

Instructor Info

Dr. Erinn Gilson, e.gilson@unf.edu
Office: Building 10 / Room 2349
Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30, M 4:15-5:45, W 11-1:30
and by appt.

Course Info

Time: M 6-8:45
Location: Building 9 / Room 1411

Course Description

In this course we explore the broad range of topics related to food and agriculture that are the subject of burgeoning food movements: Is it better to eat local and for what or whom? the environment? farmers? animals? eaters? What is the value of organic food and agricultural methods? Is it ethical to include meat and other animal products in our diets? Why are so many farmworkers immigrants and have their working conditions improved since Edward R. Murrow's 1960 documentary *Harvest of Shame* revealed slavery-like conditions in the fields? Why is the proportion of people around the world who are starving nearly equaled by the proportion who are overweight? What do we really mean when we call some foods "good" and other foods "bad"?

We will link personal concerns about what we choose to eat with broader social justice concerns. To do so, the course considers both the changes that have taken place in agriculture and food production over the past fifty or so years, the sources of injustice in the global food system, and possibilities for more just and sustainable food systems. In particular, we will explore the environmental effects of agriculture and food production, the treatment of animals in food production, how workers and farmers fare in a globalizing agricultural landscape, food accessibility and insecurity (including hunger and malnutrition, both locally and globally), social and cultural norms surrounding food (including those related to health and body size and shape), and how treating food as a commodity and agriculture as a business impacts what and how people around the world eat, work, and live.

Course Learning Aims

1. Knowledge: Gain an understanding of and explain contemporary issues related to food and agriculture from a philosophical perspective (i.e., as ethical and social justice issues)
2. Critical Thinking: Develop skills of critical reasoning by explaining philosophical arguments and ideas, evaluating critically these arguments, and constructing one's own position in a well-reasoned manner
3. Critical Thinking: Engage in one's own reflection, applying the frameworks and approaches studied to one's own everyday life, experiences, and social context
4. Communication: Express and develop one's thoughts in writing in a manner that is clear and concise, and that develops analyses that are coherent, sustained, well-reasoned, well-supported by evidence, and express a single focused thesis
5. Effective Citizenship: Make a variety of sustained connections between academic knowledge and ways of engaging in public, civic, political, or communal life
6. Ethical Character: Identify different types of ethical issues, and analyze the connections, complexities, and tensions within and among them

Required Texts

Food Justice, Gottlieb and Joshi (MIT Press)
Just Food, Dieterle (Rowman and Littlefield)
Stuffed and Starved, Patel (Melville House)
Eating Animals, Safran Foer (Back Bay Books)

*Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard and noted as (pdf) on the course schedule. You **must** print these files and bring paper copies to class. To reduce paper consumption, consider printing double-sided or on the back of previously used paper!

A note on reading:

Philosophical texts can be difficult to read. You should take the time to read and then re-read, to look up unfamiliar vocabulary, to take notes while you read, and to come to class with questions about anything and everything. Seek to read *actively and reflectively* rather than just *finish* an assigned reading!

Additionally, this seminar meets only once a week, thus a substantial amount of reading is assigned for each class session. So, each week's reading is divided into two portions: 1) for Friday and 2) for Monday. I recommend that you read on this schedule, as if the class meets twice a week.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Philosophical Journal (18%)

A weekly journal (on Blackboard) in which you reflect on the central questions of the class and the issues raised in the readings and discussions. The particular subject(s) of your reflection are up to you but they should be philosophical in nature (i.e., reckon with the philosophical questions about food and agriculture). Journal entries should be completed each week prior to class and are intended to prepare you to participate in class discussion. For full credit, your journal should contain at least 12 entries of approximately 200-300 words/1-2 pages each. I will periodically check your journals throughout the semester and provide feedback.

2. Midterm Essay (20%)

A short midterm essay (4 pages) will be assigned on the normative concepts of value in assessing food and agriculture related practices, due Friday 2/19. Revisions are accepted one week after essays have been returned (final grade = 50% revised version and 50% original version). Essays are due on Blackboard by 11:59pm of the due date on the course schedule.

3. Capstone Project (47%)

This course has an optional community-based learning component. Students may choose between two cumulative capstone projects: 1) a series of community-based learning activities and related written work, or 2) a final research paper. The aim of both is for students to engage in substantive reflection and analysis of issues related to food and agriculture.

4. Attendance and Participation (15%)

Doing philosophy requires that we question our assumptions; vibrant class participation brings up new and different perspectives, allowing us to interrogate our own beliefs by putting them into dialogue with those of others. This exposure to alternative ideas and ways of thinking is integral to learning. For these reasons, discussion will be a significant component of the class, and frequent and significant student participation is absolutely necessary both to enhance your understanding of the material and to make the class an interesting one!

I evaluate participation because the success of the class and your learning depend on it. The participation grade is an evaluation of your contributions to the class. Positive contributions to the class include: 1. verbal participation, 2. attentively listening to both instructor and peers, 3. preparation for class. Since the quality of participation matters, participation is not evaluated solely in terms of quantity (how much and how often you participate in class); please see the rubric for evaluation of class participation on Blackboard for details.

