

POLI 405
Capstone Seminar: Food Insecurity, Public Policy and Community
Action

Spring 2022
Tuesday/Thursday 1:40-2:55
Maybank 111

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or by appointment

***** Important Notice *****

We find ourselves at an interesting time in history. The country is in what seems like a continual state of uncertainty. The pandemic has led to millions of people contracting the illness, hundreds of thousands of deaths and a severe disruption in all of our daily lives. As you make your way through this capstone course, grant yourself the space to reflect on what is happening in the economic, political, and social environment and how these events are shaping your thinking, your practice, and your studies.

It is also incredibly important for you to take care of your physical and mental health. While I am committed to providing you with a learning experience that will help you wrap up your studies in political science and prepare you for future academic and professional success, your work in this class should not come at the expense of your health. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you find yourself struggling. I will work to support you in whatever way makes the most sense for your personal situation. Further down in the syllabus you will see a list of CofC resources that are available to you to support your wellness.

The College of Charleston is doing everything it can to keep students, faculty and staff safe and healthy. In order to accomplish this, we all must be a part of the effort and adhere to some basic policies (full details can be found [here](#)). Although the COVID vaccination is not required it is highly recommended for your own health and the safety of those around you. Additionally, please note that it is college policy that ***everyone is required to wear a mask to class***. We also should all try our best to practice social distancing and good hygiene. If you are sick, please do not come to class. Let's all do our part so we can have a safe and productive semester full of learning and development.

Course Description

Why is it that everyday US schools battle with both childhood obesity and childhood hunger? How have government policies shaped the growing, distribution and processing of food in this country and how does that affect our health, wealth and local communities? This course will delve into these and other questions surrounding issues of nutrition policy, hunger, corporate farming, food waste and community activism. From

the global to the national to the local level, food policy will be examined along with the important social problems stemming from our policies and potential solutions developed to deal with these problems.

The Capstone experience provides students with the opportunity to bring the skills and perspectives developed over their time as political science majors to bear in a seminar anchored by intensive reading, critical thinking and writing. It also represents a chance to polish those skills before graduation. This seminar was designed with these goals in mind so you will be expected to prepare diligently for class, conduct independent research all semester long, and to communicate the results of that research in writing and verbally by the semester's end.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution and basic issues and challenges surrounding food creation and distribution;
- Critically evaluate food policy in the United States;
- Apply the basic principles of social science inquiry to a research question to demonstrate mastery of the independent research process;
- Demonstrate an understanding of how communities in the US and abroad deal with issues of food insecurity;
- Display skills in critical analysis and effective communication;
- Explain and evaluate a community-based organization's response efforts to food insecurity.

Required Course Materials

- 1) Nestle, Marion, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* 2013 University of California Press.
- 2) Paarlberg, Robert, *Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. 2010 Oxford Press.

Other readings can be found electronically on OAKS.

Attendance and Participation: ***Regular class attendance is absolutely necessary*** in any course, but is critical in this class. This class meets ***in person*** and it is expected that you attend in person, unless the professor notifies you in advance of a change. You must keep up with the reading, in-class assignments, and course projects. Please feel free to ask questions in class – I will do everything I can to help you succeed, so do not hesitate to come see me if you are struggling or falling behind.

Assignments and Grading

Students are expected to read all assignments prior to class and participate in discussions. Your final grade will be based on the following components of the course:

Participation:

Each student will be expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate. This course will be taught as a seminar, not a lecture, with the intent that students will be

active in the course discussions. This course is an opportunity for us to learn together and from each other, rather than in the more traditional model. In order to develop and ensure this type of environment, participation will be encouraged and graded through two means.

First, throughout the semester there will be reading reflections worth a total of 100 points. The purpose of the reflections is to encourage you both to read the material for class and to attend regularly. These will be administered with no prior notification on random days throughout the semester and done in class. They are designed to test your comprehension of the assigned class readings that you are required and expected to have read prior to the class. *There will be no make-up reading reflections.* In order to compensate for students who have legitimate reasons for missing class, the two lowest reflection grades will be dropped.

