

1-2013

## ENST 594.02: The Politics of Food

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## EVST 594.02 GRADUATE SEMINAR: THE POLITICS OF FOOD

Tuesday and Thursday 2:10-3:20  
Native American Center, Room 201  
Spring 2013

**Neva Hassanein**

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**Office hours:** If I can be of assistance, please come see me during my office hours by signing up for a meeting time on the sheet posted across from my office door in Rankin. My office hours are: **Mondays 1:00-2:40 and Wednesdays 10:20-11:40**. If these are impossible for you, please contact me to make an appointment.

There is, then, a politics of food that, like any politics, involves our freedom. We still (sometimes) remember that we cannot be free if our minds and voices are controlled by someone else. But we have neglected to understand that we cannot be free if our food and its sources are controlled by someone else. The condition of the passive consumer of food is not a democratic condition. One reason to eat responsibly is to live free.

~ Wendell Berry in “The Pleasures of Eating”

### **Overview of the Course**

The contemporary food and agricultural system is contested terrain, and a wide variety of actors are now engaged in the politics of food. In this case, “politics” broadly refers to the ways that various actors with different beliefs, principles, or interests try to advance or defend their positions in the very complex sphere of food and agricultural systems. That is, these actors – governmental entities, businesses, institutions, and organizations – create and try to influence food policy. Thus, the purpose of this graduate seminar is to study and analyze some of recent debates regarding the agrifood system and the politics surrounding those debates.

Through a selection of interdisciplinary scholarship often referred to as “agrifood studies” and through critical reflection and discussion on the readings, I aim to provide you with a solid grounding that will enable you to pursue academic and civic work on these issues in the future. In addition, the course gives you a chance to learn more about a topic related to the politics of food that interests and develop your understanding of policy analysis and social change. In-class presentations at the end of the term will help you to improve your public speaking skills.

### **Accessing the Readings**

The required readings are listed on the attached schedule, and will be posted on our Moodle site for this course. The syllabus is also posted at the top of the Moodle site so you can go there to access any hyperlinks easily if you want.

### **Requirements and Opportunities**

**Class participation:** The course is organized as a seminar, which means it is discussion focused (although I will lecture some, especially at the start). Its quality greatly depends upon the active participation and contributions of all members. This is a graduate level seminar; therefore, you must be prepared to read, think, and take responsibility for your learning. In addition, all of us have a responsibility to use this opportunity to learn from the experiences, insights, and values of others in the course.

My aim is to create a learning community in which we will grapple seriously and critically with the issues presented by the readings. There is no one way to make this happen, but a few things will help us along:

- Recognizing that we are all learners (there are no experts). We are just in different “places,” we bring different backgrounds, and we are going to be learning different things along the way.
- Learning requires an investment of time and effort. It is essential that we each put in the intellectual labor, if you will, before each of our class sessions. This means carefully reading all materials prior to each class session. Take notes on what you read and jot down questions you have about the work.
- Learning also requires a willingness to question assumptions – including our own – and an interest in exploring different and multiple perspectives on a given topic.
- Attending class consistently is essential to your learning and your contribution to others’ learning.

**Analytic Essays/Assignments:** Two essay assignments will ask you to think critically about what you read, to synthesize the material covered, and perhaps do some extra research. I will distribute the question(s) that I want you to cover near the start of each section. More specific guidance on these papers will be distributed at that time. Typically, these papers should be five to seven pages, typed, and double-spaced with normal margins and fonts. I expect these papers to be well organized, grammatically correct, and completely referenced.

**Term Projects:** The term projects provide an opportunity for you to delve more deeply into a topic related to food policy and politics that interests you. Basically, this assignment asks you to pick an issue to study and engage with it. There are many prospects at the moment with the local farmland protection discussion in full force, the Montana Legislature in session, the Farm Bill at the federal level under debate (it was not passed in 2012, but extended for 9 months), and regulatory decisions by agencies. Your topic does not need to be focused on a governmental policy, however. You could also look at the policies of an institution (e.g., farm to institution; UM Farm to College will turn 10 this spring!) or those of a business (e.g., sourcing of food products at a restaurant).

