

Syllabus
Economics of World Food and Agriculture
AGEC3860/INST3860
Fall 2009

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Office: Old Main 312
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Class time: Tuesday and Thursday 1:20 – 2:35 pm in Room 2024 AG.

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:45-3:45pm; or by appointment. Email me anytime.

Course Objectives:

- Survey world food and agricultural problems, with an emphasis on food security and malnutrition in low-income countries and regions of the world.
- Focus in on the food and agricultural situation in a developing country of your choice, or on the world supply and demand conditions for a global food commodity of your choice.
- Use a basic economic framework to analyze world food and agricultural problems.
- Learn about some economic policy options for addressing world food and agricultural problems.
- Practice writing, using research resources, and citing references!

Course Prerequisites: *An economics principles course is required.* The course does use technical economic concepts and methods. For example, students must work with and answer exam questions using supply and demand diagrams and elasticities. Some algebra and graphing skills are necessary.

Required Readings:

The World Food Problem: Tackling the Causes of Undernutrition in the Third World. 2004. Howard D. Leathers and Phillips Fosters. Third Edition. Lynne Rienner Publishers. ISBN 1-58826-275-8 (paperback).

The World Food Economy. 2007. Douglas Southgate, Douglas H. Graham, and Luther Tweeten. Blackwell Publishing. ISBN-13:978-1-4051-0597-2 (paperback).

Both required books are in stock at the bookstore. Other required readings may be handed out in class. Many resources are available on line and URLs will be provided for assigned on-line readings. Students may be expected to find recommended journal articles in the Library and to copy them at their own expense.

Selected web resources:

USDA Economic Research Service <http://www.ers.usda.gov>

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations <http://www.fao.org/>

International Food Policy Research Institute <http://www.ifpri.org/>

The World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/>. (see especially *World Development Reports*)

US Agency for International Development <http://www.usaid.gov>

Library of Congress Country Studies <http://countrystudies.us/>

Academic Honesty: When preparing written assignments and papers, information, ideas, and analyses must be presented *using your own words*. Anyone else's words must be used sparingly, placed in quotes, and appropriately cited. In addition, facts and data must be appropriately referenced. Please review University Regulation 802 if you have any questions about academic honesty and implications of dishonesty.

<http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/support/clean%20uw%20regulations/UW%20Reg%206-802.pdf>

Disability support: UDSS offers a variety of services or information to support students with disabilities. Please don't hesitate to ask about them early in the course.

<http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/UDSS/>

Assignments and Grading

In-depth projects: Choose a developing country or a global food commodity to study in depth. The main focus of the country studies will be an analysis of the country's food security and nutritional status currently and into the future. (Other food-related foci may be proposed but must be approved.) The main focus of the commodity studies will be supply and demand trends and projections, and implications for global food security. There will be a **10-page paper** and a **very short verbal class presentation** based on the in-depth studies. Additional guidelines and grading rubrics will be provided in class.

Short writing assignments: Write three (3) short papers designed to build the foundation for the in-depth country or commodity projects. *Each of these 3 papers must use at least three credible sources in addition to your assigned books, and be no more than 3 double-spaced pages, using standard times roman 12 pt. font.* Additional guidelines and a grading rubric will be supplied in class.

Quizzes: There will be two (2) exams, designed to assess understanding of basic economic concepts included in the required readings and lectures. *An optional make-up or replacement exam will be offered during the scheduled final exam period.*

Grading: Grades will be based on four components for a total of 100 points:

- 3 short writing assignments (10 points each; 30 points total)
- In-depth projects (30 points)
- 2 in-class quizzes (20 points each. 40 points total)
- Periodic short assignments handed out in class will not be graded; but a complete set of carefully constructed answers will be worth extra credit points.

NOTE: Assignments will not be accepted after their due dates except in the event of a documented medical excuse or emergency. There will be an optional quiz offered during the scheduled final exam period, available to students needing to make up a quiz or wishing to improve their grades. There will be no other make-up exams or alternative exam times.

