NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

Spring 2014 PADM-GP 4250 (2 credits)

Mondays 4:55-6:25  GCASL 365

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00 and by appointment

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 respect 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

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:

The requirements are class participation (20%), a précis (15%), an op-ed (20%) and a long paper (45%).

1. Participation: (35%) The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants. This will occur in two 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). Précis (15%) 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 Sunday evening at 5 PM for the Monday class. 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. Op-Ed (20%) One op-ed (700-750 words) on an important current issue relating to food policy (This can include US or NY issues). [for guidance see the resource under the “Writing Materials” section of the NYU Classes site]. This is due by April 15 via NYU Classes. It may be revised and resubmitted for a (potentially) higher grade of up to two-thirds of a grade by May 12. (For example, if you received a B on the first pass, you can receive at most an A- on the resubmitted paper).
PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME AND WAGNER MAILBOX # (IF YOU HAVE ONE) ON THE OP-ED. PLEASE LABEL YOUR ATTACHED FILE: “Yournamefoodpolicyoped.”

3. Long Paper (45%) (10-12 pages, double-spaced) You have several options for writing the long paper. You can write a policy memo, a white paper, or a research paper on a food security issue. Or you could do a commodity chain analysis of a particular commodity. Or if you have another idea, pitch it to us. We are happy for students to write papers that may be of direct use in your work or internship. All proposed paper topics should be submitted by April 8. [An Assignment tab on NYU Classes will be created for a one page outline of the project, including basic topic, initial list of resources, and the type of paper. Please feel free to speak with me about topics]. The final paper is due by 5:00 PM on Sunday, May 18 through NYU Classes.

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%) and précis (15%); op-ed (20%)
Long Paper (45%).

Prerequisites: A basic statistics course (CORE-GP.1011), including some regression analysis, a basic micro economics course (CORE-GP.1018), and Introduction to Public Policy (CORE-GP.1022) or permission of the instructor.


OVERVIEW OF SEMESTER

WEEK 1  March 25  GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUNGER AND FOOD SECURITY: DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS, ISSUES
WEEK 2  March 31  FAMINES AND FOOD AID
WEEK 3  April 7  ACTORS IN THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM: SUPERMARKETS AND GLOBAL COMMODITY CHAINS
WEEK 4  April 14  FISH
WEEK 5  April 21  FOOD, FUEL, FIBER, AND FINANCE: THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS AND RESPONSES
WEEK 6  April 28  WHICH GREEN REVOLUTION FOR AFRICA?
WEEK 7  May 5  CLIMATE AND GENDER IN FOOD SECURITY
WEEK 8  May 12  SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, AND FOOD SECURITY
WEEK 1: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUNGER AND FOOD SECURITY: DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS, ISSUES

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 issues of chronic malnutrition and hunger as well as the recent interwoven crises of food, fuel, and finance
- discuss the goals and objectives of the paper assignments for the course

Definitions and Key Concepts:
- Hunger
- Malnutrition
- Food Security
- Famine

Questions:
- Can you identify the implicit frames for the issue of hunger or food insecurity the readings 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?

WEEK 2: FAMINES AND FOOD AID
WEEK 3: ACTORS IN THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM: SUPERMARKETS AND GLOBAL COMMODITY CHAINS
1. Jennifer Clapp, *Food*, Chapters 2, 3, 4 [pp. 24-124].

WEEK 4: FISH

WEEK 5: FOOD, FUEL, FIBER, AND FINANCE: THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS AND RESPONSES

WEEK 6: WHICH GREEN REVOLUTION FOR AFRICA?
Recommended:


WEEK 7: CLIMATE AND GENDER IN FOOD SECURITY

WEEK 8: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, HUMANS RIGHTS, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, AND FOOD SECURITY
1. Jennifer Clapp, Food, Chapter 6 [pp. 158-183].

Recommended:


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.

Global Perspectives on Hunger and Food Security: Definitions, Concepts, Issues:
- Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell, Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting its role (New York: Routledge, 2005)


• IFPRI Food Security Portal, at [www.foodsecurityportal.org](http://www.foodsecurityportal.org)

• *Micronutrient Initiative*, at [www.micronutrient.org](http://www.micronutrient.org)


• 2006, “White Paper on Food Aid Policy,” *CARE USA*

• 2009, “An urgent appeal to WFP: Please reconsider your plans for direct food transfer in Malawi,” *Wahenga: Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme*


• 2008, “Vouchers and cash transfers as food assistance instruments: opportunities and challenges,” *The World Food Programme*


• Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell, 2004, “Recasting Food Aid’s Role,” *Policy Brief*


**Actors in the Global Food System: Supermarkets and Global Commodity Chains**

• Eric Toussaint, 2008, “Getting to the root causes of the food crisis,” *Committee for the Abolition of the Third World Debt (CADTM)*