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**SOAN 0236: Sociology of Food and Agriculture**

Meets Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 11:15-12:05, Munroe Hall 405

**Professor: Dr. Erica Morrell**

**Office Hours:** M/W 1:45-2:45pm, F 12:15-1:15pm, and By Appointment

**Office:** 209 Munroe Hall

**Email:** [emorrell@middlebury.edu](mailto:emorrell@middlebury.edu)

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will apply sociological perspectives to analyze dynamics of local, regional, national, and global agri-food systems over the past several decades.

**Requirements and Policies:**

▪ ***Attendance and Preparation***

Attendance is mandatory. I expect you to arrive to all classes on time and prepared to contribute. Even a day's absence means that you will be missing a substantive part of the material. It is your responsibility to clear scheduling conflicts. If you must miss class for an excused reason, please make arrangements with me ahead of time whenever possible (I understand there are at times unforeseen circumstances, however). Absences occurred on the due date of assignments will only extend your deadline on a case-by-case basis.

▪ ***Class Conduct and Academic Integrity***

Middlebury College is committed to maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and tolerant campus environment—and so am I. The College and I strictly prohibit conduct that constitutes unlawful discrimination and harassment. Middlebury also does not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. I strongly enforce the College's stance:

[http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/student\\_policies/Academic\\_Disciplinary\\_Policies](http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/student_policies/Academic_Disciplinary_Policies)

• ***Disability Accommodation:***

Middlebury College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and applicable state laws. If you have a disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please contact the ADA Coordinator from Student Accessibility Services (Meeker House, 802-443-5936).

▪ ***Laptops/Cell Phones/Tablets/Etc***

Please TURN OFF and PUT AWAY all electronic devices (cell phones, computers, tablets, etc) prior to the start of class. Speak to me if you feel you or a particular day of class/assignment merits an exception to this.

▪ ***Late Paper Policy***

If you do not make other arrangements with me, late papers will drop by *a half letter grade* each day past the deadline.

**Assignments and Grading:**

- ***Class Participation (40% of total grade)***
  - ***Reading Reflections (20% of total grade)***

Readings are listed on the syllabus for the **day they are due**. Readings will be posted online. At the *beginning* of each class for which a reflection is due, you should have a paper prepared with reflections on the reading assigned for that day that. This should *contain 1-3 questions or other relevant reflections on each of the assigned readings* (e.g. questions about a substantive point in the material, a note about something with which you agree or disagree, a note about something you found particularly surprising, or a concept, term, historical event, etc, you want further clarification on). These reflections will be used to inform our class discussion. Turn in reflections **at the end of class**. Please **write your full name on the reflection** so that I can give you credit. You will be awarded 1 point for each reflection you turn in, 1/2 point for insufficient comments (roughly totaling 20pts, or 20% of your grade, for the term). I will return these to you to reference later if/as needed.

\*NOTE: I will not accept make-up reflections for absent students, and you may not give your reflection to another student to hand-in.

- ***Other Activities, Contribution, and Attendance (20% of total grade)***

In class you will frequently be asked to speak up and debate topics and engage in various other activities. Participation in these classroom elements is what makes this course enriching and exciting both for yourself and your peers (10% of total grade). Additionally, you are required to co-lead a discussion section as part of this grade (10% of total grade). Meaningful participation in class and co-leading one discussion thus comprise the other 20% of your participation and overall grade.

- ***Policy Memos (30% of total grade; 15% each)***

Twice you will be asked to analyze in the form of a policy memo a food issue through the lens of the social theories and concepts we have discussed in class. Each will be 3 Pages maximum, 12-point font, double-spaced. The first will be assigned March 13 and due March 22. The second will be assigned April 14 and due April 24. Submit electronically.

- ***Op-Ed (10% of total grade)***

This assignment requires you to apply your growing knowledge on the sociology of food to a pressing issue of our time in a provocative and succinctly argued Op-Ed. 750 words maximum. As part of your grade, we will workshop these Op-Eds in class. This will be assigned March 24, drafts are due in class for workshopping on April 3, and the final Op-Ed is due April 7 electronically.

