

3 September 2015 (v1)

CSI-122T: The Political Economy of Food
Fall 2015
Tues/Thurs 9:00-10:20, FPH 104

Course Information

Instructor: Helen Scharber (hsSS@hampshire.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Maya Berenholz (mb12@hampshire.edu)

Transformative Speaking Program (TSP) Peer Mentor: Fangzhou Zhu (fz13@hampshire.edu)

Office: FPH 209

Office Hour Signup: On my office door (FPH 209).

Course Description

How does speculation on Wall Street affect wheat prices halfway across the globe? Why do most tomatoes taste so bad? Can organic farming methods feed the world? In this course, we'll use questions like these to guide our study of the economics, politics and environmental impacts of the modern industrial food system. In addition to studying and critiquing the existing system, we will spend significant time exploring more sustainable alternatives to mainstream methods of food production, distribution and consumption. Students will learn to apply economic theories studied in class to specific aspects of the food system and undertake an independent project on an alternative to mainstream food production.

Required text: Patel, Raj. 2012. *Stuffed & Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*. 2nd ed. Brooklyn: Melville House.

The Patel book is available at the Hampshire bookstore; be sure to get the second edition. Most other readings will be made available on Moodle (<https://moodle.hampshire.edu/>).

By the end of the course, you will be equipped to

1. Critically evaluate how the political economic system in the U.S. and around the world influences the production, distribution and consumption of food
2. Analyze the promises and potential shortcomings of various alternatives to the existing food system
3. Apply political economic theory and ideas to food system issues
4. Present your ideas in a clear and thoughtful manner

Throughout the course, you can expect

- ✓ A supportive classroom community in which to explore ideas
- ✓ To be intellectually challenged—by the questions, material, and class discussions—and to build confidence in working through these challenges
- ✓ To work an average of 6-8 hours outside of class per week

In the classroom, you will be expected to

- ✓ Contribute thoughtfully to discussions with classmates, having read the assigned material outside of class
- ✓ Be mindful that our goal is to investigate questions together and sometimes challenge one another, but not to win arguments or be right
- ✓ Aim to use clear and logical reasoning when speaking and writing
- ✓ Generally help to create a safe, supportive and intellectually stimulating classroom environment

Attendance is required, both for your benefit and that of the classroom community. Especially in participatory classrooms like ours, the class dynamic develops a life of its own and is an integral part of the learning experience. Each participant contributes something important to that dynamic and experience, and absences are felt by the whole group. If something does prevent you from coming to class, let me know in advance, submit any assignments when they are due and consult a classmate to find out what you missed.

Course evaluations will be based on your

- ✓ Regular and active class participation, including active reading of course materials and participation during class
- ✓ Timely completion of assignments
- ✓ Ability to engage critically with the course material
- ✓ Ability to make clear and well-supported arguments verbally
- ✓ Ability to make connections to your own experiences and other work
- ✓ Progress over the semester

In order to receive an evaluation, you must be sufficiently involved in the class to give me a basis for writing an evaluation. This includes missing no more than 3 classes over the course of the semester, thoughtfully completing all required assignments on time and engaging in class discussions and activities. If you are at risk of not meeting these conditions for an evaluation—due to excessive absences, missing or poorly executed assignments, or lack of engagement in class—I will 1) advise you, your advisor and CASA that you are not on track to receive an eval and 2) let you know what will be required in order to receive one. If these requirements continue to go unmet after this first notice, I will post a “no eval” in the Hub at that time.