Capstone project information:

Community-Based Learning Option:

UNF's Center for Community-Based Learning defines Community-Based Learning in the following way:

“Community-based transformational learning refers to intentionally designed, coordinated, and executed learning experiences in community-based settings that enhance participants’ academic learning, contribute to their personal growth, and increase their civic engagement while concurrently benefiting the community or communities in which these activities are embedded.”

The Community-Based Learning component in this course focuses on course learning aims #5 and #6: it aims to expose students to diverse perspectives and approaches to food and agricultural issues, enable students to see first hand social problems with and diverse solutions to food and agricultural issues, and facilitate students’ ability to make connections between concrete issues in their community and scholarly analysis of these issues.

The Community-Based Component will include...

1. 10 hours (five 2 hour sessions) of on-site activities with community partners. On-site activities may include working in community gardens or farms (planting, weeding, watering, picking and packing produce), and at food pantries (sorting items, stocking shelves, packing bags). All on-site activities will be scheduled in advance (6% of grade).
* **Participation in all scheduled on-site activities is required.** If you elect the CBTL capstone, you must attend all activities. If an emergency occurs that prevents you from participating, you must take responsibility and speak to the instructor as soon as possible.
2. Five philosophical reflection journal entries (one per session) of 400-500 words (6% of grade)
3. A 5-7 page capstone reflection paper in which you engage in holistic reflection on the community engagement experience and link your experiences to specific concepts, analyses, and arguments in the course texts (25% of grade)

Research Paper Option:

The research paper will include...

1. A research topic proposal of approximately 300 words, which should include 1) a statement of the general topic, 2) a statement and explanation of two to three central questions you’ll investigate and seek to answer through your research, 3) an explanation of two to three central philosophical concepts/frameworks/positions or arguments that you plan to use in your analysis, and 4) a hypothetical statement of your thesis (how you anticipate answering at least one of your central questions)
2. An annotated bibliography consisting of at least 5 sources (2 of which must be beyond the course material) and 75-100 word summaries of each source
3. Three 250-300 word analyses of your sources, including an explanation of the thesis and main argument, as well as reflection on any objections to or questions concerning them
4. A 10-15 page research paper (35% of grade; #1-3 are 12% of grade)

Grade Scale:

A $95 \leq x \leq 100$, A- $90 \leq x < 95$

B+ $87 \leq x < 90$, B $84 \leq x < 87$, B- $80 \leq x < 84$

C+ $77 \leq x < 80$, C $74 \leq x < 77$, C- $70 \leq x < 74$

D+ $67 \leq x < 70$, D $64 \leq x < 67$, D- $60 \leq x < 64$

F below 60

* UNF does not award a C-, D+, or D- as final grades. For final grades, the range is D $60 \leq x < 70$, C $70 \leq x < 77$.

Policies and Expectations

Attendance:

- There is no difference between an “excused” or an “unexcused” absence. You may miss two classes without explanation or excuse before your grade is affected.
- *What to do if you're absent:* 1. You need not inform me of your absence. 2. You should contact a classmate to find out what you missed. 3. You should keep up with the reading and come to talk to me about it.
- For each absence after your second absence, your *participation* grade will drop 3 points (e.g., if you miss 4 classes and your participation grade is an 85, it will lower to a 79).
- Students with zero absences will gain 3 points on their *participation* grade (e.g., if your participation grade is an 85 and you haven't missed any class, it will rise to an 88).

Late Work:

Late essays will be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (including weekend days). Late journal entries are not accepted since their purpose is to prepare you for and orient class discussion.

Responsibilities:

What is your responsibility as a student? I expect that you will take responsibility for your own learning and education by doing the following:

1) being engaged and attentive in and out of class, 2) reading assigned material carefully, 2) coming to class prepared with questions, comments, and points for discussion or clarification, 3) reflecting on what you have read/seen/discussed, 4) taking notes both in class and while you read, 5) communicating with me about any relevant matters.

What is my responsibility as the instructor? My responsibility as a teacher is to facilitate your learning, which includes 1) ensuring that you comprehend the material, assignments, and learning aims, 2) enabling you to become more capable and discerning thinkers and writers, and 3) prompting you to reflect on diverse ideas, your own existence, and our social context.

These responsibilities are complementary: I can only fulfill mine as a professor when you fulfill yours as students! So, I encourage you strongly to communicate with me both in class and outside of class (I am available during office hours and by appointment); do not hesitate to come speak with me about any questions, concerns, thoughts, etc. that arise for you.

Basic Classroom Policies:

Common courtesy is expected of everyone. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Repeated tardiness constitutes disrespectful behavior because it disrupts the whole class; please be on time for class. If repeated, I reserve the right to dismiss the student from the classroom. As a dialogic practice, philosophy requires that we engage with one another in a respectful and open-minded way; disrespectful and derogatory remarks and behavior are unacceptable.

Technology Use:

No use of laptops, tablets, or phones is permitted in class (unless requested as an accommodation for a documented disability). Using such devices distracts you, your classmates, and me. Phones and other devices should be turned off and stowed in your bags at the beginning of class. If you are texting or otherwise using technology inappropriately, I may ask you to leave (and mark you absent).