Second, each student will be expected to lead class discussion with 1-2 other students one time over the course of the semester. This will mean that you come to class with a series of questions/reflections stemming from the day's reading to steer the conversation for that class period. You should have questions/reflections that showcase your reading and comprehension of the material under review and highlight that you have been thinking about the readings. There are no perfect questions, only questions that suggest you are engaged and challenging yourself to think through the political, economic, historical, geographic and other facets of food policy. In that sense, questions like "what was the central argument in Nestle's chapter 5?" will not be acceptable. While questions that help the class to understand the industrialization of farming such as "how does Nestle draw an analogy between industrial processing of corn and our digestive system, and how is this process advantageous?" would show that you are really thinking. There are no right or wrong answers and it is possible to err in your interpretation of the readings, and you will not be penalized for that. In order to help me understand where I may need to assist you in leading class discussion I need you to email me your questions by 8:00 am the morning you are presenting. Do not expect to hear back from me unless there is a major problem with your discussion questions/reflections. Your class session will be worth 20 points.

Participation grade total: 120 points

Active Learning Assignments:

Each student will participate in **one** active learning assignments over the semester. A separate hand out will be given providing various options and assignment expectations. The purpose of this assignment is to expose you to food insecurity, farm policy, and community programs in action. Students will select a non-profit organization, public agency or farm and participate in some specific event and then write a short (4-6 page) paper explaining and evaluating the experience. ***Active learning assignments total: 80 points***

FINAL PROJECT: Research Paper

Over the semester you will undertake an independent research project to investigate some aspect of food insecurity, farm policy or community response to it. You are free to use

quantitative or qualitative research methodologies or a combination of the two as you investigate your topic. A separate handout will have the specific requirements for your project. It will be broken down into several components to be turned in over the semester. The final paper is due the last day of class. **Research project total: 200 points**

All late assignments will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are late. Assignments that are more than 5 days past due will not be accepted.

The course grade will break down as follows:

Participation	120
Active Learning Project	80
Research Project	200
TOTAL	400

The following grading scale will be used:

A 372-400	A- 360-371	B+ 352-359
B 332-351	B- 320-331	C+ 312-319
C 292-311	C- 280-291	D+ 272-279
D 252-271	D- 240-251	F 239 and below

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, or presenting another's works or ideas as one's own, is a form of stealing. The instructor reserves the right to examine any source used by the student before giving a grade on an assignment, and to give and "incomplete" in the course if necessary, to allow time to obtain sources. Students should be prepared to show source material to the instructor for the purpose of verifying information. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and students will receive an F on any assignment or exam the instructor determines is in violation of the academic honesty policy. Academic dishonesty includes the following offenses:

- 1) Claiming as your own work a paper written by another student.
- 2) Turning in a paper that contains paraphrases of someone else's ideas but does not give proper credit to that person for those ideas.
- 3) Turning in a paper that is largely a restatement in your own words of a paper written by someone else, even if you give credit to that person for those ideas. The thesis and organizing principles of a paper must be your own.
- 4) Turning in a paper that uses the exact words of another author without using quotation marks, even if proper credit is given in a citation, or that changes the words only slightly and claims them to be paraphrases.
- 5) Turning in the same paper, even in a different version, for two different courses without the permission of both professors involved.
- 6) Using any external source (notes, books, other students, etc.) for assistance during an in-class exam, unless given permission to do so by the professor.

College of Charleston Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>

OAKS

OAKS is the course management software we will use for this class. OAKS will be used for this to provide the syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted. Check OAKS regularly!

Communication and Engagement

Please do not hesitate to contact me. My preferred method of initial communication is email. I am more than happy to talk by phone (see office number above), zoom or in person. Feel free to come to office hours or to set-up an appointment that is convenient for you.

Accommodations for Documented Disabilities

This College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the [Center of Disability Services/SNAP](mailto:SNAP@cofc.edu), 843.953.1431 SNAP@cofc.edu or me so that such accommodation may be arranged. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before any accommodation is needed.

Center for Student Learning

I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. The CSL is located on the first floor of Addlestone Library and they can assist you with writing term papers, essays, letters, memos or book reviews from developing ideas and organizing materials to editing final drafts (in addition to other services). For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu>. Additional student support services can be found here: <http://capp.cofc.edu/Support%20Services/index.php>.

Inclement Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction

If in-person classes are suspended, I will announce a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available through our Information Technology division (843) 953-3375 or helpdesk@cofc.edu to provide students with these essential tools.

Mental & Physical Wellbeing

At the college, we take every students' mental and physical wellbeing seriously. If you find yourself experiencing physical illnesses, please reach out to student health services (843.953.5520). And if you find yourself experiencing any mental health challenges (for example, anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, and/or loneliness/homesickness) please consider contacting either the Counseling Center (professional counselors at <http://counseling.cofc.edu> or 843.953.5640 3rd Robert Scott Small Building) or the Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting "4support" to 839863 or meet with them in person 3rd Floor Stern Center). These services are there for you to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.

