

ALCE 5984
Food Security & Resilient Communities:
Food Systems Theory & Praxis
Spring 2015



Course Overview

This graduate-level course is a critical and interdisciplinary exploration of current issues related to food security and the emerging discourse of food systems. This course will focus on the concepts of food security, community food security, food sovereignty, resiliency, and agricultural sustainability from local, regional, and international perspectives. Topics include but are not limited to: conceptual and programmatic approaches to addressing food security, food security policy, food system assessment, and the role of university-community partnerships to enhance food security and resiliency in communities. The Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP) will provide course participants with a theoretical and practical backdrop for class discussion and coursework, including engaging with AFP scholar/practitioners and visiting the region. This course also involves e-collaborating with a partnering graduate course in food security being offered at North Carolina State University this spring. Participatory learning and asset-based community development are also relevant course themes. Graduate student standing only (3H, 3C).

Learning Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, students should be able to:

- Define, analyze, and articulate theories, practices, and policies pertaining to food systems.
- Define and critique conceptual and programmatic definitions of and approaches to enhance food security local, regionally, and internationally.
- Define and critique scholar/ practitioner participation as change agents in the food system.
- Incorporate food system concepts and strategies into personal and professional practice for socially just ends.

CRN: 20247
Schedule: Thursday 4-7 PM
Location: 244 Litton Reaves Hall

Instructor: Dr. Kim L. Niewolny
Department of Agricultural, Leadership, & Community Education
282 Litton Reaves Hall (0343)
Tel: 540. 231.5784
Email: niewolny@vt.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching advisors: Garland Mason & Dr. Phil D'Adamo-Damery, Department of Agricultural, Leadership, & Community Education; Virginia Tech

North Carolina State University AFP partners: Dr. Michelle Schroeder-Moreno & Amanda McWhirt; Department of Crop Science

Justification for Course

“This commentary is not an attempt to definitively develop a healthy food system model. I think this is neither possible nor practical. Rather, it is my intention to portray the process of moving toward a healthy food system as a wicked problem while suggesting a set of guidelines under which we can proceed to identify strategies for markedly improving the situation.”

~Michael Hamm, 2009

In this graduate course, students will identify, analyze and address the inter-connectedness of food systems from sociopolitical, economic, ecological perspectives. We will explore the many complex and often challenging issues (as a wicked problem) related specifically to food security—what we do/don’t eat and why, how food is produced and distributed, and who benefits (and doesn’t) from these processes. Educational and community development agendas are at the heart of this dialogue.

A major component of this course is to explore the conceptual grounding and practical applications of the Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP), a USDA-NIFA, AFRI Grant Program (Award Number: 2011-68004-30079). The AFP is using a foodshed concept to address issues of **community food security** in West Virginia and the Appalachian regions of North Carolina and Virginia. Similar to the concept of a watershed, a foodshed takes into account everything between where food is produced and where it is consumed. This includes the farms and gardens used to raise food, travel routes used to transport products, processing facilities, distribution (farmers markets, brokers, retailers), and the restaurants, institutions, and homes where we all eat.

- ∞ The AFP is designed to build on the work that is already happening in Appalachia, facilitating and enhancing formal and informal work by creating a network of organizations and individuals who are engaging similar issues related to community development, economic viability, health and nutrition, food access, social justice, and agriculture.
- ∞ By working collaboratively, the AFP hopes to build on the human and natural resources in the region to improve access, expand food security, and enhance food economies, especially in communities that have been underserved and are economically vulnerable.
- ∞ The AFP aims to cultivate resilient food systems within the region. This means creatively working with communities, farmers, policymakers, non-profits, and institutions to better understand the food system and implement changes that have long term benefits for all people in the region.

In working towards this work, the AFP is committed to engaging stakeholders, service providers, community workers, researchers, students, producers, and organizations in western North Carolina, southwest Virginia, and West Virginia. The project has four major objectives:

- Create a place-based foodshed model with special emphasis on food accessibility and affordability
- Design and implement participatory community food security assessments;
- Develop, implement, and expand food system/ food security curriculum; and
- Implement a comprehensive, community-based evaluation of “Foodshed Security”.



