Social theory can be thought of as the attempt to provide explanations for social phenomena—the interactions, patterns, and structures within which our lives are immersed. It is how we make sense of our social world. This course will seek to improve your awareness of:

1. The usefulness of social theory in producing an understanding of our social lives.
2. The ways in which social theory has sought to make sense of the extraordinary and accelerating social changes that have affected human societies since the 19th century.
3. The importance of social movements as efforts to produce intentional social change.
4. The significance of food production, distribution and consumption not simply for human reproduction, but also for such important issues as health, poverty, sustainability, social power, and social identity.
5. The prospects of social action and social movements oriented toward the goals of food security and sovereignty.

To accomplish those objectives, we will read and discuss a wide range of texts that use social theory to explain social change, and social movements in particular. We will focus on the Slow Food movement as an effort to produce social change in food systems and undertake research projects to apply social theory to the Slow Food movement. We will also work in small groups to advance these projects and develop a comparative perspective on the movement’s local manifestations.

Readings

The following books are required for the course and available for purchase in the FIU bookstore:

ISBN 978-0-8133-4668-7

ISBN: 978-0847841301

Other readings (accessible online through FIU library website):


Ch. 36. The Political Economy of Food Aid in an Era of Agricultural Biotechnology. Jennifer Clapp. Pp. 531-545


Ch. 2: “A Tomato Grows in Florida”.


Ch. 4: “Big Pig”.


**Videos**


*Food Miles.* Public Broadcasting Service, 2008. 30 min.


**Requirements**

- **Quizzes (25%, 100 points).** These will be composed of primarily multiple choice questions and taken online; each will be based on the reading assigned for the week of that quiz. There are 12 quizzes in all and the two lowest scores will be dropped from the final calculation.
- **Research paper (35% of course grade, 140 points)**
  - Individual work (20%, 80 points). This will be due on the date of the first group presentation.
  - Group work (15%, 60 points). This will be due at the end of the semester.
- **Group presentation (20%, 80 points).** Each student will participate in a small group presentation in class based on the research project.
- **Class participation (20%, 80 points).** This will be based on contributions to classroom and group discussions and activities, as well as class attendance.

**Course Grading Formula**
### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics/Lectures</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Aug. 23-25</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Aug. 30-</td>
<td>Classical theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>The industrial food system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Sept. 6-8</td>
<td>Introduction to Slow Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classical theory readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Sept. 13-15</td>
<td>Social theories and world conflict Industrial agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Sept. 20-22</td>
<td>The new gastronomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Theory and conflict readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Sept. 27-29</td>
<td>The “Golden Age” Industrial meat production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Oct. 4-6</td>
<td>The principles of food quality Golden Age voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Oct. 11-13</td>
<td>Global rebellion Food aid and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Oct. 18-20</td>
<td>The Slow Food movement in action Challenging voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Oct. 25-27</td>
<td>Beyond modernity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Week 11
- **Nov. 1-3**  The Slow Food agenda  Petrini, Part V; Lemert, group selections
  - Post-modern voices

### Week 12
- **Nov. 8-10**  Globalization theory  Lemert, pp. 433-447; Counihan and Van
  - Food justice and politics  Counihan and Van Esterik, Ch. 40

### Week 13
- **Nov. 15-17**  **Group Presentations**
  - Groups 1-2
  - Groups 3-4

### Week 14
- **Nov. 22**  **Group Presentations**
  - Groups 5 (individual papers due)
  - **Thanksgiving holiday (no class)**

### Week 15
- **Nov. 29- Dec. 1**  **Wrapping Up**
  - Slow Food: a critical assessment  Counihan and Van Esterik, Ch. 28
  - Course conclusions

### Week 16
- **Dec. 8**  **Group papers due**

Absences may be excused for legitimate, verifiable cases of illness and emergencies. Please provide documentation of each instance.

The University has a policy statement regarding religious holidays included in the University catalog and the student handbook. Any student may request to be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of his/her faith.