Food & Housing Resources:

Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (such as not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please

contact the Dean of Students for support (<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/about/salt.php>). Also, you can go to <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/student-food-housing-insecurity/index.php> to learn about food and housing assistance that is available to you. In addition, there are several resources on and off campus to help. You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry-goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student in need. Please also consider reaching out to me if you are comfortable in doing so.

Inclusion

The College of Charleston offers many resources for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff along with their allies.

[Preferred Name and Pronoun Information](#)

[On Campus Gender Inclusive facilities](#)

[Campus Resources](#)

[College of Charleston Reporting Portals](#)

[National Resources for Faculty & Staff](#)

[GSEC Reports](#)

[Documenting LGBTQ Life in the Lowcountry](#) (CofC Addlestone Library Special Collections Project)

[College of Charleston Quality Enhancement Plan \(QEP\)](#)

[Articles about CofC and LGBTQ+ Issues](#)

Religious Accommodations

The College of Charleston community is enriched by students of many faiths that have various religious observances, practices, and beliefs. We value student rights and freedoms, including the right of each student to adhere to individual systems of religion. The College prohibits discrimination against any student because of such student's religious belief or any absence thereof. The College acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observances in some traditions may cause conflicts with student schedules. In affirming this diversity, like many other colleges and universities, the College supports the concept of "reasonable accommodation for religious observance" in regard to class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and other academic work requirements, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship on the College. If you would like a class accommodation due to your religious observances, practices, and beliefs, please contact me in advance to request this. I will do everything within reason to accommodate you.

Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary adjustments to this schedule. Required texts are listed by the last name of the first author. Readings that are designated with an * can be found on OAKS.

Date

January 11

Assignment

Introduction & Syllabus Review

In class discussion

<i>January 13</i>	<i>Introduction to Food Politics</i> Paarlberg Chp. 1; Nestle – Foreword through Introduction
<i>January 18-20</i>	<i>Undermining Dietary Advice</i> Nestle Part 1 (Chapters 1-3)
<i>January 25-27</i>	<i>Working the System</i> Nestle Chapters 4-5 Paarlberg Chapter 11 “Ending Corporate Control” (National Family Farm Coalition https://nffc.net/what-we-do/ending-corporate-control/)
<i>February 1</i>	<i>Working the System, Contd.</i> Nestle Chapter 6-7 Paarlberg Chapter 14
<i>February 3-8</i>	<i>Reflection Paper due February 8</i> <i>Exploiting Kids, Corrupting Schools</i> Nestle Part 3 (Chapters 8-9) <i>Guest Speaker Walter Campbell 2/3</i>
<i>February 10-15</i>	<i>Food Insecurity and Public Programs</i> Paarlberg Chapter 2 & 4
<i>February 17-22</i>	<i>Urban Food Security: International & Local Perspectives</i> Paarlberg Chapters 5 & 7
<i>February 24</i>	<i>Active Learning Day</i>
<i>March 1 & 3</i>	<i>Annotated Bibliography Due March 1</i> <i>Deregulation and Supplements</i> Nestle Part 4 (Chapter 10-12)
<i>March 7-11</i>	<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>
<i>March 15-17</i>	<i>Techno-Foods</i> Nestle Part 5 (Chapters 13-15) Nestle Conclusion
<i>March 22-24</i>	<i>Food Safety and School Lunches</i> Paarlberg Chp. 13 *Food Safety: Public-Private Approaches * Poppendick

*What's in the Meat?" from *Fast Food Nation*

March 29

Research Paper Methodology Due

What do we Eat?

**Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safran Foer

**Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser

*Sugar, Salt & Fat

March 31

The Cost of Food and Obesity

Paarlberg Chapters 3 & 8

*Reducing Childhood Obesity

April 5-7

Active Learning Assignment due April 7th

Agriculture and Organic Farming

Paarlberg Chps. 6, 9, 10 & 12

*Organic Agriculture Supports Biodiversity

*Urban Agriculture by Brown & Jameton

April 12

Food Loss

*Corner on Food Loss

*Food Loss on the Farm

*Hallmark of a Sustainable Farming Industry

*Analyzing Retail Food Loss

*Food Loss and the American Household

*What to do about Food Loss

April 14 & 19

Research Presentations

April 21

Wrap-up

Final Research Projects due in class