Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

Fall 2021

Instructors:

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Office Hours: TBD

Time/Location: Synchronous learning sessions: Thursdays, 1:30 to 4:30 pm.
Exceptions: The Nov 9th lecture will be held on a Tuesday.

Graduate Credits: 3 Credits
Prerequisites: Graduate Standing

Course Description:
Nutrition 203 is an introductory policy course that will allow students to become familiar with policy processes (domestic and international), typologies of policy initiatives (laws, global initiatives, interventions, systems, and institutional mandates), and to be able to critically analyze and discuss how policy and science interact with regard to food and nutrition.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students will have gained an understanding of
  a) The difference between policies and programs
  b) Legislative and policymaking processes and procedures
  c) National and international governance structures and policy initiatives, institutions, and some key organizations involved in nutrition policy and programming
  d) The role of qualitative and quantitative evidence in influencing the policy agenda
  e) How policy debates influence the scientific agenda, and vice versa
  f) A variety of policy-making tools and the situations in which they are most appropriate
  g) Common challenges to policy-making and factors of progressing a policy agenda
h) Identify specific ways in which policies and programs influence the achievement of the sustainable development goals
i) Evaluate the effects of gender, inequalities and structural racism on the impact of food and nutrition policies and programs

Texts or Materials:
There is no required textbook for this course. Weekly readings will be posted on the class website on Canvas. If you have any problems accessing the class website please inform one of the teaching assistants as soon as possible. Readings are grouped by date, and it is expected that readings will be completed in advance of each class. Not all readings will be discussed in class, rather they will serve as a basis upon which class lectures and discussions will build.

Academic Conduct:
Each student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, as specified in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures manual (http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents) and Tufts University policies (http://uss.tufts.edu/studentAffairs/documents/TuftsStudentHandbook.pdf). It is the responsibility of each student to understand and comply with these standards, as violations will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from failure on an assignment and the course to dismissal from the school.

Diversity Statement
We believe that the diversity of student experiences and perspectives is essential to the deepening and knowledge in this course. We consider it part of our responsibility as instructors to address the learning needs of all of the students in this course. We will present materials that are respectful of diversity: race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religious beliefs, political preference, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, citizenship, language or national origin among personal characteristics.

Assessments and Grading:
Class assignments and their overall contribution to your grade are as follows:

a) Case study analysis: case study
   (Written analysis) 10%
   (Oral presentation) 10%

b) Policy Memo 20%
c) Response to Questions 20%
d) Final Project 40%

Letter Grades:
A+ Greater than 100
A 96-100
A- 91-95
B+ 86-90
B 81-85
B- 76-80
C 75 or less
Summary description of assignments:

a) **Case Study Analysis**: There will be three case studies, the topic of which is a current issue or debate in domestic or international nutrition programming, policy and/or communications. For each case study, students in the class will be assigned to a group representing a different constituency. Each student will be assigned to participate in one case study. The topic of the three case studies are as follows:

   a) GMOs  
   b) Healthy Food Systems  
   c) Dietary Guidelines  

For each case study, each group will be responsible for preparing a 5-minute oral testimony before class, presenting their testimony on the day of assignment discussion, and submitting a written copy of the oral testimony **by 11:59 pm on Tuesday prior to the oral testimony presentation**. One group member will present the oral testimony. Following the presentation of all groups, the remaining group member(s) who did not present the oral testimony should be prepared to discuss and defend the perspective of the constituent group they represent.

b) **Policy Memo**: The goal of a policy memo is to provide concise background, analysis, and guidance in a specific area of public policy. A well-written policy memo requires efficient use of language to summarize a complicated issue and convince the reader of a particular position. For this assignment, you will choose an area of policy related to a current area of food and nutrition that you would like to address, and a specific policy-maker to whom you are writing.