Tentative Schedule

Weeks 1-3 (August 25 & 27; September 1 & 3, 8 & 10): Food security and nutrition

Topics:

- Hunger and malnutrition
 - Definition and measurement
 - How many are at risk: who, when, where?
- Economic benefits of nutrition and health: why should the world care?
- The food security model

Readings:

- Leathers and Foster, Part 1 and Chapt. 8
- Southgate et al., Introduction, Sections 8.1 and 8.2
- Fogel, R. W. 2004. Health, nutrition, and economic growth. *Economic Development & Cultural Change* 52(3): 643-658.
- We Are What They Ate. *UC Santa Cruz Review*, Fall 2007: 22-23.
- Eide, Asbjorn. 2007. Freedom from Hunger as a Basic Human Right, in *Ethics, Hunger, and Globalization*, edited by Per Pinstруп-Andersen and Peter Sandoe. The Netherlands: Springer Press.

Weeks 4-5 (September 15 & 17; 22 & 24): Demand for food

Topics:

- Need for food v. effective demand for food
- Food demand functions, price and income elasticities
- Diets, diet diversification, and the nutrition transition
- Market effects of changing diets

Readings:

- Leathers and Foster, Chapters 7, 9 and 11.
- Southgate et al., Chapter 2
- Estimates of income elasticities and price elasticities for foods at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/InternationalFoodDemand/> (Find estimates for your country or commodity.)

By this point in the class, you should have chosen a country or commodity of focus and have completed the first take-home writing assignment.

Weeks 6-8 (September 29 & October 1; October 6 & 8; 13 & 15): Agricultural production and the supply of food

Topics:

- What does farming look like around the world?
- In what kind of shape are land, soil, and water resources?
- Economic causes and consequences of resource degradation

- What's happening with crop yields?

Readings:

- Southgate et al., Chapters 3 and 5
- http://www.fao.org/farmingsystems/description_en.htm
- Leathers and Foster, Chapters 12, 13, and 14

By this point in the class, you should have completed the second take-home writing assignment and taken the first exam.

MID-SEMESTER GRADES DUE OCTOBER 21

Week 9-10 (October 20 & 22; 27): Global supply-demand balance and projections

Topics:

- Projecting demand for and supply of food
- Will the world have enough food, at affordable prices?
- Food distribution: why is there hunger in a world of (sometime) plenty?

Required readings:

- Leathers and Foster, Chapters 24 and 10
- Southgate et al., Chapter 4

Weeks 10-12 (October 29; November 3 & 5; November 10): Global food trade and international food aid

Topics:

- Food and agricultural trade
- Development assistance and international food aid
- The effects of trade and food aid on food security

Required readings:

- Southgate et al., Chapters 6 and 8
- FAO Food Balance Sheets for assigned country:
<http://faostat.fao.org/faostat/collections?subset=nutrition>
- Shapouri, S. and S. Rosen. 2004. Fifty years of U.S. food aid and its role in reducing world hunger. *Amber Waves* 2 (September): 38-43.
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Amberwaves/september04/Features/usfoodaid.htm>

By this point in the class, you should have completed the third take-home writing assignment.

Weeks 12-14 (November 10, 17 & 19, and 24): Food and agricultural policies

Topics:

- Supply side policies
 - Agricultural research and development

- Infrastructure and production policies
- Demand side policies
 - Income support and redistribution
 - Food assistance programs

Required readings:

- Leathers and Foster, Part 3 selections
- Southgate et al., Chapter 7 and 8

In-depth projects should be completed by this point and we should have had the second exam.

Weeks 15-16 (December 1 & 3; December 8): Brief presentations of in-depth studies

Thursday, December 10, 1:15-3:15 PM

Make up exam during assigned final exam period

Other Readings of Possible Interest

Tannahill, Reahy. *Food in History*. 1988. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. 1999. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. (Part II: The Rise and Spread of Food Production)

Pinstrup-Andersen, Per and Peter Sandoe, editors. *Ethics, Hunger, and Globalization*. 2007. The Netherlands: Springer Press.

More to be added.....