To learn more, visit the AFP at: www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org

Course Assignments

- Assignment guidelines are posted in Scholar
- Assignments are due in class on the day stated on the course calendar, unless otherwise noted
- All assignments and guidelines are subject to change.

► Participation

This course is philosophically based using participatory learning principles. Complete and committed participation is a core principle in which the course operates. We will be using a variety of methods and techniques to implement our course—as a group of learners. This will require course participants to adhere to democratic decision making throughout the semester. This process is foundationally rooted in pragmatic, critical dialogue. Each participant will have an opportunity to critique their course participation through a written assignment at the end of the term. This critique will contribute to 25% of your course grade.

What you can expect:

- Participants will be expected to choose, assign, and read course material with close attention to concepts and ideas for application in course discussions and assignments.
- Participants will be expected to draw upon newly learned (and previously obtained) skills and strategies to organize and lead class discussions and activities.
- Participants will be expected to develop and implement course assignments using Scholar as our conduit for resource sharing (see below).
- Participants will be expected to learn and follow a consensus model for decision making.
- Participants will be expected to be patient, courteous, and sincere throughout the learning process.

Participation written assignment generally includes:

- Length of the participation reflection paper should be 700-800 words using 12 point font and one inch margins. Please use double-spacing. If references are used, please adhere to APA formatting.
- In the conclusion of the paper, include a “participation” grade you would give yourself using the Letter Evaluation Scale (A-F) found on page 3 in your syllabus.
- This reflection paper should be written as a WORD document and emailed directly to niewolny@vt.edu by 5pm on May 8th.

► Critical Reflection Responses

Students will develop weekly reflective responses to the topic of discussion. Reflective statements should fill two pages (double-spaced; 12 point font; one inch margins) in length and capture and critique main points of the reading(s). Please include a list of references in addition to your two page response. These written responses will be collected each week for review and returned the following week. These responses are designed to be used to organize your thinking and prepare you for critical dialogue with your peers. You may be asked to share your responses with other students as part of class activities. No late responses will be accepted. Overall, this assignment contributes to 25% of your course grade.

► Facilitation

Course participants will be expected to lead portions of class by directly relating “student choice readings” and thematic issues relevant to the course. Each participant will be expected to:

1) choose and disseminate one reading by 5pm on the Friday the week before his or her assigned facilitation; 2) lead the class in an interactive learning session using student selected readings; and 3) provide a written critique of his/her (co)facilitation. Co-facilitation might be required due to the number of course participants. A common expectation for all facilitators includes being prepared to lead a critique of the readings, challenge peers to think about application, and foster interactive discourse. This assignment will contribute to 20% of your final grade.

► Practitioner Narrative Assignment

Drawing upon the Practitioner Profile (PP) Framework of Forester, Peters, and Hittleman (2005), your final assignment for the course will include: 1) conducting a 60-90 minute interview with a food system practitioner, 2) transcribing the interview, 3) editing this interview for readability, 4) and analyzing your profile by referring to course themes and literature. The final assignment is due by 5pm, May 8th, as a hard copy document. This assignment contributes to 30% of your course grade.

The interview should be conducted with someone who is a practitioner of community food systems. You have the choice to collaborate with Appalachian Foodshed Project practitioners or relevant food system practitioner /scholar who lives and works in our region. A list of practitioners will be provided to you; however, you are welcomed to identify someone on your own. Local area practitioners who might not be directly involved in the AFP may be an option.

Course Evaluation

- Final grades are based upon a percentage of total points out of 100.
- Assignments are due in class, hard-copy, unless otherwise noted.
- All items are subject to change.

Assignment	Points
Participation (25%)	25
Critical Reflection Responses (25%)	25
Facilitation (20%)	20
Practitioner Narrative Assignment (30 %)	30
Total Possible Points	100

Evaluation Scale	
A	100-93.0
A-	92.9-90.0
B+	89.9-87.0
B	86.9-83.0
B-	82.9-80.0
C+	79.9-77.0
C	76.9-73.0
C-	72.9-70.0
D+	69.9-67.0
D	66.9-63.0
D-	62.9-60.0
F	< 60.0

Course Schedule and Main Course Topics

PLEASE NOTE: A detailed course schedule with assignments will be built with student input over the semester. All dates, topics, & speakers are subject to change.