Assignments will be designed to help you think critically and deeply about the issues and theories presented in the course, with an emphasis on speaking and presentation. Please see the course schedule for due dates. Details about all assignments will be distributed and discussed in class. Assignments include

- **Five meetings** with our peer speaking mentor: an initial individual goal-setting meeting, two shorter individual follow-up meetings to assess goal progress in the second half of the term, and group rehearsal meetings before each of the two formal presentations.
- **Three in-class debates** to consider the merits and drawbacks of an assigned food system intervention. Students will prepare for these outside of class, submit a written opening statement for both sides and participate in the debate as specified in class.
- **Two annotated bibliographies** of 3-4 sources, in preparation for the two formal presentations.
- **Food system issue analysis presentations** in which students will research a food system problem, apply a theory discussed in class to this problem, and present their research and analysis to the class. Students will submit a one-page handout to accompany the presentations.
- **Creative final project presentation** - flexible in format, to include a short proposal, an in-class presentation, accompanying visual aids and handout, and a reflection.
- **Shorter assignments** to be determined throughout the semester.

The **Transformative Speaking** focus in this course means that we will work actively toward developing clearer and more confident oral communication, starting from wherever you are now. The mission of Hampshire’s speaking program is to promote radical dialogue to change the world, with a further aim to bridge the gap between students’ extraordinary ideas and ideals and the oral communication skills they need to be effective change makers in their careers and lives. Two major course assignments will include formal presentations, but we will also attend to oral communication skills during in-class debates and small- and large-group discussions. We are lucky to have peer mentor **Fangzhou Zhu** working with us this semester to support your verbal communication skill development.

As you know, this class is your **tutorial** and I am your **tutorial advisor**. In addition to learning about the Political Economy of Food, a major goal of this class is to help you figure out how to be your best self at Hampshire and make the most of the Divisional system. Toward these ends, I will regularly set aside time during class meetings to check in with you about how your first term at college is going and make space for you to ask questions about academics, extra-curriculars or anything else that’s on your mind. Our course TA, **Maya Berenholz**, is an excellent resource for any questions you may have related to navigating Hampshire as a student.

To ensure that we are all present in the classroom, and to foster an engaged classroom dynamic, **use of computers and cell phones** during class meetings **is not allowed**. I understand that computers can be handy for taking notes and reviewing readings, but I have found these benefits are generally outweighed by the level of distraction that easy access to the internet facilitates—for me, for you and for your classmates. Please bring a notebook to class to take notes, as well as printed copies of the readings and/or your notes on them. If you have concerns about this policy or have documentation that may require an exception, I’ll be happy to speak with you.

It is your responsibility to **actively read** and/or **view** all assigned materials before coming to class. Active reading means reading with a purpose. Ask yourself questions as you read, like ‘What is the thesis or main argument of this piece?’, ‘What claims does this author make?’, ‘What evidence or rhetorical devices are used to support the claim?’, or ‘What did this author leave out?’ In addition to underlining and making margin notes, it is often worthwhile to write a short annotation after reading, to sum up the piece and summarize your own thoughts.

Moodle will be used as a repository for readings, the syllabus, assignment guidelines and other documents for the course. You will also turn in some assignments via Moodle. In general, though, most of our course interaction will take place offline during class meetings.

Accommodating Learning Differences: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you have medical information to share with me that may impact your performance or participation in this course, please check in with me as soon as possible. If you have approved accommodations, please go to Accessibility Services in CASA/Lemelson Center to pick up Letters of Accommodation and to initiate a discussion about reasonable accommodations for this course. If you have not already done so, students with documented disabilities who need to utilize accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Services to formally request accommodations as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Accessibility Services is located in the Center for Academic Success and Advising (CASA) and can be contacted via email: accessibility@hampshire.edu, via phone: (413) 559-5498, or in person: Aaron Ferguson, Director of Accessibility, Lemelson Building.

Academic honesty is expected. All Hampshire College students and faculty, whether at Hampshire or at other institutions, are bound by the ethics of academic integrity. The entire description and college policy can be found in Non Satis Non Scire at handbook.hampshire.edu under [Academic Policies/Ethics of Scholarship](#). Plagiarism is the representation of someone else’s work as one’s own. Both deliberate and inadvertent misrepresentations of another’s work as your own are considered plagiarism and are serious breaches of academic honesty and integrity. All sources used or consulted in the process of writing papers, examinations, preparing oral presentations, course assignments, artistic productions, and so on, must be cited. Sources include material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students, faculty, or staff, information from the Internet, software programs and other electronic material, designs and ideas.

