

The Politics of Food

PSCI 198-302 ABCS and Fox Leadership Program Seminar

Tues, Thurs 12-1:30

Prof. Mary Summers

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215-746-7118

office hours: Thurs, 2-3:30 and by apptmt

Leadership Hall, rm 20

3814 Walnut St (next to President Rodin's house; entrance is on side of building)

This academically based community service seminar will explore the many different politics that shape food production and consumption and problems like food insecurity and obesity here in West Philadelphia and around the world. Students will be encouraged to think broadly about how people engage in politics —articulate goals, form alliances, struggle for power, respond to and engage in leadership— in many different arenas: cities, farms, factories, kitchens, markets, schools, churches, research institutions, social movements, elections, legislatures. A focus on case studies of leaders who have made a difference in the politics of food will include guest speakers, who work on food related issues.

Tuesday classes will be devoted to class discussions or meeting with speakers. On most Thursday class times, students will be engaged in fieldwork at their community service sites. On an average, in addition to the class time spent at your community service site, you should probably expect to spend another hour and a half to two hours a week on your community service work in order to cover travel and follow up time and regular discussions of how this work is going.

Students in this course may choose to participate in one of two community service projects. One is a parallel social studies course for seniors on “the Politics of Food” taught by Mr. Bruce Poulson in the Eco-Tech Division at University City High School. Under Mr. Poulson’s direction, you will work on special projects with small groups of students using what they are learning about economics and politics to analyze key problems with regard to food, including food related health, environmental, and labor issues and different approaches to solving those problems. Another group will work with the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger on a food stamp enrollment campaign in soup kitchens, food cupboards, and other community sites in West Philadelphia. Studies suggest that 90,000 low-income people in Philadelphia – including almost half the clients of emergency food programs-- are not aware that they are eligible for food stamps, which could significantly increase their access to healthy food. This project

represents an important effort to expand the services offered by emergency food programs to their clients and an opportunity for you to study food related faith-based, community, and government programs. Students will be trained to do screening for food stamp eligibility and to assist with the food stamp application process.

There will be some work-study jobs associated with both these projects. If you are a work-study student and would like to apply for such a position, please let me know as soon as possible. There will also be regular discussion meetings with regard to these projects that will be considered part of your work for the course.

For those of you who wish to pursue other options for your community service project, the Food Trust is interested in research on nutrition related health problems and access to healthy food in low-income communities. There may also be an opportunity to work with Greensgrow, an urban farm, farmers' market, and community supported agriculture project in Kensington. You may also choose to structure your own project, preferably working with at least one other student; but you must email me a proposal describing the problem it will address, with whom you will work, and what you hope to accomplish by September 19th. (Efforts to lay the ground work for future "politics of food" community service projects will be especially welcome.)

Requirements for the course include: 50-100 pages of weekly readings, with brief responses (1-3 pages), submitted by email by Monday at 9am. (Topics for responses will be suggested each week. These will not be graded; and you will be allowed to miss two of them.) Preferably with a partner or two, you will also choose one session from the syllabus that you will help to present. Each of you will also adopt a food related web site, append interesting news from the website to your weekly reading responses as appropriate. (See for example, Food First, <http://www.foodfirst.org>; Bread for the World, <http://www.bread.org>; Food Research Action Center, <http://www.frac.org>; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, <http://iatp.org>; Rural Defenders and Family Farm Coalition, www.familyfarmer.org; U. S Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, <http://www.ers.gov> --for food assistance and nutrition research, <http://www.ers.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/>) You should let me know your web site by Sept. 12th; you can change websites in the course of the semester, if you so choose.

There will be one short 5 page double space discussion paper due Sept 23 and another on Oct. 22nd. (The second will not be required for students who have to prepare presentations in association with their community service projects). Students will have a choice between a take home essay exam at the end of the semester and a 20-25 page research paper on any topic related to the politics of food. Alternatively, you may choose either singly or with a group of students to write a proposal for a food related campaign that includes a well researched analysis of the problem that the campaign seeks to address. Those of you taking the research or campaign proposal option, should bring ideas regarding the topics you would like to work on to class for discussion on Sept. 17th.

Draft of topic proposal including statement of problem to be analyzed, bibliography, and strategy for research due Tuesday, Nov. 5th. A first draft is due Nov. 26^h. Final paper is due Dec. 12th.

Your research paper or final exam will count for 40% of your grade; your two discussion papers (or your community service related written/oral presentation will count for 15% each; your class participation (I'll count the quality of your responses for those of you who don't like to talk) 15%; and the quality of your participation in the community service work 15%.

