



**NYU**

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

## **PADM-GP-4250**

# **Hunger and Food Security Spring 2024**

### **Course Information**

January 23- March 5 2024

Tuesdays 4:55-6:35

12 Waverly Place Room L114

### **Instructor Information**

Instructors: John Gershman

Email: <mailto:john.gershman@nyu.edu>

Office Hours: Office 3440, Puck Building, Mondays, 5:00-7:00 PM and by appointment either in person or via Zoom. I am typically available to meet before class as well as after class.

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 and the United states.

### **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 productionist, 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](#)  
[Academic Honesty](#)

### Required Texts

There are two required texts: Roger Thurow, *The Last Hunger Season* and Jennifer Clapp *Food* (3rd edition) Polity Press.

### Course Requirements

The requirements are class participation (20%), reading responses (20%), and a final paper (60%).

1. Participation: (20%) The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants.

a). **Class Participation** 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. Students are expected in particular to bring questions about the reading (were there concepts, data, or arguments that were unclear? Does the analysis travel to different contexts? What are the limits of the analysis in terms of space and time? Are the researchers asking the right questions?)

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 or times 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 not occurred to you.

There will be extensive discussions in class and students are expected to participate actively and constructively.

2). **Reading Responses** – for four (4) seven sessions of class (six remaining after the first), you need to post a 150-250 word reading response on the discussion boards on bright space responding to two or more of the readings/podcasts/videos assigned for that week by 9 AM the day of class

3. Final Paper (60%). You will write a 10-12 page, double-spaced, Times New Roman 11pt font, 1 inch margin paper due by 9 AM Monday, March 25 (extensions routinely allowed) via Brightspace. The paper can be a policy memo, research paper, or any other kind of paper that would be appropriately referenced and address an issue relevant to the class. **You must submit a minimum one paragraph proposal and initial bibliography for what the paper will be about by 9 AM Monday, February 5 via Brightspace.**

Late Policy. Extensions will be granted **only** in case of emergency or officially recognized university reasons. 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.

### Course Schedule

Tuesday, January 23:	Hunger and Food Security: Definitions, Concepts, Issues
Tuesday, January 30:	Famines and Food Aid
Tuesday, February 6:	Value Chains I One paragraph proposal for paper due 9 AM Monday February 5
Tuesday, February 13:	Value Chains II
Tuesday, February 20:	Fish
Tuesday, February 27:	Climate and New Green Revolutions
Tuesday, March 5:	TBD
Monday, March 25:	9 AM Final Paper Due

## **Week 1: Global Perspectives on Hunger and Food Security: Definitions, Concepts, Issues**

Definitions and Key Concepts:

Hunger, Malnutrition, Food Security, Wasting, Stunting

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?

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.

Pay attention to definitions (food security, wasting, stunting, prevalence of undernourishment) and sources of data and measurement. Are they clear? Do you understand them?

What are the main explanations for the policy challenges for food security at present and looking forward (ie, 2050) (the focus in this class is on dealing with undernourishment; although we will discuss the global obesity crisis)

Are the issues (or will they be) primarily production (ie, not enough food) or access (economics, geography, rights)? A combination of both? How does sustainability enter the picture? How much of this is an issue of dietary choices of individuals or of the structures of the food system(s) in which people live?

Required Readings:

Roger Thurow, *The Last Hunger Season*

World Resources Institute, *Creating a Sustainable Food Future* (2019) Read pp. 1-34 [Brightspace]

## **Week 2 : Famine and Food Aid**

Required Readings:

Alex de Waal, *Mass Starvation: The History and Future of Famine*

Alex de Waal, "The Vanishing Point of the Laws of War," *New York Review of Books*, September 11, 2022

Famine expert Alex de Waal on Israel's starvation of Gaza

Stephen Devereux (2019) "Preventable Famines" in *An Economic History of Famine Resilience*. [Brightspace]

Webinar, *The U.S. International Emergency Food Aid Program: Time For Change?*

Listen at least up to 28:40, up to 52:00 if possible

Stephanie Mercier and Vincent H Smith, Don't Reverse Recent Food Aid Reforms by Passing the American Farmers Feed the World Act, AEI September 5, 2023.