**Length**: Your memo should be written for delivery to an influential policy-maker of your choice, and should be **no longer than two pages, single spaced, Arial 12 font with 1” margins**. We highly recommend discussing your topic ideas with the TA a few weeks before the due date.

c) **Response to Questions**: Each student will be required to answer four questions listed in Appendix One. The response to the questions are listed by week of appropriate lecture and are due the Wednesday prior to the following week’s lecture. The response should be one or two pages. Answers longer than two pages will not be graded. References in the 1-2 page response are optional.

d) **Final Project**: Addressing a Sustainable Goal. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which drive the global development agenda. Most countries of the world have endorsed these guidelines. Each student will select a SDG from the following list and develop a plan/strategy to address this SDG within a specific country.

   1. Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities  
   2. Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water  
   3. Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land  
   4. Sustainable Development Goal 17: Partnerships for Goals  

The plan developed must focus on how the specific SDG can be used as a strategy within a particular country for improving food security and nutrition (SDG 2 – Zero Hunger). The student can choose any country for this project (including the USA). The final document must be
submitted on Canvas by 11:59 on the date reserved for the Final Exam (December 16, 2021). Late submissions will not be accepted. In order to prepare for the Final Project, it would be prudent for students to produce and submit an outline for review. (An outline for this project is shown in appendix two). It is also recommended that students book a 15-minute appointment via zoom with a TA to go over this outline or to have any questions answered that they may have.

e) *TurnItIn*: This course will utilize TurnItIn in the Canvas learning management system to help determine the originality of your work. TurnItIn is an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of websites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. When papers are submitted to TurnItIn, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work in the TurnItIn database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted works. Students retain copyright on their original course work.

For more information, see Turnitin.com or review Tufts’ *Academic Integrity* policies.

***Note:*** Unless otherwise noted, ALL assignments should be uploaded on Canvas as a Microsoft Word document, using the following naming scheme: last name_assignment name (i.e. Kennedy_PolicyMemo.doc).

**Accommodation of Disabilities:**
Students with documented disabilities are entitled to academic accommodation appropriate to their needs. If you require accommodations for this course, please contact Dr. Kennedy confidentially prior to the end of the second week of classes.

**Course Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Global Food and Nutrition</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Frameworks for Understanding Food and Nutrition Policy</td>
<td>Webb</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>How do we measure “nutrition?” including impacts on policy</td>
<td>Webb</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Maternal and Child Nutrition</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>Bias due 9/27 11:59PM</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>Nutrition Sensitive and Nutrition Specific Actions for Food Security and Nutrition</td>
<td>Webb</td>
<td>Case Study 1: GMO Written Testimony due Wednesday–10/6</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>Food Systems Part I</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>Policy Memo due on canvas: 10/14</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/21</td>
<td><strong>Food Systems Part II</strong></td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td><strong>Case Study 2:</strong> Healthy Food Systems: Written testimony due on Oct 20</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>US and Global Food Policy: Effects on Food Security</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Political Economy: Implications for food and nutrition policy</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>Dietary Guidelines: History, Applications, Controversies</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td><strong>Case Study 3:</strong> Dietary Guidelines Written testimony due on 11/8 – note class is on Tuesday this week</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Micronutrient Policies and Programs</td>
<td>Webb</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>Communications: The good, the bad, the ugly</td>
<td>Squires</td>
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***Note:*** This schedule is subject to modification at the instructor’s discretion.
Course Topics, Learning Objectives and Assignments:

***Note: all required readings for each week will be posted on Canvas***

Week 1 (9/9) Global Food and Nutrition

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Understand the international architecture for nutrition and how various stakeholder groups are involved in food and nutrition policy design and implementation
- Understand the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals and Design and Implementation of Policies and Programs
- Understand the current global food security and nutrition situation

Required Readings

- Effective international action against undernutrition: why has it proven so difficult and what can be done to accelerate progress? Morris, Saul S et al. The Lancet, Volume 371, Issue 9612, 608 – 621

Optional

- Video Lecture – the Theory and Practice of the Policy Process
Week 2: (9/16) Frameworks for Understanding Food and Nutrition Policy