I will share some ideas with you for topics you might pursue and how you might find information on other topics and/or how to get involved. In addition, I will give you more details about the assignment. Generally, once your topic is chosen, you will learn much more about it. The kinds of questions you will explore include: What is the issue? Who are the decision makers and what are their interests? Which stakeholders or interest groups are trying to influence the process, and what are their positions? What strategies are being used? What are the prospects for successful adoption or implementation of the policy position you support? What do you think might enhance those prospects?

To learn how to translate your research into action, you will also be asked to engage in one or more actions related to the issue, and then to reflect on your experiences. You will report on your findings or activities in presentations, papers and other products due at the end of the term.

If more than one person chooses the same topic, it will probably make sense to work in teams.

**Paper/Project Proposals:** In an informal proposal due on **February 14**, please tell me which topic you have chosen, why it is of interest to you, what key resources you have already identified, and any questions you may have of me regarding leads and so on.

**Guest speakers and field trips:** Guest speakers will be added as appropriate. I would like to organize one or two **field trips** depending on your level of interest.

**Advising:** If I can be of assistance, please come see me during my office hours. I have a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from my office door. If my office hours are impossible for you, contact me about setting up an appointment.

**Grading:** Please note the following grading procedures, and mark the due dates on your calendar so you can plan accordingly. I will use the plus/minus grading system (A, A-, B+, B, B-, and so on).

<u>Assignment:</u>	<u>Due:</u>	<u>Possible Points:</u>
Participation	Throughout	50
Two analytic essays (up to 50 points each)	Feb. 28, Apr. 25	100
Term Project	May 15	100
<b>Total possible points</b>		<b>250</b>

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### COURSE MENU

(Subject to change at the whim of the chef and diners)

#### 1. Tues., Jan. 29 – What’s on Our Plate?

##### PART ONE: AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION

#### 2. Thurs., Jan. 31 – Agrarianism and Industrialism

Berry, Wendell. 2001. “The whole horse.” Pp. 63-79 in *The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life*, edited by Eric T. Freyfogle. Washington: Island Press.

Lyson, Thomas. 2004. “From subsistence to production.” Pp. 8-29 in *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*. Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.

Hanson, Bob. 2010. “Give modern ag credit for full bellies, good stewardship.” *Great Falls Tribune* Feb. 10. Opinion-Editorial page.

Manning, Richard. 2004. “The oil we eat: Following the food chain back to Iraq.” *Harpers Magazine*.

**Mon. Feb. 4** – Please attend one or both of these lectures by **Anna Lappé**, and be prepared to discuss them on Tuesday in class. Her bio is posted on Moodle. At the lectures, please take notes on the following questions: (1) What were her main points and overall message? (2) What new information did you take away from the lecture(s)? (3) What questions did the lecture(s) raise for you? (4) Do you think her messaging is effective? Why or why not?

**"Eat the Sky: Connecting the Dots between Climate, Food, and the Future of Farming"**  
Seminar at 3:10-4:30 PM, Gallagher Business Building, Room 123

**"Sustainability, Sustenance, and Social Change: How Sustainable Food and Farming Can Nourish the World and Transform Communities"** 8:00 PM, Dennison Theatre.

#### 3. Tues. Feb. 5 – Discussion on Lappé

The lectures are a great opportunity for you, so I strongly encourage you to attend. Her biography is posted on our Moodle site. If you absolutely cannot, read the Myth #1 Companion Reading Guide, posted on Moodle. Also, check out [foodmyths.org](http://foodmyths.org) and watch the video on the home page. Answer the questions listed above. Even those of you who do attend may want to read these materials and check out her website.