Academic Integrity:

I expect that you will not engage in any form of academic misconduct. UNF's academic integrity policy states that any form of academic misconduct is **ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE**. Such misconduct will be **SEVERELY** penalized (i.e., **the student will receive zero credit**).

- Academic misconduct consists of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of information, and facilitating such violations.

- In particular, academic integrity calls for complete and proper citation; failure to cite the texts and any other sources you use will be punished with a failing grade (zero credit).
- If you are unsure of what constitutes academic dishonesty or unfamiliar with citation conventions, then you must speak with the professor.
- The university’s complete academic integrity policy can be found in §11 (“Rights and Regulations”) of the student handbook.
- The graduate school also has a useful website providing information on plagiarism and guidelines for citation: <http://www.unf.edu/graduatestudies/enrolled/Plagiarism%20prevention.html>

Accessibility and Accommodations:

The materials (texts, slides, etc.), physical spaces, and contexts and expectations through which we undertake education are often limited in their accessibility. I seek to make the entirety of this course accessible to all students and foster an environment in which all students can learn. I encourage you to speak with me about your learning style and how I can improve accessibility. In particular, I invite students with documented disabilities to come to speak with me and bring their Letter of Accommodation prepared by the DRC so that I may offer accommodations.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in the classroom or other aspects of performing their coursework should first register with the UNF Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in Building 57, Room 1500. DRC staff members will work with students to obtain required documentation of disability and to identify appropriate accommodations as required by applicable disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After determining that a student qualifies for services with the DRC, the DRC staff will prepare a letter for the student to provide faculty advising them of approved accommodations. For further information, contact the DRC by phone 904.620.2769, email the Director, Rusty Dubberly (r.dubberly@unf.edu), or visit the DRC website (<http://www.unf.edu/dept/disabled-services>). Military and veteran students may also request accommodations. Contact Ray Wikstrom, Director of Military and Veterans’ Resource Center (57/2700), by phone 904.620.5131 or email (ray.wikstrom@unf.edu, mvrc@unf.edu).

Course Schedule

* This schedule is subject to changes announced in class and via email!

		TOPIC	READING
Week 1	1/11	Overview of Core Issues	<i>Food Justice</i> , Chapters 1 and 2 (1-58) <u>Recommended:</u> <i>Just Food</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
Week 2	1/18	Overview of Core Issues No Class (MLK Day)	1) <i>Food Justice</i> , Chapters 3, 4, and 5 (59-119) 2) <i>Fair Food</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
Week 3	1/25	Refining Conceptions of Justice	1) <i>Just Food</i> , Chapters 3, 4, and 5 2) Gilson, “Vote with your Fork?” (pdf)
Week 4	2/1	Labor in Food and Agriculture	1) “The Hands That Feed Us” (pdf), 1-35 2) “Injustice On Our Plates” (pdf), 4-40; Saru Jayaraman, “Feeding America” (pdf) <u>Recommended:</u> “The Hands That Feed Us” (pdf), 37-48, 71-79; “Injustice On Our Plates” (pdf), 41-62; Jayaraman, “From Triangle Shirtwaist to Windows on the World” (pdf)

		TOPIC	READING
Week 5	2/8	Gender, Food and Agriculture	1) Shiva, “Women and the Gendered Politics of Food” (pdf); <i>Just Food</i> , Chapter 8 2) Allen and Sachs, “Women and Food Chains” (pdf); <i>Just Food</i> , Chapter 9 <u>Recommended:</u> <i>Just Food</i> , Chapters 6 and 10
Week 6	2/15	Food, Health, and Social Meaning	1) Biltekoff, “The Terror Within: Obesity in Post 9/11 U.S. Life” (pdf); Counihan, “Food Rules in the U.S.” (pdf) 2) Bordo, “Reading the Slender Body” (pdf) <u>Recommended:</u> Crawford, “Health as a Meaningful Social Practice” (pdf); Guthman, “Teaching the Politics of Obesity” (pdf)
	2/19	Midterm Essay Due	
Week 7	2/22	Animal Agriculture	<i>Eating Animals</i> , pp. 1-77
Week 8	2/29	Animal Agriculture	<i>Eating Animals</i> , pp. 78-148
Week 9	3/7	Animal Agriculture	<i>Eating Animals</i> , pp. 148-245
	3/14	Spring Break	
Week 10	3/21	Global Food Politics	<i>Stuffed and Starved</i> , pp. 1-98 <u>Recommended:</u> <i>Just Food</i> , Chapter 7
Week 11	3/28	Global Food Politics	<i>Stuffed and Starved</i> , pp. 99-213
Week 12	4/4	Global Food Politics	<i>Stuffed and Starved</i> , pp. 215-319
Week 13	4/11	Is Local Food Just Food?	1) <i>Just Food</i> , Chapter 11 2) <i>Just Food</i> , Chapter 12; McWilliams (pdf)
Week 14	4/18	Pursuing Food Justice	1) <i>Food Justice</i> , Chapter 10 and select one of 6, 7, 8, or 9 2) <i>Fair Food</i> , Chapters 7-9
	4/26	Capstone Project Due	