This class provides students with an introduction to the politics, economics, and policies associated with the global crises of hunger, malnutrition (under and over-nutrition), and food security. While the analytical perspectives provided will be comparative and historical, the course intends to ground discussion with practical exposure to the contemporary context of Ghana. Students will have an opportunity to have several field experiences in Ghana. The goals of the field experiences 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, the public sector, etc). During this time, there will be additional sessions for students to share their field 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 basic elements of a commodity chain analysis

Outline of Class: There are two main sections of the class: New York and Ghana. Five class sections in New York will compose the bulk of the lecture and “classroom” part of the course. These will include lectures, guest lecturers, case discussions, class exercises, and debates. In Ghana the focus will be on organizational and site visits, guest lecturers, and some small-scale field research to various locales. There will be regular debriefs and discussions following the site visits and guest lecturers, well as some presentations of the results of the small-scale field research.
Most class days in New York will be divided into two parts. The first part will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, followed by a break, while the second sessions will largely focus on a specific case discussion or classroom exercise. 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.

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: (35%) The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants. This will occur in three ways:

   a). Class Participation (20%): Class participation includes both effective participation in the New York classes as well as the site visits and guest lectures in Ghana. 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 (5%) There will be a jointly authored course blog. All students will be expected to post 500 words from May 1-June 30 (ie, about 10 substantive contributions of 50 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 hunger and food security issues, discussions of talks, events, policy debates, legislation, etc. on food security issues either in the U.S. or abroad.

There are 3 required posts – and the remainder is up to you:
- One response to the framing represented in the various videos to see before the first class.
- 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.

c). Precis (10%) Each week 3-5 people will take responsibility for preparing response papers to one or more of the readings. This includes writing a 3-5 page précis of the reading that a) lays out the main argument(s), b) indicates what you found provocative and/or mundane, and c) poses 3-4 questions for class discussion. These handouts will be distributed via email to the rest of the class by Thursday at 5 PM (using the course website). Everyone will prepare one précis over the course of the semester. Everyone who prepares a précis for the week should be prepared to provide a brief (2-3 minute) outline of their reaction to the readings as a contribution to discussion.

2. Field Research Memo: (25%) There will be the opportunity to spend some time in a small group (2-3 people) mapping the commodity chain of a particular commodity. The focus will be on developing a basic commodity chain analysis of a particular product found at the Kaneshie market (or if you prefer, elsewhere). Each team will make an initial presentation in class and submit a short paper outlining those findings prior to departure based on some initial research. The final grade is based partially on the initial presentation and short paper (5%) and mostly on the final field research memo (20%, combined totals 25% of the final grade). The field memo is due by June 30.

3. Longer Paper: (40%) This memo will provide a reflective analysis on issues raised by the course that draws upon analytical or conceptual frameworks from readings, lectures, site visits, and/or class discussions. The paper should be no more than 12 pages double-spaced and is due no later than midnight, July 15. There are three options for the longer paper:
1. Write a policy memo on a contemporary issue in hunger and food security policy that is either (a) an options memo that explores and recommends a particular policy alternative to a situation (ie, a traditional policy memo) or (b) a strategy memo that outlines a process for achieving a particular policy objective.

2. Write a research paper that explores an issue in hunger and/or food security policy. This could involve, for example, a discussion of evolution of the food aid regime, responses to the 2008 food price crisis, an assessment of Malawi’s approach to food security, etc.

3. Some other format that you clear with one of us.

**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 (35%): includes general participation (20%) weblog (5%) and précis (10%)
Field Research (25%)
Longer Paper (40%)

**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.
Tentative Schedule and Readings

New York: April 29, May 6, May 13, May 20, June 3 Fridays, 3:30-6:30

2. Actors in the Global Food System: Supermarkets and Global Commodity Chains
3. Which Green Revolution for Africa?
4. Alternative Food Security Strategies: National Policies, Social Movements, the Right to Food, and Food Sovereignty
5. Getting Your Feet Dirty: Basic Intro to Field Research

N.B. One class session may include a guest lecture on the history of Ghana. Details to follow.