#### **4. Thurs. Feb. 7 – Agricultural Development: Structure and Markets**

Lyson, Thomas. 2004. "Going global." Pp. 30-47 in *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*. Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.

Carolan, Michael. 2012. "Understanding the food system: Past, present and future." Pp. 40-65 in *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. London: Routledge.

#### Supplemental:

Hendrickson, Mary and Mara Miele. 2009. "Changes in agriculture and food production in NAE since 1945." Chapter 2.1, Pp. 20-29 in *Agriculture at a Crossroads: North America and Europe (NAE) Report*. International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD).

#### **5. Tues., Feb. 12 – Knowledge and Ecological Agriculture**

Berry, Wendell. 1984. "Whose head is the farmer using? Whose head is using the farmer?" Pp. 19–30 in *Meeting the Expectations of the Land: Essays in Sustainable Agriculture and Stewardship*, edited by Wes Jackson, Wendell Berry, and Bruce Colman. San Francisco: North Point Press.

Masumoto, David Mas. 1999. "Learning to fail." Pp. 191-200 in *At Home on the Earth: Becoming Native to Our Place, A Multicultural Reader*, edited by David Landis Barnhill. Berkeley: UC Press.

Magdoff, Fred. 2007. "Ecological agriculture: Principles, practices, and constraints." *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 22(2): 109-117.

#### **6. Thurs., Feb. 14 – The Politics of Research. PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE.**

Clarren, Rebecca. 2008. "Pesticide drift: Immigrants in California's Central Valley are sick of breathing poisoned air." *Orion* July/August: 56-63.

LaDuke, Winona. 2007. "Ricekeepers: A struggle to protect biodiversity and a Native American way of life." *Orion Magazine*. July/August. Go to:

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/305/>

#### **7. Tues., Feb. 19 – The Politics of Genetic Engineering and Organics**

Dupuis, E. Melanie. 2000. "Not in my body: rBGH and the rise of organic milk." *Agriculture and Human Values* 17: 285-295.

Hubbard, Kristina and Neva Hassanein. 2012. "Confronting coexistence in the United States: Organic agriculture, genetic engineering, and the case of Roundup-Ready alfalfa." *Agriculture and Human Values*. DOI 10.1007/s10460-012-9394-6

#### **8. Thurs., Feb. 21 – The Promise of GE**

McGovern, George. 2001. "A strategy to defeat world hunger." Pp. 19-45 in *The Third Freedom: Ending Hunger in Our Time*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Paarlberg, Robert L. 2006. "Let them eat precaution: Why GM crops are being overregulated in the developing world." Pp. 92-110 in *Let Them Eat Precaution: How Politics is Undermining the Genetic Revolution in Agriculture*, edited by Jon Entine.

**9. Tues., Feb. 26 – Work Session in Class. Please attend this evening lecture:** "Lessons from the World's Oldest Tea Farmer: Small-Scale Farming and Kenya's Environmental Renaissance," by Joy W'Njuguna, Founder & Chief Operations Officer, Royal Tea of Kenya. North Underground Lecture Hall. See Moodle for more information about Joy and her work.

10. Thurs., Feb. 28 – ESSAY #1 DUE.

## **PART TWO: THE POLITICS OF FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION**

### **11. Tues., March 5 – Historical Context: Alternative Agrifood Movements**

Allen, Patricia. 2004. "Perspectives of alternative agrifood movements." Pp. 21-49 in *Together at the Table: Sustainability and Sustenance in the American Agrifood System*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Kloppenborg, Jack R., Jr., John Hendrickson, and G.W. Stevenson. 1996. "Coming in to the foodshed." *Agriculture and Human Values* 13(3): 33- 41.

### **12. Thurs., Mar. 7 – Considering the Movement(s?)**

Hassanein, Neva. 2003. "Practicing food democracy: A pragmatic politics of transformation." *Journal of Rural Studies* 19:77-86.