All cases of suspected plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Advising who will review documentation and meet with student and faculty member. Individual faculty, in consultation with the Dean of Advising, will decide the most appropriate consequence in the context of the class. This can range from revising and resubmitting an assignment to failing the course. Beyond the consequence in the course, CASA considers first offenses as opportunities for education and official warning. Multiple or egregious offenses will have more serious consequences. Suspected instances of other breaches of the ethics of academic integrity, such as the falsification of data, will be treated with the same seriousness as plagiarism and will follow the same process.

Office hour sign-up is on the door of my office, FPH 209.

Feel free to contact me to discuss matters related to class, the universe and everything. But please keep in mind that I often get more emails than I can reasonably respond to quickly. Do not assume that I will respond within 24 hours (though I often will), at nights or on weekends. Also, fair warning: I will be disinclined to respond to requests for information that can be easily obtained elsewhere (e.g., what was covered during a missed class, my office hours, assignments, the number for Sibie's, etc.)

Final thoughts: I hope that, like me, you’re in this class to learn something and to contribute to the wider community. What you already know is much less important than how curious you are willing to be, how much time you are willing to devote, and how many risks you are willing to take. As the professor and facilitator, I’ll do my best to create a context in which you are encouraged to do those things, but—as with everything—what you get out of this class is ultimately up to you.

Course Schedule, Readings and Assignments

Patel (Stuffed and Starved) is the course textbook. Other readings are generally available in the Readings folder on Moodle.

Tuesday, 9/8 – Welcome & Introduction to Hampshire and Political Economy

Thursday, 9/10 – Food Fight

- Read Beus, C. E., & Dunlap, R. E. (1990). The Paradigmatic Roots of the Debate. *Rural Sociology*, 55(4), 590–616.
- Read Sexton, S. (2011, November 14). The Inefficiency of Local Food. Retrieved from <http://freakonomics.com/2011/11/14/the-inefficiency-of-local-food/>
- Read Philpott, T. (2011, November 18). Freakonomics Blog: Still Wrong on Local Food. *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from <http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2011/11/freakonomics-blog-still-wrong-local-food>

Tuesday, 9/15 – Farmworkers & Negative Externalities

- Read pp. 35-72 from Estabrook, B. (2012). *Tomatoland: How modern industrial agriculture destroyed our most alluring fruit*. Andrews McMeel Publishing.
- Read pp. 51-92 from Koepfel, D. (2007). *Banana: The fate of the fruit that changed the world*. Penguin.

Thursday, 9/17 – Farmers of the World

- Read Preface and Chs. 1-3 from Patel, R. (2008). *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food*. London: Portabello.

Tuesday, 9/22 – Political Economic Theory: Who wins and who loses?

- Read Boyce, J. K. (2008). Is inequality bad for the environment? *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, 15, 267–288.
- Read Ch. 6 in Patel.
- Individual goal setting meeting with Fangzhou (transformative speaking peer mentor) by today

Thursday, 9/24 – In-Class Debate: Should Massachusetts pass a GMO labeling law?

- Read Scientific American Editors. (2013, August 20). Labels for GMO Foods are a Bad Idea. *Scientific American*, 309(3).
- Read Paarlberg, R. (2010). GMO foods and crops: Africa's choice. *New Biotechnology*, 27(5), 609–613.
- Read Barker, D. (2014). Genetically Engineered (GE) Crops: A misguided strategy for the twenty-first century. *Development*, 57(2), 192–200.
- Read other sources as helpful.
- Complete opening statements for each side of the debate and bring them to class. See assignment guide for details.

Tuesday, 9/29 – Environment and Food Justice, Race and Gender Justice

- Watch CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). (2012). *The Story of Agriculture and Climate Change: The Road We've Travelled*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D-ORGjnf0s>
- Read Denton, F. (2002). Climate change vulnerability, impacts, and adaptation: why does gender matter? *Gender & Development*, 10(2), 10–20.
- Read Penniman, L. (2015, January 28). Radical Farmers Use Fresh Food to Fight Racial Injustice and the New Jim Crow. *YES! Magazine*.

