

FDSC 421-Food Systems: Farm to Fork
Course Syllabus
May-mini 2023

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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 D2L account. Access to the Internet and a printer is 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.
- e.. **Learning Outcome 5 (Graduate Credit):** Students will be able to review, interpret, and present research result from relevant studies.
- f. **Learning Outcome 6 (Graduate Credit):** The student will be able to create and present scientific and/or technical information to an audience of peers or industry stakeholders.

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.

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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.
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. Review 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
Food-Oriented Awareness Activity	100
Farm-Based Experiential Learning Activities	100
Assignment #2 Fabulous Farm to Fork Food Systems Finale	100

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

Graduate Credit

Students seeking graduate credit will create an informative presentation that utilizes a variety of scientific and technical sources.

Class Engagement for All Course Activities

This is an online course, where media-related activities and handouts are available online for review as an alternative to scheduled class time. There are online discussion prompts for each module that serve as formative assessments for that module. There will be 10 modules for this course which are opened and closed following a schedule. Additionally, there will be outside of class-time for face-to-face or virtual farm-based learning activities and designated food-oriented learning projects from which you can choose.

Attendance and Participation in Class/Online Discussions

You are expected to engage in the online course materials daily during this mini-semester. Participation in the face-to-face and/or virtual activities will also 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 discussion prompts will be due by 11:30 p.m. on the due date for each module. In order to get full credit for online discussion, a reply to each prompt must be posted in a timely manner and specifically address the main ideas/concepts mentioned in the prompt. **You do not have to respond to the posts of classmates unless specifically directed to do so.**

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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 (saved as PDF) with information presented with title, subtitles, text, graphics, and references. This project is similar in the information provided in 2-3 page term paper but presented in a one-page, poster format. **Graduate students must present an informative poster based on research related to post-harvest, processing, or consumption fruit, vegetable, meat, poultry or dairy item.**

Farm-Based Experiential Learning Activities

Each student is expected to engage in **at least 5 hours of farm-based learning (hands-on or virtual) activities** at the TAMUC Twin Oaks Farm for Experiential Learning, other fruit/vegetable farm such as those collaborating with GROW North Texas, a Dallas-based non-profit focused on expanding local food production access. These activities may include but are not limited to pruning, preparing seedbed, and planting. Virtual alternatives will be provided.

Please note that credit will only be awarded for farm-based learning activities completed during the May-Mini 2023 semester. Verification of date of service is required through photo with time stamp, email confirmation from a contact person with the source of learning activity, or a date generated on a certificate of completion from the source of learning.

Food-Oriented Awareness Activity

Each student must complete a food-oriented awareness activity (face-to-face or virtual). The following are *pre-approved* examples. All other activities must have **prior approval from professor**. Pre-approved activities include:

1. Volunteering for three hours at a food bank, food pantry, community kitchen or cannery*.
2. Participation in a canning or other food preservation workshop*.
3. Completion of Texas Food Handlers certification (costs \$7-15, online) Upload copy of certificate.
4. Visiting a local farmers market, interviewing at least one customer and one farmer*.

*Report by summarizing the experience in a one-page report with a picture/time stamp or video to confirm actual location/participation.

Assignment #2 Fabulous Farm to Fork Meal Preparation and Sharing

Each student will select the ingredients, prepare a meal for one or more persons, and demonstrate this process through a video presentation that includes preparation and consumption of the meal by the student. Students may work in groups or have another person (in or outside of class) assist them. At least two of the food items in the meal must be locally sourced as defined in the course materials. A list of food items used and where they came from (company, country of origin, or label indicating local source). Videos need to be edited to be no longer than three minutes and should highlight key points, explanations, and/or demonstrations. We do not need to see every aspect of the meal prep, but enough to confirm you did the work and ate the final product. You do not have to video eating the entire meal. We will use a

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link in D2L that allows you to post your video and allow comments and questions, similar to a discussion prompt.

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 A&M-Commerce.

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