Holt-Gimenez, Eric. 2010. "Food security, food justice, or food sovereignty." Vol. 16. No. 4. Retrieved at: [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org)

#### Supplemental:

Hassanein, Neva. 2008. "Locating food democracy: Theoretical and practical ingredients." *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition* 3(2-3): 286-308.

### **13. Tues., Mar. 12 – Assessment, Planning, and Policy**

Pothukuchi, Kameshwari. 2004. "Community food assessments: A first step in planning for community food security." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 23:356-377.

Clancy, Kate. 2004. "Potential contributions of planning to community food systems." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 22:435-438.

Scherb, Allyson, Anne Palmer, Shannon Frattaroli, and Keshia Pollack. 2012. "Exploring food system policy: A survey of food policy councils in the United States." *Journal of Food, Sustainability and Community Development*. Retrieved at: <http://www.agdevjournal.com/volume-2-issue-4/277-survey-of-food-policy-councils-in-us.html?catid=111%3Aopen-call-papers>

### **14. Thurs., Mar. 14 – Farmland Protection in Missoula County**

Hubbard, Paul and Neva Hassanein. 2010. *Losing Ground: The Future of Farms and Food in Missoula County*. Missoula, Montana: Community Food and Agriculture Coalition.

### **15. Tues., Mar. 19 – Engaging the Market: Campus Food**

Barlett, Peggy F. 2011. "Campus sustainability food projects: Critique and engagement." *American Anthropologist* 113(1): 101-115.

Hassanein, Neva, Scott Kennedy, Beth Neely, and Paul Hubbard, editors. 2007. "Executive summary." *Tracing the Chain: An In-depth Look at the University of Montana's Farm to College Program*. Missoula, MT: University of Montana Environmental Studies Program.

**16. Thurs., Mar. 21 – Montana Innovators**

Western, Sam. 2005. "A new green revolution: In Montana's dying farm country, 'vanguard agriculture' puts people back on the land." *High Country News* 37(24): 8- 13, 19

Haynes, George. 2011. "More Montana farmers are venturing toward the organic marketplace." *Montana Business Quarterly* 49(2):10-14.

Cohen, Betsy. 2009. "Raised on grass: Adapting to cattle markets, caring for Blackfoot Valley sustains generations of Mannix family." *Missoulian*. September 13.

**17. Tues., Mar. 26 – Food Safety and Community Food Systems**

Delind, Laura and Philip Howard. 2008. "Safe at any scale? Food scares, food regulation, and scaled alternatives. *Agriculture and Human Values* 25:301- 317.

Hassanein, Neva. 2011. "Matters of scale and the politics of the Food Safety Modernization Act." AFHVS Presidential Address, presented at the 2011 Annual meeting of the Agriculture Food, and Human Values Society. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28: 577-581.

**18. Thurs., Mar. 28 – TBD**

**SPRING BREAK: Week of April 1**

**19. Tues., April 9 – TBD**

**20. Thurs., April 11 – TBD**

**21. Tues., April 16 – Challenging the "Local"**

Born, Branden and Mark Purcell. 2006. "Avoiding the local trap: Scale and food systems in planning research." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26:195-207.

Allen, Patricia. 2010. "Realizing justice in local food systems." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy, and Society* 3:295-308.

**22. Thurs., April 18 – Work session**

**23. Tues., Apr. 23 – ESSAY #2 DUE**

**25. Thurs., Apr. 25 – PRESENTATIONS**

**26. Tues., Apr. 30 – PRESENTATIONS**

**27. Thurs., May 2 – PRESENTATIONS**

**28. Tues., May 7 – PRESENTATIONS**

**29. Thurs., May 9 – PRESENTATIONS**

**30. Wed. May 15 – Exam period at 1:10-3:10. FINAL TERM PAPERS DUE.**

**Note:** If it works for everyone, we will probably select another time to meet and have a final gathering/potluck and reflection on the course.