Week 1

January 22

Course & Participant Introductions

- Food Systems, Food Security, and “Wicked Problems”
- Meet Dr. Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, North Carolina State University
- Introduce Critical Reflection Response (CRS) Assignment

READ:

- AFP Website: www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org
- Hamm, M. (2009)

Week 2

January 29

Setting the Food Security Stage through “Food Systems”

- Defining “Food Systems”
- Industrialization/Globalization of Agriculture
- Consensus Building
- Introduce Facilitation Assignment

READ:

- **Full Text:** Guptill, A.E., Copelton, D.A., & Lucal, B. (2013). *Food and society: Principles and paradoxes*. Polity Press: Malden, MA.

CRS DUE

Week 3

February 5

Food Security Definitions, Discourses, & Policy

- Household Food Security
- Community Food Security
- Food Sovereignty
- Local, National, and International Perspectives

READ:

- Holben, D. H. (2002)
- Hamm, M. & Bellows, A. (2003)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (2009)
- Patel, R. (2009)
- **Text:** Thomas, C, (**chapter 1**) in Thomas, C. (ed.) (2014). *Voices of hunger: Food insecurity in the United States*

Optional Reading: Grantmakers in Health (2012)

CRS DUE

Week 4

February 12

Food Production, Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security

- Agroecology and sustainability
- Food security and the Green Revolution
- Global food security and production
- Presentation by Michelle Schroeder-Moreno

READ:

- Holt-Giménez, E., & Altieri, M.A. (2013)
- Holt-Giménez, E., Shattuck, A., Altieri, M., Herren, H., Gliessman, S. (2012)
- Godfray, H. C. J., Beddington, J. R., Crute, I. R., Haddad, L., Lawrence, D., Muir, JF., Pretty, J., Robinson, S., Thomas, S.M., & Toulmin, C. (2010)

Optional Reading: Fischer, R. A., Byerlee, D., & Edmeades, G.O. (2009)

CRS DUE

Week 5

February 19

Assessing Food Systems, Food Security, and Community Resilience

- Community-based Food System Assessments
- Nikki D'Adamo-Damery, AFP Deputy Director, Virginia Tech
- Introduce Practitioner Profile Assignment

READ:

- Abi-Nader, J. A., et al. (2009)
- Pothukchi, K. (2007)
- Stevenson, G. W., Ruhf, K., Lezberg, S., & Clancy, K. (2007)

CRS DUE

Week 6

February 26

Food Justice & Food Security (PART 1)

- What /Why/How Food Justice?
- Food In/security and Access
- Phil D'Adamo-Damery AFP Research Associate, Virginia Tech

READ:

- **Text:** Alkon, A., & Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability.* (**chapters 1-6**)

CRS DUE

Week 7

March 5

Food Justice & Food Security (PART 2)

- Food Justice/Security in the Region
- Shorlette Ammons, North Carolina, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

READ:

- **Text:** Alkon, A., & Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. (**chapters 7-15**)

CRS DUE

Week 8

March 12

No Class (spring break)

Week 9

March 19

VA Farm-to-School Conference / Open Session Facilitation (full day trip to Charlottesville)

READ:

- Bagdonis, J., Hinrichs, C., Schafft, K. (2009).
- **Text:** Hoflund, Chen, & Edbon, (**chapter 7**) in Thomas, C. (ed.) (2014). *Voices of hunger: Food insecurity in the United States*

CRS DUE

Week 10

March 26

Food Security Initiative/AFP Regional Visit

READ: TBD

CRS DUE

Week 11

April 2

Student Choice (s) and Facilitation

READ:

CRS DUE

Week 12

April 9 **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation**

READ:

CRS DUE

Week 13

April 16 **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation**

READ:

CRS DUE

Week 14

April 23 **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation**

READ:

CRS DUE

Week 15

April 30 **Reflections, Lessons Learned, and Course Celebration**

Final

May 8 **Turn in Final Assignments**

- **Practitioner Narrative Assignment due by 5pm --- hard copy**
- **Participation Response due by 5pm –send submission at niewolny@vt.edu**

Course Materials

► **Required Texts: These can be acquired through online sources.**

Guptill, A.E., Copelton, D.A., & Lucal, B. (2013). *Food and society: Principles and paradoxes*. Polity Press: Malden, MA.