Thursday, 10/1 – Farm Visit

- Read Coppinger, L., & Coppinger, R. (2011). Hampshire College (1978): The Agricultural Liberal Arts. In *Fields of Learning: The Student Farm Movement in North America*. (pp. 149–170). University Press of Kentucky.
- Read USDA Economic Research Service. (2013). *Farm Household Income (Historical)*.

Tuesday, 10/6 – Organic and Low-Input Agriculture

- Read Chappell, M. (2007). *Shattering Myths: Can sustainable agriculture feed the world?* (Vol. 13, No. 3). Food First.
- Read Bittman, M. (2012, October 19). A Simple Fix for Farming. *New York Times*.
- Read Leopold Center. (2015). Frequently Asked Questions about Cropping System Diversity and Profitability. Retrieved from <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/faq-cropping-system-diversity-profitability>

Thursday, 10/8 – In-Class Debate: Should Hampshire College double its local food budget next year?

- Skim Hampshire College. (2013). Hampshire Sustainable Food Purchasing Guide.
- Read Scharber, H., & Dancs, A. (2015). Do locavores have a dilemma? Economic discourse and the local food critique. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 1–13.
- Read Budiansky, S. (2010, August 19). Math lessons for locavores. *The New York Times*.
- Read Grist Staff. (2010, August 26). Do locavores really need math lessons?
- Complete opening statements for each side of the debate and bring them to class. See assignment guide for details.

Tuesday, 10/13 – October Break

Thursday, 10/15 – Guest Speaker Samruay Phadphon on Sustainable and Community-Based Agriculture in Thailand

- Readings TBD
- Annotated Bibliography #1 due to Moodle
- Second meeting with Fangzhou by 10/16

Tuesday, 10/20 – Political Economic Theory: Shading and Distancing

- Read Princen, T. (1997). The shading and distancing of commerce: When internalization is not enough. *Ecological Economics*, 20(3), 235–253.

Thursday, 10/22 – Fair Trade

- Read Preface, Introduction and Ch 1 from Jaffe, D. (2007). *Brewing Justice*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Draft presentation & handout due before practice session with Fangzhou

Tuesday, 10/27 – Food System Issue Analysis Presentations

- In-Class Presentations. See assignment guide for details.

Thursday, 10/29 – Food System Issue Analysis Presentations

- In-Class Presentations. See assignment guide for details.

Tuesday, 11/3 – Maya's Choice

- Readings TBD.

Thursday, 11/5 – Advising Day

Tuesday, 11/10 – Consumers

- Read Ch. 9 in Patel.
- Read pp. 173-196 in Nestle, M. (2002). *Food politics*. CA: University of California Press.
- Read Komisar, L. (2011, December 3). How the Food Industry Eats your Kid's Lunch. *New York Times*.

Thursday, 11/12 – In-Class Debate: Should there be a national tax on snack foods to help reduce obesity?

- Read Jacobson, M. F., & Brownell, K. D. (2000). Small taxes on soft drinks and snack foods to promote health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 90(6), 854.
- Read Introduction and Conclusion from Guthman, J. (2011). *Weighing in: Obesity, food justice, and the limits of capitalism* (Vol. 32). Univ of California Press.

- Skim CDC. (2009). *Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States*. Washington, DC: Center for Disease Control.
- Complete opening statements for each side of the debate and bring them to class. See assignment guide for details.

