

GEO 4354: Geography of the Global Food System

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Office Hours: By Zoom appointment

Course Description and Purpose

Food is the universal commodity and our most direct link to the natural environment. Today this link is increasingly mediated by transnational corporations, which control much of the production process from the patenting of seeds to the transcontinental shipment of agricultural commodities to the delivery of ready-to-eat products to our tables. This course explores how the spatial organization of the global food system is critical to our understanding of the development of the world economy, from the first New World sugar plantations to ultra-processed globally marketed "pseudo foods". Ranging in scale from the level of the individual to national and global levels, the course will examine issues of food security, food sovereignty, trade, and environmental sustainability. We will trace the historical development of food production and distribution on a global scale, marking important developments such as the petrochemical revolution, the Green Revolution, genetic modification, and the increasing consumption of ultra-processed foods. We will consider how, at the global level, hunger is now increasing while climate change, oil prices and the diversion of food crops to fuel production point toward worsening crisis. Finally, we will look at ways to improve the food system in terms of sustainability, nutrition and affordability, for example, using agroecological and/or restorative methods.

Course Objectives

Students will learn about the central importance of food and agriculture in structuring human relationships to one another, to other species, and to the natural environment at multiple geographic scales, from the individual to the global level. By looking at the food system in terms of its historical development, its political economic structure, its environmental impacts, and the social and geographic differences that characterize it, students' ability to analyze the food system, including their own participation in it, will be enhanced. We will also examine alternatives to globalizing trends so that students, as informed citizens, will become aware of choices and options and possibilities for change.

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- understand the colonial roots of today’s food system and its role in globalization.
- examine what is meant by “cheap food” and what the hidden costs are.
- identify the “industrial diet” and understand how it evolved and what its shortcomings are.
- analyze at multiple scales the factors that shape people’s access to food.
- understand the role of transnational corporations in transforming agriculture and food systems.
- recognize environmental impacts of industrial foodscapes.
- explore alternatives to the industrial foodscape including those found in the local (Miami Dade) foodscape.
- recognize structural inequalities in the food system, including access to healthful food and labor conditions in agriculture, processing, retail, etc.

Policies

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- [Policies](#)
- [Netiquette](#)
- [Technical Requirements and Skills](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodation](#)
- [Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Statement](#)
- [Copyright Statement](#)
- [Inclusivity Statement](#)

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

If you have computer problems while taking a quiz or exam, you must contact FIU Online Support Services **immediately** by calling FIU Online at **(305) 348-3630** or by clicking on the “**Technical Support**” link in the Course Menu, **NOT THE PROFESSOR OR YOUR CLASSMATES**. If you do have technical trouble, **gather as much evidence of the issue as you can** (for example, take screenshots or photos) and include it in the message sent to Technical Support. Otherwise, unfortunately, we will be unable to provide you with the opportunity to retake the missing or incomplete assignment.

Students are expected to:

- **review the getting started page** located in the course modules
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion
- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas
- **interact** online with instructor and peers
- **review** and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines
- **watch** the instructor's pre-recorded lectures that will be available within the modules
- **log into** the course **3 times** per week
- **respond** to discussions by the due date specified. **No late work will be accepted**
- **respond to emails** within **3 days**
- **submit** assignments by the corresponding deadline

The instructor will:

- log in to the course at least **5 times** per week
- respond to discussion postings within **5 days of the deadline**
- respond to **emails** within **48 hours** (excluding weekends and holidays)

- grade assignments within **10 days** of the assignment deadline.

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within **48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays)**.

Users must log on to CANVAS to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in CANVAS to inform users when a new message has been received. Therefore, it is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

In addition, I will send “Announcements” through CANVAS, alerting students of important course deadlines, feedback on assignments, and other important information. Please make sure to read them carefully and get back to me immediately if you have any questions or concerns. Please be clear and precise when phrasing your questions or concerns to allow me to respond efficiently.

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct **office hours by appointment**.

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. If you are not familiar with using Zoom:

- Reference the [Zoom Student Tutorials](#) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.
- Access the [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#) to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#). Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Make-Up Policy

Absolutely NO make-up quizzes. NO make-up exams without either 1) a note from a doctor that you were incapable of logging on for medical reasons or 2) documentation of a death in the immediate family. Flat tires, bad internet connections, missing pets, etc. **are not valid reasons for missing an exam** and do not qualify for make ups.

Students are responsible for all information, materials, and instructions disseminated online. In addition to the readings, there will be required recorded lectures and films posted on CANVAS. All this material is subject to assessment.

Prof. Hollander's Periodic Zoom Lectures

Throughout the course there will be pre-recorded lectures that supplement the other course materials. These lectures are intended to clarify or elaborate on concepts, provide additional illustrative content, and help students draw connections between abstract concepts and real-world examples.

Discussion Forums

We will use two types of online discussion forums, one graded, one not graded.

Discussion Forum Expectations:

1. We will have **12 Directed Class Discussions**, which are graded using a rubric. Each discussion is worth 12 points. For these discussions, you will be prompted with questions to reflect upon, draw connections among, and otherwise react to the required readings and films. Everyone is required to post answers to the questions at least once for each discussion to receive credit. In addition, you will be required to respond to at least one other student's post.
2. We will also have an **Open Freeform Discussions** in which anyone can post with questions or comments related to the course. For example, you and your classmates can use it to prepare for quizzes and exams, seek clarification regarding assignment requirements, and seek advice navigating the demands and logistics of an online course. I will monitor the discussions and join in as needed. This will not be graded.

Course Grading: grading scale

Course Requirements	Total Number of Requirements	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Weekly Discussions	12	12	144	32%
Writing assignment #1	1	40	40	8%
Writing assignment #2A	1	20	20	4%
Writing assignment #2B	1	70	70	16%
Exam 1	1	90	90	20%
Exam 2	1	90	90	20%
Total	18	N/A	440	100%

Required Readings:

We will make extensive use of readings posted on Canvas, articles and book chapters accessed via the FIU library, and newspapers available on-line. Therefore, make sure that your FIU library card is activated!!

Also...[register for your free New York Times subscription](#)

Important Dates*

- Due September 25: Essay Assignment: The Global/Local Foodscape and You.

- Due October 10: Exam 1
- Due October 30: Preliminary statement for research paper (includes short description of the topic and an annotated bibliography)
- Due December 4: Research paper
- Final Exam: December 11

****Dates subject to change with prior notice. Reading and assignment deadlines and details are presented in the individual learning modules online in CANVAS.***

Assignment Descriptions

Exams: You will have two (2) exams worth 90 points each. Each exam will be available for a limited period of time on Canvas. More details to come.

Writing assignments: You will be responsible for completing two (2) writing assignments. Each of them will be run through Turnitin's plagiarism checker via Canvas.

Discussion Posts: As a measure of participation in the online course, you will complete twelve (12) discussion assignments in Canvas, worth twelve (12) points each.

Important Information

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- [Accessibility and Accommodation](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Statement](#)

*The professor reserves the right to change or modify the syllabus at any time during the semester.

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	92 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 91	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less