Alkon, A., & Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

Thomas, C. (ed.) (2014). *Voices of hunger: Food insecurity in the United States*. Common Ground Publishing: University of Illinois. (eBook)

► **Required Readings: Course-selected readings are posted on our Scholar Course.**

Abi-Nader, J. A., A., Harris, K., Herra, H. Eddings, D., Habib, D., Hanna, J., Paterson, C., Sutton, K., Villanueva, L. (2009). Whole measures for community food systems: Value-based planning and evaluation. In C. F. S. Coalition (Ed.). Portland, OR.

Bagdonis, J., Hinrichs, C., Schafft, K. (2009). The emergence and framing of farm-to-school initiatives: Civic engagement, health and local agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 26: 107-119.

Fischer, R. A., Byerlee, D., & Edmeades, G.O. (2009). Can technology deliver on the yield challenge to 2050? Expert meeting on how to feed the world in 2050. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Economic and Social Development Department.

Food and Agriculture Organization. (2009). Rome Principles: World summit on food security. United Nations. Available at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final_Declaration/WSFS09_Declaration.pdf

Grantmakers in Health. (2012). Too few choices, too much junk: Connecting food & health. Issue brief no. 39. Washington, DC. Available at <http://www.gih.org>

Godfray, H. C. J., Beddington, J. R., Crute, I. R., Haddad, L., Lawrence, D., Muir, JF., Pretty, J., Robinson, S., Thomas, S.M., & Toulmin, C. (2010). Food security: The challenge of feeding 9 billion people. *Science*, 327(5967), 812-818.

Hamm, M.W. (2009). Principles for framing a healthy food system. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition* 4(3-4), 241-250.

Hamm, M. & Bellows, A. (2003). Community food security and nutrition educators. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 35, (1), 37-43.

Holben, D. H. (2002). An overview of food security and its measurement. *Nutrition Today*, 37(4), 156-162.

Holt-Giménez, E., Altieri, M.A. (2013). Agroecology, food sovereignty and the new green revolution. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*. 37(1), 90–102.

Holt-Giménez, E., Shattuck, A., Altieri, M., Herren, H., Gliessman, S. (2012). We already grow enough food for 10 billion people ... and still can't end hunger. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*. 36(6), 595-598.

Patel, R. (2009). What does food sovereignty look like? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(3), 663-706.

Pothukchi, K. (2007). Building community food security: Lessons from community projects: 1999-2003. In K. Siedenburg (Ed.). Venice, CA: *Community Food Security Coalition*.

Stevenson, G. W., Ruhf, K., Lezberg, S., & Clancy, K. (2007). Warrior, builder, and weaver work-Strategies for changing the food system. In C. Claire Hinrichs & T. A. Lyson (Eds.), *Remaking the North American food system- Strategies for sustainability* (pp. 33-62). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

A final course reference list will be developed and shared at the end of the semester.



► **Additional Sources: Below is a sampling of resources to consider for further reading**

Projects and Resources

- Appalachian Foodshed Project (www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org)
- Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit. USDA (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan-electronic-publications-from-the-food-assistance-nutrition-research-program/efan02013.aspx>)
- Community Food Security Bibliography, Community First (<http://www.carleton.ca/communityfirst/resources/community-food-security-publications/>)
- Food Dignity (<http://fooddignity.org/>)
- Food Desert Locator (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/index.htm>)
- Community and Regional Food Systems Project (<http://www.community-food.org/>)
- USDA Community Food Projects Grant program (<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/cfp/cfp.html>)
- USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), Food Security Projects (http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri_synopsis.html)
- Why Hunger (<http://www.whyhunger.org/about/whatWeDo>)

Organizations and Agencies:

- Community Food Security Coalition (<http://foodsecurity.org/category/home/>)
- Growing Power (<http://www.growingpower.org/>)
- Kellogg Foundation (<http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/healthy-kids/food-and-community.aspx>)
- La Via Campesina (<http://viacampesina.org/en/>)
- National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, ATTRA (<https://attra.ncat.org/index.php>)
- Heifer International (<https://attra.ncat.org/index.php>)
- Wallace Center (<http://www.wallacecenter.org/>)
- World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>)
- World Food Programme, United Nations (<http://www.wfp.org/about>)

Journals:

- Agriculture, Food & Human Values (<http://www.afhvs.org/journal.html>)
- Community Development Journal (http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/cdj/about.html)
- Culture and Agriculture (<http://cultureandagriculture.org/>)
- Sociologia Ruralis (<http://www.ruralsociology.eu/WebRoot/1036578/Page.aspx?id=1058609>)
- Food Policy (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03069192>)
- Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development (<http://www.agdevjournal.com/>)
- Journal of Community Practice (<http://www.acosa.org/jcponline.html>)
- Journal of Food Distribution Research (<http://fdrs.ag.utk.edu/journal.html>)
- Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition (<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/WHEN>)
- Journal of Regions, Economy and Society (<http://cjres.oxfordjournals.org/>)
- Journal of Rural Studies (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/07430167>)
- Journal of Rural Social Sciences (<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/auxiliary/srsa/index.htm>)
- Journal of Rural and Community Development (<http://www.jrcd.ca/index.php>)
- Renewable Agriculture & Food Systems Journal (<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=RAF>)
- Rural Sociology (<http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0036-0112&site=1>)

Course Policies

Be prepared. Evaluation criteria of course work comprises accuracy, depth, and comprehensiveness; logic and organization of thought and writing; and clarity of writing and presentation. In all submitted work, course participants must present convincing arguments with suitable research and literature. It is also an important course expectation that participants come to each class with sufficient command of the reading assignments to discuss them in depth. This means that during every class session, each of us will have read the material assigned and be prepared for class discussion and activities.

Written Work Policy. The American Psychological Association's (APA) *Publication Manual (6th edition)* is the recommended style manual for written work. Papers and written assignments with minor grammar violations and *Publication Manual* requirements will be marked accordingly. Written work comprising serious composition and/or citation violations will not be reviewed. As part of Virginia Tech's Principles of Community, participants should avoid using sexist, gender-exclusive, racially prejudiced, and other forms of discriminatory language in all course work.

Quality counts more than quantity. Engaged and courteous participation by all course participants is expected. It is essential that all participants actively contribute to class discussions and activities, while exercising respect and restraint.

Attendance is required. Course participants are expected to come to class each week. Please contact the instructor by email or office phone if you cannot attend class. Absences will only be excused in the event of medical illness, immediate family emergency, religious holiday, or an approved professional event. In the event of a planned absence, such as a professional obligation or religious holiday, participants are expected to inform the instructor at least one week prior to the date of nonattendance. More than one absence could result in course failure. Be courteous to others by arriving on time to class and silencing cell phones.

Late assignments cannot earn full credit. Five points will be deducted for each calendar day an assignment is turned in past its due date up to one week, unless otherwise noted. Course incompletes are available only for medical emergencies (i.e., personal and immediate family).

Policy on Academic Integrity. Each participant in this course is expected to abide by the *Virginia Tech Honor System*. It is a university-wide expectation that written work submitted by a participant in this course for academic credit will be the participant's own. For full information on the Graduate Honor System, visit <http://ghs.graduateschool.vt.edu/>

Learning Needs. Any participants with special needs are encouraged to consult with me about those needs. Please consult with me as soon as possible so that we can work together to make the necessary accommodations. Anything you discuss with me will be held in strictest confidence. Additional information about assistance for special learning needs for all Virginia Tech students can be located at the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 250 S. Main Street, Suite 300; Mail Code (0185); 231-0858 (V); 231-0853 (TTY); www.ssd.vt.edu.

Principles of Community. Students are to adhere to Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in all aspects of the course (see next page).

Virginia Tech's Principles of Community

<http://www.vt.edu/diversity/principles-of-community.html>

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- **We affirm** the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- **We affirm** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- **We affirm** the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- **We reject** all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- **We pledge** our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).