Ghana (tentative)

0. Sunday, June 12  Arrival
1. Monday, June 13  Briefing with NYU Ghana and Guest Lecture
2. Tuesday, June 14  Urban Agriculture in Accra (Site Visit)
      Food Security Coalition (Guest Presentation)
3. Wednesday, June 15  (AM) World Food Program
      (PM) School Feeding programs in Ghana (presentation)
4. Thursday, June 16  Kaneshie Market
5. Friday, June 17  (AM) Supermarkets and Dietary Change in Accra
      (PM) New Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
6. Saturday, June 18  Elmina Castle and Fisherfolk Community
7. Sunday, June 19  Beach or travel to Kumasi
8. Monday, June 20  Kumasi (TBD)
9. Tuesday, June 21  Kuapa Kokoo (fair trade chocolate)
10. Wednesday, June 22  Millenium Villages
11. Thursday, June 23  Free Day
12. Friday, June 24  Departure
New York class meetings:

**Class 1 (April 29th): Global Perspectives on Hunger and Food Security: Definitions, Concepts, Issues**

Definitions and Key Concepts:
- Hunger, Malnutrition, Food Security, Famine
- Understanding Famines
- Food Aid

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

Watch the talk on ethics and food security by Pers Pinstrup-Andersen

Watch the videos on the World Food Program’s Hunger bytes Youtube Channel
http://www.youtube.com/user/hungerbytes
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwkHdCRoC60

Norman Borlaug Interview

- Pay attention to the images, narratives, and frames used by the filmmakers and articulated by their subjects.
- Who are presented as the people who suffer from hunger and food insecurity? How are they presented? Who is presented as having agency with respect to the issues associated with hunger and food insecurity?
- Can you identify the implicit frames for the issue of hunger or food insecurity they project? What are the (implicit or explicit) diagnoses and prescriptions represented? Do they disagree on the data or the analysis of the data? What are the key areas of disagreement and common ground?

Your reactions to these videos will be posted on the course blog. See **Blog Assignment** above.

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
Class 1 continued:

Required Readings:

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

Lester Brown, “The Great Food Crisis of 2011,” *Foreign Policy*  

[http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/327/5967/812](http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/327/5967/812)


Economist Special Report, *The Nine Billion People Question* [BB]


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


Class 2 (May 6th):  Actors in the Global Food System: Supermarkets, Global Commodity Chains and the Food Crisis

Required Readings:


**Class 2 continued:**

Peter Timmer, Supermarkets, Modern Supply Chains, and the Changing Food Policy Agenda - Working Paper 162, Center for Global Development
http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1421245

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


*Urban Livelihoods and Food and Nutrition Security in Greater Accra, Ghana* (Read Summary and Conclusions, sample more as you wish.) [BB]


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

**Exercise:**
Introduction to Commodity Chain Mapping

**Class 3 (May 13th): Which Green Revolution for Africa?**

**Required Readings:**

Robert Paarlberg, “Attention Whole Foods Shoppers” *Foreign Policy.com*
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/04/26/attention_whole_foods_shoppers

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


AGRA Strategy [BB]

A Viable Food Future, pp. 1-50 [BB]
Class 4 (May 20th): Alternative Food Security Strategies

Required Readings:

Belo Horizonte Video, Right to Food
http://www.urgentevoke.com/video/the-human-right-to-food-how


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]


Eric Holt Gimenez and Annie Shattuck, “Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation?” Journal of Peasant Studies, Jan 2011 [BB]

Agroecology and the Right to Food, Report [BB]

Discussion: India and Malawi Cases

Class 5 (June 3rd): Getting Your Feet Dirty: A Quick and Dirty Introduction to Field Research

Techniques for Interviewing

Readings TBA

Teams will present a no more than 10 minute overview of what they have found so far in terms of their research on their commodity chain and an initial outline of questions they want to explore in the field.
Additional Reading

Additional (optional) readings are included 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.

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

Additional Reading related to Global Perspectives on Hunger and Food Security—Definitions, Concepts, Issues and the Food Crisis:

USDA-ERS, Food Security Assessment, 2010-2011 (July 2010) [BB]

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

Raj Patel, Stuffed and Starved

UN Food Security Crisis Portal

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

IFPRI’s Food Security Portal
www.foodsecurity.org


Helen Epstein, “Cruel Ethiopia” New York Review of Books  


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


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


*Additional Reading related to Actors in the Global Food System—Supermarkets and Global Commodity Chains:*


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


*Food Rebellions* By Eric Holt-Gimenez and Raj Patel


*Additional Reading related to Alternative Food Security Strategies—National Policies, Social Movements, the Right to Food, and Food Sovereignty:*

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