Learning Objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- The main principles underpinning food policy thinking and action.
- Basic framing concepts and paradigms that shape thinking on food and nutrition policy development and implementation.
- Examples of ‘policy agendas’ relating to nutrition beyond national ‘public’ policy

Required Readings


A useful ‘extra’ resource to browse through online: https://foodpolicyforcanada.info.yorku.ca/frameworks/. [not required reading].
Week 3: (9/23) How Do we Measure “Nutrition?” Including Impacts on Policy

Learning Objectives:

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- The range of methods and modalities used to ‘measure’ food, nutrition and policy impacts on both.
- Approaches to defining what ‘should’ be measured.
- Examples of types or categories of indicators widely used in public policy and interventions (as well as implementation science).

Required Readings

Week 4: (9/30) Maternal and Child Nutrition

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Evaluate the effects of policies and programs aimed at improving maternal and child health
- Assess the barriers and facilitators for enhancing the positive effects of maternal and child policies and programs
- Analyze potentialities for revamping current maternal and child policies and programs to decrease overweight, obesity, and non communicable diseases

Required Readings

- Food Swamps and Obesity Rate Prediction. (2017).
Week 5: (10/7) Nutrition-Sensitive and Nutrition-Specific Actions for Nutrition

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Understand the concept of nutrition sensitive development
- Analyze the impacts of nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific approaches in improving food security, diet quality, and nutritional status
- Identify alternative strategies using nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific focus in improving diet quality and nutrition

Required Readings

   https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211912416301171?casa_token=HS5SEVuXTxYAAAAA:pmOK9ai1apbsv-xay7-MI1wDmqLdmYrYPli-1pwzuPvQdRu2ziJbcZ4tN_3PeP85Nn2RBbL2qEiL

Case Study 1: GMOs
Week 6 (10/14): Food Systems Part I – Impact of Covid-19

**Learning objectives Weeks 6 and 7 Combined**

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Describe typologies of food systems
- Identify leverage points along the food value chain for enhancing food security, diet quality, and nutrition
- Evaluate national level policies aimed at enhancing the positive effects of food systems on diet quality and nutrition
- Evaluate approaches to sustainable agricultural production within various food systems
- Understand leverage points within the agricultural sector for improving diet quality and nutrition

**Required Readings: For Weeks 6 and 7**

- Scott, P. Global panel on agriculture and food systems for nutrition: food systems and diets: facing the challenges of the 21st century. *Food Sec.* 9, 653–654 (2017). [https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-017-0678-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-017-0678-y)
- Global Panel. 2015. Improved metrics and data are needed for effective food system policies in the post-2015 era. Technical Brief. London, UK: Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition
Week 7: (10/21) Food Systems Part II

Case Study 2: Healthy Food Systems

Week 8 (10/28): US and Global Food Security

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Understand how the history of U.S. and Global Food Security policies and programs has influenced the emerging agenda on worldwide food security
- Analyze trends in food security globally
- Evaluate barriers and facilitators for improving food security globally
- Identify strategies for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 – Zero Hunger

Required Readings

Week 9 (11/4): Political Economy: Effects on Policies and Programs

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Identify key political economy factors and their effects on policies and programs
- Understand strategies for influencing the political economy
- Evaluate effective approaches for developing political commitment, leadership and advocacy for advancing achievement of the Strategic Development Goals

Required Readings

Week 10 (11/9): Dietary Guidelines: History, Applications, Controversies

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Analyze US and global food based dietary guidelines and their scientific underpinnings
- Assess the impact of food based dietary guidelines in improving diet quality and nutritional status
- Identify current controversies surrounding diet guidelines
- Understand the role of UN normative agencies – WHO, FAO – in influencing nutrition policy

Required Readings

Week 11: (11/18): Micronutrient Policies and Programs

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Understand the current state and trends of micronutrient deficiencies globally
- Describe and critique policies and programs aimed at eliminating hidden hunger
- Evaluate the science base related to current controversies in approaches to improving micronutrient status

Required Readings

2. Fiorella et al. (2021) Contemporary aquaculture: implications for human nutrition, Curr. Opin.in Biotech., [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0958166920301816?casa_token=TNJYGM-W4AsAAAAA:qc1F1O7uTDUGBaC_qMli1OPhN3tauxvBBea8aPq7dqX2tSNdvzk-8C5c3_asxd6tIHDhNi0Bte6V]
Week 12: (12/2) : Communications: The good, the bad, the ugly

Learning objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Critique information sources for biases, and inaccuracies.
- Discuss how individual and collectives biases influence communication strategies.

