

FDSC 421H-Food Systems: Farm to Fork
Course Syllabus
Spring 2022

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Course Description: This course will introduce students to the concept of *food* systems at the local, regional, and global levels. Students will examine and reflect on critical issues influencing food production, processing, distribution, and consumption. Scientific and technical publications, multimedia presentations, field experiences, observations, informal interviews, and class discussions will be used to promote student understanding.

Text:

Chase, L. & Grubinger, V. (2014), *Food, farms, and community: Exploring food systems*. Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press.

Other course material will come from a variety of sources including scientific and professional journals, publications from governmental agencies, information from agricultural organizations, multimedia presentations, and personal field experiences. Some of the handouts used (with permission) are from the *Teaching the Food System* curriculum initiative at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (foodspanlearning.org), a project which the professor participated in field testing of the original materials and provided review for revision. A complete curriculum is for teaching mostly middle and high school students is available from this source. Documents/handouts/media will be provided through your university eCollege account. Access to the Internet and a printer are essential.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to-

- a. **Learning Outcome 1:** Students will be able to demonstrate *knowledge* of issues, processes, trends, and systems in context of food production, processing, and distribution..
- b. **Learning Outcome 2:** Students will be able to *apply* knowledge about issues, processes, trends, and systems in context of local/regional food production and processing through course discussions and assignments.
- c. **Learning Outcome 3:** Students will be able to *evaluate* conditions for establishing and maintaining local/regional food production or processing enterprises.
- d. **Learning Outcome 4:** Students will be able to *synthesize* observations, discussions, interview results, and other course activities in a final exam or *Reflective Essay* supported with properly cited references and examples.

The following instructional objectives will guide course content to achieve these outcomes.

1. Define the phrase *food systems* and contextualize within a local, regional, and global perspective.
2. Communicate issues related to food systems using accurate terms, definitions, and descriptions.
3. Interpret research, technical, and trade publications related to food systems.
4. Discuss the concepts of local, regional, global, and community food systems.
5. Determine regulatory influences on food production, distribution, and consumption.
6. Examine economic factors affecting food production, distribution, and consumption.
7. Review ecological and environmental factors associated with food systems.

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8. Compare food processing for local, regional, and global food systems.
9. Analyze criticism of animal agriculture as a component of food systems.
10. Explore issues related to food safety and hygiene.
11. Appreciate the impact of labor and technology used in farming and food processing.
12. Recognize the diversity of products and production methods in food systems.
13. Participate in activities designed to promote career awareness and development in food systems.
14. Engage in farm-based activities that contribute to local or regional food systems.
15. Synthesize course topics, resources, activities, and perspective into an essay regarding food systems.

Grade Determination:

	<i>Possible Points</i>
Online discussions (10 Modules @ 20 per module)	200
Assignment #1 Poster on food item origin, production, processing, and distribution	100
Service Learning/Career Awareness & Development Engagement	100
Farm-Based Experiential Learning Activities	100
Assignment #2 Fabulous Farm to Fork Food Systems Finale	100

$$\text{Your Grade (\%)} = \frac{\text{Points Earned} \times 100}{600} \quad (\text{A} = 90\text{-}100 \text{ B} = 80\text{-}89 \text{ C} = 70\text{-}79 \text{ D} = 60\text{-}69 \text{ F} = \text{below } 60\%)$$

Class Engagement for All Course Activities

This is a “flipped” or web-enhanced course, where most media-related activities and handouts are available online for review outside of class. There are related online discussion prompts for each module that serve as formative assessments for each module. There will be 10 online modules (or units) for this course which are opened and closed following a schedule. Additionally, there will be weekly lecture/discussion with outside of class-time farm-based experiential learning activities and designated service learning projects from which you can choose.

Attendance and Participation in Class/Online Discussions

You are expected to attend each class period ready to participate in discussion and other class activities. Participation in face to face class activities will enhance your understanding and perspectives related to the various aspects of food systems. Each module will have 2-3 online discussion prompts related to the reading assignments, multimedia presentations, and other course activities. Replies to the discussions will be due by 11:50 p.m. the first Sunday following when the module is posted/opened. In order to get full credit for online discussion, a reply to each prompt must be posted in a timely manner.

Assignment #1

Each student will create and share a poster presentation with the professor and classmates addressing the production, processing, and distribution of one *non-commodity* food item, such as a fruit, vegetable, or grain other than barley, corn, rice, or wheat. Prior approval from the professor is required to eliminate duplication and assure that the food item is relevant to course content. The poster presentation will consist of one PowerPoint slide with information presented with title, subtitles, text, graphics, and references. This project is similar in design to a 2-3 page term paper but presented in a one-page format.

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Service Learning/Career Awareness & Development Engagement

Each student is expected to engage in at least one *service-learning* activity related to food systems. Pre-approved examples include:

- Five hour volunteer service to an organization that provides food assistance to those in need,
- Five hour volunteer service in “dirt therapy” such as community or school garden,
- Train or assist in training of youth in food preparation through 4-H or FCCLA activities/events,
- Plan, organize, and host an Agriculture/Food related science and/or history fair

Each student is also *required* to assist with the Area V & VI FFA Career Development Event on either **Monday, April 11 or Tuesday, April 21**. This is an *all-day* event and will count as an official university excused absence. There will be a variety of events in Commerce and Sulphur Springs for you to choose from to participate. I can assist you in determining how to fit these events into your class schedule although, as previously mentioned, this is a university excused absence.

Please note that credit will only be awarded for service-learning activities completed during the Spring 2022 semester.

Assignment #2 Fabulous Farm to Fork Meal Preparation and Sharing

Students will plan, prepare, and share a meal using local ingredients that they have selected. Meal preparation and serving will be conducted during the last class period of the semester and will occur in the Food and Nutrition Education Lab (NHS 103) unless otherwise announced.

Farm-Based Experiential Learning Activities

Each student is expected to engage in **at least 10 hours of experiential learning activities** at the TAMUC Twin Oaks Farm for Experiential Learning or other instructor-approved site. These activities may include pruning, painting, preparing seedbed, and planting. A safety orientation/training session will be included. Additionally, space will be designated to allow students to prepare and plant their own vegetable plots. Verification of hours engaged must be documented by a university faculty or staff member, or GA.

Written Assignments and Format

Essays and other assignments should be written in a format compatible with the *American Psychological Association (APA) Manual for Publication*, 7th or latest edition. A synopsis and tutorial on scientific writing, including the use of APA format is available from the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>). Personal face-to-face assistance with editing and format suggestions is also available from the on-campus Writing Center at TAMU-Commerce.

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