Required books: Upton Sinclair, The Jungle (1981 [1906]), bantam edition; Eric Schlosser, Fast Food Nation (2001); Janet Poppendieck, Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement (1998); Deborah Barndt, ed., Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food and Globalization (1999). These books are being placed on reserve at the library and have also been ordered at House of Our Own bookstore, 3920 Spruce St., 215-222-1576. All other readings will be included in a course packet which can be obtained at Campus Copy Center, 3907 Walnut St., 215-386-6410

Sept 5 Introduction to course themes and each other.

Required workshop at Civic House: Community Involvement in Philadelphia
2 alternative dates: Thurs, Sept 5, 7:00-8:30 or Weds, Sept. 11, 5-6:30pm

Sept. 10 The Politics of Food at the turn of the 21st century:

REQUIRED: FAST FOOD NATION, 3-10, 133-190, 239-243, 260-288

Recommended:

Richard Lewontin, "Genes in the Food," New York Review of Books, June 21, 2001, 81-84 (packet); Wendell Barry, "The Prejudice Against Country People," The Progressive, April 2002, 21-24 (packet); Wendell Barry, "For Love of the Land," Sierra, May/June 2002, 50-55 (packet); Sidney Mintz, "Food and Eating: Some Persisting Questions," in Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, eds., Food Nations (2002), 24-33 (packet); Eric Schlosser, Fast Food Nation, 1-10, 111-288; Harriet Friedman, "Remaking 'Traditions': How We Eat, What We Eat and the Changing Political Economy of Food," in Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain, 36-50.

Sept. 12 Submit choice of web site

Politics of Food case studies: Food security, poverty, hunger; grass-roots, faith-based and government programs.

REQUIRED: POPPENDIECK, 1-19, 36-106, 288-318.

Recommended:

Kenwyn Smith, Manna in the Wilderness of Aids: Ten Lessons in Abundance (2002), ix-48, 205-211. (packet); Janet Poppendieck, Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement (1998), 1-48; 81-140, 201-255, 288-318 ; Norwood Allen Kerr, "Drafted

into the War on Poverty: USDA Food and Nutrition Programs,” Agricultural History, spring 1990, 154-166 (packet); Mary von Euler, “Food Stamps: The Remains of the Safety Net,” pamphlet published by Americans for Democratic Action, 1998 (packet)

Sept. 17 Discussion of options and sites for community service and research projects.

Sept. 19 First short discussion paper due; Library Research Session, Goldstein classroom, Van Pelt Library

Sept. 23 Choice of community service sites due

Sept. 24 Janet Poppendieck, guest speaker, “Charity, Justice and Social Action: Confronting Hunger in America,” 3619 Locust Walk
Continue readings for week of Sept. 12th.
REQUIRED POPPENDIECK and KENWYN SMITH

Sept. 26 Start work at community service sites; Food Stamp screening/enrollment training in our classroom for those of you who are participating in that program.

Oct. 1 The Politics of Food at the turn of the 20th century: industrialization; low wage work; food purity: labor organizing, political crusades and government programs
REQUIRED:

Upton Sinclair, The Jungle, (1906, 1981) bantam edition w. intro by Morris Dickstein, v-xvii, 1-29, 72-118, 133-161, 257-280, 330-346;

RECOMMENDED:

Clayton Coppin, “James Wilson and Harvey Wiley: The Dilemma of Bureaucratic Entrepreneurship,” Agricultural History, spring 1990, 167-181; Clayton Coppin and Jack High, The Politics of Purity: Harvey Washington Wiley and the Origins of Federal Food Policy (1999), 1-6, 18-34, 165-171.

Oct. 2, 4:30-6:30, Bodek Lounge, Houston Hall: “Making the Connection: A Seminar for Teachers and Tutors” Required for all students participating in University City High School “Politics of Food Class.”

Oct. 3 community service site; food stamp screening training in our classroom

Oct. 5 WORLD FOOD DAY; Official Kick-off of Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign, 8:30am-1:30pm, Winnet Building, Community College of Philadelphia, 17th and Spring Garden (Broad St. subway, Spring Garden stop), Janet Poppendieck key note speaker at 9:15.

Oct. 8 FAST FOOD, LOW WAGE WORK AND YOU! mini-conference, 12 –3 with guest speakers: Eric Schlosser, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Delmarva Poultry Justice Alliance and the Union of Food and Commercial Workers.