- ***Final: Research Proposal (20% of total grade)***

Your final is a research proposal that will identify a research question you aim to answer, explain why this question is relevant to the sociology of food and agriculture, provide some background/motivation for the question, address the social theories and concepts that are relevant (or insufficient) towards answering your question, and discuss how you plan to conduct research to answer your question. More details on this assignment will be provided throughout the course. As part of your grade, there is a required in-class presentation of your proposal idea. The final proposal is due May 17. Submit electronically.

## Class Schedule

### **Week 1: Introduction to Sociology of Food and Agriculture**

#### **Monday, February 13: Class Introduction**

- Read the Syllabus!

Plan for Class: Class overview and introductions.

Assignment for Class: Be prepared to discuss why you chose to take this class and what you hope to get out of the course. Questions about the course and syllabus welcome.

#### **Wednesday, February 15: The Sociology of Food and Agriculture, and Systems Mapping**

- Johnson, Allan. 2014. "The Forest, the Trees, and One Thing." *The Forest and the Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice and Promise*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. pp. 7-30.
- Nesheim, Oria, and Yih, eds. 2015. "The U.S. Food and Agriculture System as a Complex Adaptive System." Pp 233-242 in *A Framework for Assessing Effects of the Food System*. National Academies Press.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on sociology, the sociology of food and agriculture, and food systems mapping.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #1 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

***\*Sign-up for discussion co-lead.***

#### **Friday, February 17: No Class, Winter Carnival**

### **Week 2: Dramatic Changes in the Global Food System**

#### **Monday, February 20: Industrialization and the Community Capitals Framework**

- Hamilton, Neil. 1995. "Agriculture without Farmers?" *Northern Illinois University Law Review*. 613. Pp1-25.
- Hribar, Carrie. 2010. "Understanding Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations and Their Impact on Communities." Pp 1-17.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on food systems industrialization and the Community Capitals Framework.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #2 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

#### **Wednesday, February 22: Consolidation and the Community Capitals Framework**

- Philip Howard. 2009. "Visualizing Food System Concentration and Consolidation." *Southern Rural Sociology*. 24(2): 87-110.
- Douglas, Leah. "Consolidation is Eating Our Food Economy." *New American Weekly*. Edition 122. Pp 1-5.
- Flora and Bregendahl. 2013. "Collaborative Community-Supported Agriculture: Balancing Community Capitals for Producers and Consumers." *International Journal of Agriculture and Food*. 19(3): 329-346.

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Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on food systems consolidation and the Community Capitals Framework.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #3 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

### **Friday, February 24: Globalization, World-Systems, and the Green Revolution**

- Moore, Jason W. 2003. "The Modern World-System as environmental history? Ecology and the rise of capitalism." *Theory and Society*. 32: 307-377.
- Shiva, Vandana. 1991. "Science and Politics in the Green Revolution." Pp 19-45 in *Violence of the Green Revolution*.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on globalization, World-Systems theory, and the "green revolution".

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #4 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

### **Week 3: Dramatic Changes in the Global Food System Continued**

#### **Monday, February 27: Student-Led Discussion #1**

#### **Wednesday, March 1: View Film *Life and Debt***

- Carolan, Michael. 2011. "Cheap Food, Globalization, and Development." Pp 12-25 in *The Real Cost of Cheap Food*. Earthscan.
- Wise, Tim. 2009. "Agricultural Dumping Under NAFTA: Estimating the Costs of U.S. Agricultural Policies to Mexican Producers." Global Development and Environment Institute.

Plan for Class: View film "Life and Debt"

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #5 Due.

#### **Friday, March 3: View Film *Life and Debt***

- No new readings

Plan for Class: Finish viewing film "Life and Debt", followed by reading and film discussion.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #6 due based on film reflections/questions/comments.

### **Week 4: Dramatic Changes in the Global Food System Continued**

#### **Monday, March 6: Student-Led Discussion #2**

#### **Wednesday, March 8: GMOs, Seed Privatization, and Social Construction**

- Kinchy, Abby. Pages 1-10 only in Chapter 1 of *Seeds, Science, and Struggle*. MIT Press.
- Aoki, Keith. "Grafting Plants into U.S. Patent Law: The Convergence of Technology and Law: 1930–2001 and Beyond." Pp 27-58 in *Seed Wars*. Carolina Academic Press.
- OPTIONAL Howard, Philip. 2015. "Intellectual Property and Consolidation in the Seed Industry." *Crop Science*. 55.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on GMOs, seed privatization, and social construction.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #7 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc

**Friday, March 10: GMOs and Social Construction: GE Salmon Case Study**

- “Genetically Engineered Salmon—Coming soon to a supermarket near you?” Ocean Conservancy
- Aqua Bounty Technologies, Inc. “Environmental Assessment for AquAdvantage Salmon.” Read selections: Introduction, p. 12-15; Jurisdictional and regulatory issues, p. 69-70; Risk assessment, p. 70-73; Conclusions, p. 74; Document preparation, p. 74.
- Richardson, Jill. 2010. “Why is the FDA About to Ruber-Stamp GE Salmon.” *Grist*.
- FDA. “Questions and Answers on FDA’s Approval of AquAdvantage Salmon.”

Plan for Class: Case study and discussion on GMOs and social construction vis-à-vis the GE Salmon case.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #8 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc

**Week 5: Global and National Food Governance**

**Monday, March 13: How to Write!**

- No readings, be prepared to learn about writing!

Plan for Class: Lecture on Writing

Assignment for Class: Be prepared to learn and talk about core features of strong writing.

**\*Assignment #1 Handed Out: Policy Memo**

**Wednesday, March 15: Global Food and Agriculture Governance**

- Raustiala and Victor. 2004. “The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources.” *International Organization*. 58: 277–309.
- ACORD. 2010. “Global Food Governance: The Committee on World Food Security.”

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on global food and agriculture governance.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #9 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**\*Instructions on the final handed out**

**Friday, March 17: Food and Agriculture Governance and the Role of Corporations**

- Nestle, Marion. 2007. Ch 4, “Influencing Government” Pp 95-110 in *Food Politics*. University of California Press.
- Nestle, Marion. 2007. Ch 5, “Co-Opting Nutrition Professionals” Pp 111-136 in *Food Politics*. University of California Press.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on food governance and the role of corporations.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #10 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

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## **Week 6: Global Food Movements**

### **Monday, March 20: Student-Led Discussion #3**

***\*Opportunity for Midterm Feedback***

### **Wednesday, March 22: Global Food and Agriculture Movements—Guest Lecturer: Molly Anderson**

- Kinchy, Abby. Pages 11-22 only in Chapter 1 of *Seeds, Science, and Struggle*. MIT Press.
- Rosset, Peter. 2003. “Food Sovereignty: Global Rallying Cry of Farmer Movements.” *Food First*.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on global food and agriculture movements.

Assignment for Class: No reading reflection due, but we will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc

***\*Assignment #1 Due***

### **Friday, March 24: Student-Led Discussion #4**

***\*Assignment #2 Handed-Out: Op-Ed***

***March 25-April 2: No Class, Spring Recess***

## **Week 7: U.S. Food Movements**

### **Monday, April 3: Framing Theory and Op-Ed Workshopping**

- Shurman and Munro. 2006. “Ideas, thinkers, and social networks: The process of grievance construction in the anti-genetic engineering movement.” *Theory and Society*. 35: 1–38.

***OR***

- Morrell, Erica. 2015. “Unpacking Frame Resonance: Professional and Experiential Expertise in Intellectual Property Rights Contention.” *Mobilization*. 361-78.
- Bring in Assignment #2, Op-Ed draft!

Plan for Class: We will discuss the readings and framing theory. Also, bring assignment #2, for Op-Ed workshopping.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #11 Due. Bring in draft Assignment #2, Op-Ed.

### **Wednesday, April 5: U.S. Food Movements, including organic, sustainable, and local food, and Political Opportunity Theory**

- Reed. 2010. “Introduction” and “Social Movements.” Pp 1-31 in *Rebels for the Soil*. Earthscan.
- Hassanein. 1999. “A Social Movement to Change Agriculture.” Pp 1-6 in *Changing the Way America Farms*. University of Nebraska Press.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on U.S. food movements.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #12 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

***\*Midterm feedback recap provided***

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**Friday, April 7: Guest Speaker—Anthony Naples, Starbird Fish, Vermont**

- No new readings.

Plan for Class: Guest speaker Anthony Naples.

Assignment for Class: Please be prepared to listen and ask questions, provide comments, etc.