Required Readings
Week 13: (12/9) Achieving Food System Transformation – How?

Learning Objectives

Students should be able to discuss/critique the following:

- Current thinking on policy and program actions to transform food systems
- The role of political economy and economic tradeoffs in shaping policy solutions
- Shape ideas on the feasibility of transforming food systems by 2030
- Articulate the content of clusters of policy actions aimed at achieving the ambitions set out in the UN Food Systems Summit of Sept 2021.

Required Reading


Appendix I: Discussion Questions - Answer any four of the following questions during this semester. The 1 to 2 page answer is due prior to the next class e.g week I question due on the Wed before week 2 lecture.

**Week 1:** One reason given for the rising rates of under nourishment by FAO over the past few years is conflict. What ways might you suggest for mitigating food insecurity in conflict countries or zones?

**Week 4:** Anemia in women of child bearing age has been shown to be an intractable problem. What are solutions at the country level that can deal with this continuing problem?

**Week 6:** What are potential game-changing solutions for food system transformation?

**Week 7:** How can we create a more sustainable urban food system?

**Week 7:** The pre-Summit to the UN Food Systems Summit, held in July 2021, in Rome emphasized an agroecological approach as one useful agricultural strategy for sustainable agriculture. Why has agroecology not been widely used in the USA and what would you suggest to change this trajectory to get broader adoption of agro ecology?

**Week 8:** Households on SNAP, on average, do not purchase a nutritionally adequate diet. What are viable solutions for improving diet quality in SNAP households?

**Week 9:** What role does the political economy play in influencing the Sustainable Development Goals?

**Week 10:** Explain the pros and cons of including sustainability in the 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

**Week 11:** Can universal food fortification be used as a complementary strategy to eliminate micronutrient deficiencies?

**Week 12:** How would you judge the accuracy of food and nutrition information posted on social media?
Appendix 2: Framework for Final Project

The overall objective of this project is to analyze how a specific Sustainable Development Goal (see below) can be used more effectively to improve food security and nutrition (FNS) within a country.

Each student will choose a specific country for this project. This can be a developed or a low-middle income country.

The total project document should be 10-15 pages. Pages beyond 15 will not be graded.

Suggested Outline:

General characteristics of the Country (½ to 1 page in length): selected statistics might include GDP, population size, major foreign exchange earner, region of the world, landlocked (yes/no), political situation (stable/not) and other information as relevant.

1. Country-specific goals and targets for the SDG you have chosen. It is important that the country you pick for analysis has this information available. It is important that you ascertain the availability of data prior to the final selection of your country.
2. Current status and trends in food security and nutrition; as information is available, might include immediate causes (in your country – general statements not relevant), underlying causes, basic causes.
3. The current set of policies and programs targeted to food security and nutrition (FNS) – are focused and well-designed to adequately address the determinants of FNS. You can use an appendix to list policies and programs – this will not count towards your page limit.
4. Identification of how your specific SDG (see list below) can be used to more effectively address FNS in the country. You can select any one of these four SDGs as the main focal point for this project. This should be the major portion of your paper.
5. Next steps – going forward – for your country.

This project cannot be completed in a few days. Success will depend on researching the data needed for your paper well beyond the due date.

Choose one of the following SDGs as the basis of your analysis in your chosen country:

5. Sustainable Development Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
6. Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water
7. Sustainable Development Goal 15: Life on Land
8. Sustainable Development Goal 17: Partnerships for Goals