For reference

Randy Schnepf, U.S. International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues, Congressional Research Service, February 2021 [Brightspace]

### **Week 3: Value Chains and Resilience**

Required Readings:

Jennifer Clapp, Food (3rd edition), Chapters 2-5

Chapters 4-6 in IFPRI, Global Report 2013 [Brightspace]

Shenggen Fan, Joanna Brzeska, and Tolulope Olofinbiyi, "The Business Imperative: Helping Small Family Farmers to Move Up or Move Out," in IFPRI, Global food Policy Report [NYU Classess]

### **Week 4: Changing Diets, Food Waste, and Food Systems**

Sonja J. Vermeulen et al, "Changing diets and the transformation of the global food system" Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 1478 (2020) 3–17.

#### [Planet Fat](#)

Ultra-Processed Foods in Africa

AP, Protein Problem

Zane Swanson, Caitlin Welsh, and Joseph Majkut , Mitigating Risk and Capturing Opportunity: The Future of Alternative Proteins CSIS

IPES, Fake Meat

Eduardo J. Gómez, "Government Response to Ultra-Processed and Sugar Beverages Industries in Developing Nations: The Need to Build Coalitions across Policy Sectors," Chapter 6 in Political Economy of Food System Change

Liz Goodwin, "[The Global Benefits of Reducing Food Loss and Waste, and How to Do It,](#)" World Resources Institute, April 20, 2023

Recommended:

## [How Ugly Fruits and Vegetables Can Solve World Hunger](#)

### **Week 5: Fish**

Required:

Paul Greenberg, [The Fish on My Plate](#)

Required Readings:

Selections: End of the Line [Brightspace]

Hannah Ritchie, “Overfishing” and “Ocean Plastics”

World Resources Institute, Creating a Sustainable Food Future (2019) Read pp. 287-309 [Brightspace]

Open Ocean Fish Farming

If you have time: Paul Greenberg, The Four Fish We Are Overeating: And what to Eat Instead

[The four fish we're overeating -- and what to eat instead](#)

Recommended

Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, Andrew Thorne-Lyman, Patrick Webb, Jessica Rose Bogard, Rohana Subasinghe, Michael John Phillips, and Edward Hugh Allison, “Sustaining healthy diets: The role of capture fisheries and aquaculture for improving nutrition in the post-2015 era,” Food Policy

Some great films: Chasing Coral, Plastic Ocean both on Netflix; Blue Planet

### **Week 6: Climate, Food Systems, and New Green Revolutions**

Required Readings:

World Resources Institute, Creating a Sustainable Food Future (2018) Read pp. 179-194 and 209220 and sample from elsewhere [Brightspace]

Mbow, C., C. Rosenzweig, L.G. Barioni, T.G. Benton, M. Herrero, M. Krishnapillai, E. Liwenga, P. Pradhan, M.G. Rivera-Ferre, T. Sapkota, F.N. Tubiello, Y. Xu, 2019: Food Security. In: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J.

Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)]. In press. Read exec summary, 441-463 and sample as interested

IFPRI, Global Food Policy report, Chapters 5 and 6.

Economist, “A Green Evolution,” [Brightspace]

How Square Watermelons Get Their Shape and other GMO Misconceptions [Brightspace]

Why the Arctic Apple Means You May Be Seeing more GMOs at the Store [Brightspace]

Christopher Barrett, “The Political Economy of Bundling Socio-Technical Innovations to Transform Agri-Food Systems,” Chapter 9 in Political Economy of Food System Reform

John P. Reganold and Jonathan M. Wachter, Organic agriculture in the twenty-first century Nature Plants

### **Week 7: TBD, probably guest panel**

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

Jennifer Clapp, Food, Chapter 6

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