**\*Assignment #2, Op-Ed, Due**

**Week 8: U.S. Food Movements**

**Monday, April 10: U.S. Food Movements, including food justice and security, and Resource Mobilization Theory**

- Holt-Gimenez and Wang. 2011. “Reform or Transformation?: The Pivotal Role of Food Justice in the U.S. Food Movement.” *Race/Ethnicity*. 5(1): 83-102.
- Bradley and Herrera. 2016. “Decolonizing Food Justice: Naming, Resisting, and Researching Colonizing Forces in the Movement.” *Antipode*.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on U.S. food movements, continued.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #13 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**Wednesday, April 12: Urban Agriculture and Food Justice in Detroit**

- White, Monica M. 2011. “Sisters of the Soil: Urban Gardening as Resistance in Detroit.” *Race/Ethnicity* 5(1): 13-28.

Plan for Class: View film “Urban Roots”

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #14 Due.

**Friday, April 14: Urban Agriculture and Food Justice in Detroit**

- No new readings

Plan for Class: Finish film “Urban Roots”

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #15 due based on film reflections/questions/comments.

**\*Assignment #3 Handed Out: Policy Memo**

**Week 9: U.S. Food Movements**

**Monday, April 17: Student-Led Discussion #5**

**Wednesday, April 19: Guest Speaker(s) from Migrant Justice OR Film Viewing**

- No new readings.

Plan for Class: Guest speaker Migrant Justice at 12:15 OR view film TBA.

Assignment for Class: Please be prepared to listen and ask questions, provide comments, etc.

**Friday, April 21: No Class, Spring Student Symposium**

**Week 10: Effects of Food Activism (primarily in the U.S.)**

**Monday, April 24: Policy Changes**

- Harper *et al.* 2009. “Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned.” Food First.

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- Hardesty. 2010. "Do Government Policies Grow Local Food?" *Choices*.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion of recent food governance changes (especially in the U.S. context).

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #16 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**\*Assignment #3 Due**

**Wednesday, April 26: Labels and Certification**

- Obach, Brian K. 2007. "Theoretical Interpretations of the Growth in Organic Agriculture: Agricultural Modernization or an Organic Treadmill?" *Society & Natural Resources*. 20(3): 229-244.
- Hatanaka, Maki. 2014. "McSustainability and McJustice: Certification, Alternative Food and Agriculture, and Social Change." *Sustainability*. 6: 8092-112.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion of labeling and certifications.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #17 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**Friday, April 28: Corporate Social Responsibility**

- Riches, Sam. 2017. "The Story of Heady Topper, America's Obsession-Driving Double IPA." *Food and Wine*.
- John Mackey and Rajendra Sisodia. 2013 "Conscious Capitalism and the Heroic Spirit of Business." Pp 25-40 in *Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion of CSR.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #18 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**\*Sign-Up for Final Presentations**

**Week 11: Recent Food System Developments and the Future of Food**

**Monday, May 1: Student-Led Discussion #6**

**Wednesday, May 3: Ethical Consumption**

- Wilkins, J. L. 2005. "Eating Right Here: Moving from Consumer to Food Citizen." *Agriculture and Human Values*. 22(3): 269-273
- Lekakis, Eleftheria. 2013. Pp 1-13 in *Coffee Activism and the Politics of Fair Trade and Ethical Consumption in the Global North*.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion on ethical consumption.

Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #19 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**Friday, May 5: Climate Change, Migration, and Innovation**

- Schmidhuber and Tubiello. 2007. "Global food security under climate change." *PNAS*. 104(5): 19703-08.
- Reuveny. 2007. "Climate change-induced migration and violent conflict." *Political Geography*. 26: 656-73.

Plan for Class: Lecture and discussion of recent food systems challenges and opportunities—especially climate change, migration, and innovation.



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Assignment for Class: Reading Reflection #20 Due. We will discuss the readings. Please be prepared with questions, comments, etc.

**Week 12: Research Proposal Presentations**

**Monday, May 8: Research Proposal Presentations**

**Wednesday, May 10: Research Proposal Presentations**

**Friday, May 12: Research Proposal Presentations**

**Week 13: Course Wrap-Up**

**Monday, May 15: The Future of Food**

Plan for Class: TBD depending on semester progress.

**Wednesday, May 17: Final Due**