REQUIRED: Schlosser, Fast Food Nation, 59-88, 149-190

RECOMMENDED: Southern Exposure, "Ruling the Roost" (Summer, 1989), 1-33; Jim Lewis, "Grasshopper Power"; Jennifer Gordon, "Buying into the Future: Understanding Boycotts," Radcliffe Quarterly, Fall, 2001. Websites: <http://www.ciw-online.org>, <http://www.dpja.org>, <http://fairfoodamerica.org>; National Employment Law Project, www.nelp.org; Brandt, ed., Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain, 62-80, 114-126

Oct. 10 Community Service Sites

Oct. 15 Farm Politics, Economics, and the Environment

REQUIRED: Mary Summers, "Putting Populism Back In: Rethinking Agricultural Politics and Policy," Agricultural History, Spring, 1996, 395-414; Mary Summers, "From the Heartland to Seattle: The Family Farm Movement of the 1980's and the Legacy of Agrarian State Building," in Countryside in the Age of the Modern State, Stock and Johnston, eds., 2001, 304-326 (packet); Robert Paarlberg and Don Paarlberg, "Agricultural Policy in the Twentieth Century," Agricultural History, Spring, 2000, 136-161

RECOMMENDED: Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America (1978), 20-93 (packet); ; Wendell Barry, "Six Agricultural Fallacies," in Home Economics (1987), 123-131.

Oct. 17 community service site

Oct. 22 2ND Discussion paper due

Politics and Policy in Agricultural Research and Development:

REQUIRED: Alfred Charles True, A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States (1928) 58-73 (packet); Jim Hightower, Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times (1973), vi-64; James Scott, Seeing Like a State, 262-306 (packet); ;

RECOMMENDED: Willard Cochrane, The Development of American Agriculture, 235-257 (packet); Harrison Welford, Sowing the Wind (1972) 264-285 (packet)

Mary Summers, "History of Agricultural Institutions" for Organization for Competitive Markets position paper, A Food and Agricultural Policy for the 21st Century (2001)

Oct. 24 Community service sites

Oct. 29 Politics and Policy; Research and Development, cont; Ecological and Industrial Models for the future of Agriculture: Factory Farming and Bioengineering,

REQUIRED: Michael Pollan, "Power Steer," New York Times, March 31, 2002; Michael Pollan, The Botany of Desire (2001), 185-248 (packet); Kurt Eichenwald, "Redesigning Nature: Hard Lessons Learned; Biotechnology Food: From the Lab to a Debacle," New York Times, Jan. 25, 2001

RECOMMENDED: Jack Kloppenberg, First the Seed (1988) (packet), 1-18, 39-129, 278-290

Oct. 31 Community service sites

Nov. 5 Research paper proposals due; Discussion of research proposals

Nov. 7 Community service sites

Nov. 12 Politics of consumption, markets, and kitchens

REQUIRED: Marion Nestle, Food Politics (2002) (packet), vii-50, 93-174.

RECOMMENDED: Jeffrey Pilcher, "Industrial Tortillas and Folkloric Pepsi," in Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, Food Nations, 222-239; Arlene Avakian, ed., Through the Kitchen Window (1997), 1-9; Marge Piercy, "What's that smell in the kitchen, 111 (packet)

Nov. 14 Community service sites

Nov. 19 Case study: Politics of Obesity

REQUIRED: Marion Nestle, FOOD POLITICS, 175-218, , 358-374; Kelly Brownell, "The Environment and Obesity," and "Public Policy and the Prevention of Obesity," in Fairburn and Brownell, eds., Eating Disorders and Obesity: A Comprehensive Handbook (2002), 433-438, 619-623; Gary Taubes, "What if It's All Been a Big Fat Lie?" New York Times Magazine, 7/7/02; Amanda Spake, "A Fat Nation," U.S. News and World Report,

RECOMMENDED: Kelly Brownell and David Ludwig, "Fighting Obesity and the Food Lobby," Washington Post, 6/9/02, B07; (Packet); "Fatty Foods and Law Suits," exchange, Philadelphia Inquirer, 8/8/02-8/15/02; "Twinkie Tax," articles Aug. 19, 2002; S. Kumanyika, et al, "Obesity Prevention: the Case for Action," International Journal of Obesity (2002), 425-436.

Nov. 21 Community Service Sites

Nov. 26 First Draft of Research Papers due; discussion

Dec. 3 Last Class. FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS handed out for those not doing research papers.

Dec. 5 Community Service sites

Dec. 10. Final exams due by 5pm

Dec. 12 Research projects due by 5pm

Renske van Staveren, who now works for the Fair Food Project and has had extensive experience working with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy on food and agriculture related issues (especially genetic engineering), has agreed to be available for consultation regarding research and service projects. Email: Renske@riseup.net or cell phone, 215-668-6222.

Sara Coelho, at the program Communication within the Curriculum (CWIC), is available to help with preparing oral presentations. Her phone number is 215-573-6309. CWIC's website also has lots of useful information: www.sas.upenn.edu/cwic