested the assigned readings and prepared to engage the class, with questions and/or comments with respect to the reading.

   Before approaching each reading think about what the key questions are for the session and about how the questions from that session relate to what you know from previous sessions. Then skim over the reading to get a sense of the themes it covers, and, before reading further, jot down what questions you hope the reading will be able to answer for you. Next, read the introduction and conclusion. This is normally enough to get a sense of the big picture. Ask yourself: Are the claims in the text surprising? Do you believe them? Can you think of examples of places that do not seem consistent with the logic of the argument? Is the reading answering the questions you hoped it would answer? If not, is it answering more or less interesting questions than you had thought of? Next ask yourself: What types of evidence or arguments would you need to see in order to be convinced of the results? Now read through the whole text, checking as you go through how the arguments used support the claims of the author. It is rare to find a piece of writing that you agree with entirely. So, as you come across issues that you are not convinced by, write them down and bring them along to class for discussion. Also note when you are pleasantly (or unpleasantly) surprised, when the author produced a convincing argument that had occurred to you.

   There will be extensive case discussions in class and students are expected to participate actively and constructively.
b) Food for Thought Weblog (10%) There will be a jointly authored course blog. All students will be expected to post 1000 words from May 28-June 30 (ie, about 10 substantive contributions of 100 words, or any equivalent arithmetic combination), including responses to other’s posts. Contributions should pertain to broad issues or themes raised by the course, but are not limited to the readings or issues we discuss in class. Postings can include continuations of or expansions of class discussions (remember all those times time ran out before you could get your comment in the class discussion?), analysis of media coverage of development issues, discussions of talks, events, policy debates, legislation, etc. on development issues either in the U.S. or abroad.

There are 2 required posts – and the remainder is up to you:
- One post on the ethical and policy issues associated with a “right to food.”
- One response to someone’s post on those policy issues

This is a public blog, so keep that in mind when framing your posts. One should observe all the customary courtesies while blogging that one observes in class.

2. Case Analysis Memo (25%) 

One four-page double-spaced options memo that outlines an analysis and recommendation with respect to one case on food security. The memo will be no longer than 4 pages double-spaced and due no later than midnight, June 30. Details on the case analysis and a template for it will be posted on Blackboard. You need to choose from one of the two cases we will be discussing in class (on Malawi and India, and are in the “Case” folder on Blackboard.)

3. Internship Memo (45%) 

This memo will provide a reflective analysis of the field experience that draws upon analytical or conceptual frameworks from readings, lectures, or class discussions. The paper should be no more than 10 pages double-spaced and is due no later than midnight, June 30. The goal is to analyze the strategic approach of your NGO partner with respect to:
1. The organization’s issue analysis and diagnosis of the situation (and the source of that analysis)
2. The organization’s stakeholder and power analysis
3. The organization’s policy or operational prescription
4. The degree to which the organization has a monitoring and evaluation system that measures outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Late Policy. Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

Grading Breakdown: Class participation (30%, includes general participation and weblog, Case Analysis Memo (25%), Internship Memo (45%).
Prerequisites: A basic statistics course (P11.1011), including some regression analysis, a basic micro economics course (P11.1018), and Introduction to Public Policy (P11.1022) or permission of the instructors.

Schedule and Readings

1. Ghana Background
3. Millennium Villages Project (Guest Lecture)
4. Ghana’s Nutritional Transition (Guest Lecture)
5. Famine and Food Aid
6. Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture (Guest Lecture)
7. Global Food Crisis
8. Supermarkets and Global Commodity Chains
10. Right to Food (Guest Lecture)

There are still two possible guest lectures outstanding, one involving a visit to the World Food Program’s office in Accra and the other a presentation by a representative from Kuapa Kokoo. We will adjust the schedule as necessary.

Preparation:

Watch What the World Eats Parts I and II, a slide show of Peter Menzel’s photography from his book Hungry Planet: What the World Eats.
http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html and
http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1645016,00.html

Day 0: Arrival and Check-in Day: Tuesday, June 1, 2010
Students are picked up at Accra, Ghana airport. Students check into rooms at NYU Ghana Campus.