Tuesday, 11/17 – Markets, Super and Otherwise

- Read Ch. 8 in Patel.
- Read Kaufman, F. (2010, July). The Food Bubble. *Harper's Magazine*, 28–34.
- Third meeting with Fangzhou by today

Thursday, 11/19 – Guest Speaker Margaret Christie from Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)

- Read CISA. (2011). *Scaling Up Local Food*. South Deerfield, MA: Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture.
- Read DeLind, L. B. (2011). Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars? *Agriculture and Human Values*, 28(2), 273–283.
- Final Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography #2 due to Moodle

Tuesday, 11/24 – International Food Movements

- Watch *MST - Lutar, construir Reforma Agrária Popular!* (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=1149&v=mcPhrGPkTJc> .
- Watch *La Via Campesina in Movement... Food Sovereignty now!* Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/27473286> .
- Read Watts, J. (2014, February 13). Brazil's Landless Workers Movement renews protest on 30th anniversary. *The Guardian*. London.

Thursday, 11/26 – Thanksgiving

Tuesday, 12/1 – Democratizing Food

- Read Ch. 10 in Patel.
- Read Organarchy. (2007). A Basic Introduction to Co-operatives.
- Draft presentation & handout due before practice session with Fangzhou

Thursday, 12/3 – Final Project Presentations

- In-Class Presentations. See assignment guide for details.

Tuesday, 12/8 – Final Project Presentations

- In-Class Presentations. See assignment guide for details.

Thursday, 12/10 – Wrap Up

- No new readings

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CSI 122T – Political Economy of Food

Tues	Thurs	Tues	Thurs
9/8 Intro to Political Econ	9/10 Food Fight * Sexton (2011) * Philpott (2011) * Beus and Dunlap (1990)	9/15 Negative Externalities * Estabrook 35-72 * Koepfel 51-92	9/17 Farmers * Patel Preface & Chs. 1-3
9/22 Theory: Winners/Losers * Boyce (2008) * Patel Ch. 6 <i>1st mtg w/ Fangzhou by today</i>	9/24 <u>Debate: GMOs</u> * Sci Am Editors (2013) * Paarlberg (2010) * Barker (2014) <i>Opening statements due</i>	9/29 Env & Food Justice * CGIAR video (5 min) * Denton (2002) * Penniman (2015)	10/1 <u>Farm Visit</u> * Coppinger (2011) * USDA ERS (2013)
10/6 Organic & Low Input * Chappell (2007) * Bittman (2012) * Leopold Ctr (2015)	10/8 <u>Debate: Local</u> * Hampshire SFPG (2013) * Scharber & Dancs (2015) * Budiansky (2010) * Grist staff (2010) <i>Opening statements due</i>	10/13 October Break	10/15 <u>Thailand Sustainable Ag Speaker – Samruay Phadphon</u> * Readings TBD <i>Annot Bib #1 due</i> <i>2nd mtg w/ Fangzhou by 10/16</i>
10/20 Theory: Shading & Distancing * Princen (1997)	10/22 Fair Trade * Jaffee (2007) <i>Draft pres & handout due before practice session w/ Fangzhou</i>	10/27 <u>Food System Issue Analysis Presentations</u>	10/29 <u>Food System Issue Analysis Presentations</u>
11/3 <u>Social & Cultural Aspects of Food & Land – Maya Berenholz</u> * Readings TBD	11/5 Advising Day	11/10 Consumers * Patel Ch. 9 * Nestle (2002) * Komisar (2011)	11/12 <u>Debate: Obesity</u> * Jacobson (2000) * Guthman (2011) Intro & Con * CDC (2009) <i>Opening statements due</i>
11/17 Markets, Super and Otherwise * Patel Ch. 8 * Kaufman (2010) <i>3rd mtg w/ Fangzhou by today</i>	11/19 <u>CISA Speaker – Margaret Christie</u> * CISA (2011) * DeLind (2011) <i>Proposal & Annot Bib #2 due</i>	11/24 International Food Movements * Via Campesina video (20 m) * MST video (20 m) * Watts (2014)	11/26 Thanksgiving
12/1 Democratizing Food * Patel Ch. 10 * Organarchy (2007) <i>Draft pres & handout due before practice session</i>	12/3 <u>Final Project Presentations</u>	12/8 <u>Final Project Presentations</u>	12/10 Summing Up <i>Final reflection due Fri, 12/11</i>