6PM Group Dinner

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2010
9AM -10:30 AM: Orientation – Presented by the NYU in Ghana campus staff

10:30AM – 10:45AM: Light refreshments

10:45AM – 12:30PM: Guest Lecture: Economic and Social Development in Ghana, Dr. Kofi Asiedu, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
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12:45 – 3:30 PM: Opening Luncheon with NGOs and NGO Presentations

For a sense of history of Ghana, suggested readings include:


http://www.afdb.org/portal/page?_pageid=313,167132&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL


http://www.touringghana.com/tourist_sites.asp

http://www.measuredhs.com/countries/country.cfm?ctry_id=14&cntrytab=quickstats

World Food Program, Executive Brief - Ghana
Impact of the Financial Crisis on Vulnerable Households (May 2009) [BB]

DAY 2: THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2010

Goals:
- Spend some time on getting clear with respect to definitions of hunger, food (in)security, etc. and the significance of debates over those definitions as guides to policy.
- Explore and understand the normative and analytical disagreements and commonalities among the main policy-relevant approaches to understanding to issues of chronic malnutrition and hunger as well as the recent interwoven crises of food, fuel, and finance.
- Discuss the goals and objectives for the paper assignments for the course

Chris Barrett, Measuring Food Insecurity, Science (Feb 2010)
http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/327/5967/825

USDA-ERS, Food Security Assessment, 2008-09 (June 2009) pp.1-40 [BB]

FAO, Food Insecurity in the World 2009, exec summary, pp. 8-26, case material on Ghana, and pp.39-47 [Blackboard]

Joan Gussow, “The Incompatibility of Food and Capitalism,” Snail #2&3 (Aug, 2002) [BB]


Warren Belasco, Meals to Come: A History of the Future of Food, Chapters 1 and 2 [BB]

Food Security: The Challenge of Feeding 9 Billion People
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H. C. J. Godfray et al
http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/327/5967/812

Additional Reading:

Raj Patel, Stuffed and Starved

Warren Belasco, Appetite for Change

UN Food Security Crisis Portal

Other coverage of the 2008 food, fuel, and finance crisis
http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/ourfoodourfuture/


Micronutrient.org
http://www.micronutrient.org/english/view.asp?x=582

1:30-3:30 Guest Lecture: Millenium Villages Project, Rafael Flor, MVP
(see readings on Blackboard)

DAY 3, FRIDAY, JUNE 4

9:30-11:30 Guest Lecture: Ama de Graf Aikins, Ghana’s Nutritional Transition

2:30-4:30 Famine and Food Aid

Much of the politics around food policy in the North was animated by concerns over famines and the delivery of emergency relief in response to, or to prevent, famines. We’ll look at what we know about the history of famines (identifying commonalities and differences), the emergence of the global food aid regime as an ostensible response to famine, and the evolution of food aid programs. After the lecture we’ll examine two cases: in the morning, the debate over reforming U.S. international food aid and the decision by CARE to reject U.S. food aid. The afternoon case will focus on Malawi’s pursuit of a heterodox set of policies to prevent the repetition of its 2002 famine,
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and in doing that, pursue a different path than the approach suggested by the World Bank and other donor agencies.


Additional Reading:


Alex de Waal, “Retreat from Accountability: Neoliberalism and Adjustment,” in Famine Crimes, pp. 49-64. [BB]


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Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell, Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role (London: Routledge, 2005)


http://www.ers.usda.gov/Amberwaves/septem ber04/Features/usfoodaid.htm

DAY 4, SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2010

9:30-11:30 Guest Lecture: Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture in Ghana and West Africa
Dr. Olufunke Cofie

Gender and Urban Agriculture [BB]

1:30-3:30 Market Trip (or possible Kuapa Kokoo presentation)

DAY 5: SUNDAY, JUNE 5TH, 2010

Morning: Participation in WFP Event (details to follow)

2:00 – 4:00 Food Crisis

CADTM, Getting to the root causes of the food crisis [BB]


Additional Reading:

Food Rebellions By Eric Holt-Gimenez and Raj Patel

DAY 6, MONDAY JUNE 7th 2010

9:00-12:00
Supermarkets and Global Commodity Chains
Required Readings:


Eric Holt-Giménez, Ian Bailey, and Devon Sampson, Fair to the Last Drop: The Corporate Challenges to Fair Trade Coffee [BB]


Lester Brown, “How Food and Fuel Compete for Land,” The Globalist, February 01, 2006 http://www.energyjustice.net/ethanol/the_fuel/ (read the articles in this link)

See response by Anna Lappe, “Don’t Panic, Go Organic,” and scroll down to read other responses to both pieces, including Paarlberg’s response to Lappe http://www.foreignpolicy.com/lappe?obref=obinsite

Additional Reading:


1:30–4:00 National Food Security Strategies and Malawi Case
Walden Bello, Food Wars, Chapters on Malawi and Philippines


Peter Timmer, "Preventing Food Crises Using a Food Policy Approach." The Journal of Nutrition. Supplement: The Impact of Climate Change, the Economic Crisis, and the Increase in Food Prices on Malnutrition. (November 18, 2009) [BB]


Biofuel land grabbing in Northern Ghana, RAINS, [BB]

Discussion: Malawi Case [BB]

Additional Reading
Jean-Denis Crola, Aid for Agriculture: Turning Promises into Reality on the Ground: Co-ordinating Donor Interventions in Three West African Countries

Action Aid and Food First, Smallholder Solutions [BB]

Improving the proof: Evolution of and emerging trends in impact assessment methods and approaches in agricultural development


DAY 7, TUESDAY JUNE 8TH, 2010 TENTATIVE
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and Kakum Reserve Park  

—Return to Ghana in Daylight – by 6PM  
Note: There will be a fee to cover the costs of travel and food during the Cape Coast trip.  

D AY 8, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9TH, 2010

9:00-11:30 Guest Lecture: Food Sovereignty and Food Security in Ghana, Dr. Wilhemina Quaye

Required Reading:


Belo Horizonte Video, Right to Food  

1:30-3:30 Case

Right to Food Network, Food Policy and Social Movements: Reflections on the Right to Food Campaign in India [BB]  
*Vivek Srinivasan, and Sudha Narayanan*

Additional Reading:

Action Against Hunger  
[http://www.actionagainsthunger.org](http://www.actionagainsthunger.org)

Brazilian Action for Nutrition and Human Rights (ABRANDH)  
[http://www.abrandh.org.br](http://www.abrandh.org.br)

Prosalus, Salud y Desarrollo  
[http://www.prosalus.es](http://www.prosalus.es)

FAO, Right to Food  

Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN)
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http://www.fian.org

Right to Food Campaign, India
http://www.righttofoodindia.org

Danwood Mzikenge Chirwa, “Child poverty and children’s rights of access to food and to basic nutrition in South Africa: A critical analysis of case law, legislation and policy,” ESR Review, (September 2009) Community Law Centre,

DAY 9: THURSDAY, JUNE 10TH, 2010
8AM – 3PM: Visits to NGOs
Groups of 4-6 students will be assigned internships at various NGOs. The goal of the internships is to:

- Learn about the programs the NGO runs
- Learn about the rationales for the programs and how the programs were designed
- Learn about what evaluation techniques that were used by the NGO and why

DAY 10: FRIDAY, JUNE 11TH, 2008
8AM – 3PM: Visits to NGOs
Groups of 4-6 students will be assigned internships at various NGOs. The goal of the internships is to:

- Learn about the programs the NGO runs
- Learn about the rationales for the programs (analytical foundation, political analysis) and how the programs were designed
- Learn about what evaluation techniques that were used by the NGO and why

Day 11: Saturday, June 12, 2010
9AM-11:30 AM: Reflective Session
In this session, each group will present experiences on their internship, followed by whole group discussion.

Afternoon: Meetings to Discuss Writing Assignments if Needed

6PM: Closing Dinner: Group Dinner at Restaurant

Day 12, Sunday, June 13, 2010
9AM – 9PM Checkout: Students must check out of NYU Ghana Housing by 9PM