COURSE SYLLABUS
Determinants of U.S. Food Policy (NUTR 303)
Fall 2022

Synchronous: Tues/Thur 8:45am-10:15 am eastern, Jaharis 118.
Asynchronous: Lectures, videos, exercises, and discussion boards on Canvas.

Instructor: Parke Wilde (he/him)
parke.wilde@tufts.edu | Phone 339.368.2975
Usual Office Hours: Tuesday 3 pm – 4 pm (open); 4pm – 5pm (scheduled on Calendly).
Calendly: https://calendly.com/parke-wilde/food-policy-nutr-303-only

Teaching Assistant: Ian Moore (he/him/his)
ian.moore@tufts.edu | Phone 805.704.7663
Usual Office Hours: Thursday 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm (open); Email for additional availability.

Tufts Graduate Credit: 3 credits (1 course)

Prerequisites for taking this course:
- NUTR 203 (Fundamentals of Public Policy) or equivalent.
- NUTR 207 (Statistics) / 307 (Regression Analysis for Nutrition Policy) or equivalent.
- NUTR 238 (Fundamentals of Economics for Food Policy) or equivalent.

Course Description:
This course offers a broad introduction to food policies in the United States. Food policy encompasses laws, regulations, decisions and actions by governments and other institutions that influence food production, distribution and consumption. Real-world controversies and debates motivate the course’s attention to economic principles, research tools, policy analysis, and contemporary data sources. The course addresses both normative issues (how to evaluate policy options) and positive issues (how policy actually is made). The course assumes that you care not just about the economic interests of farmers, but also about nutrition, food security, the environment, and justice for all participants in the food system.

Course Objectives:
A. Understand contemporary U.S. food policy, focusing on 10 topics:
   - Agriculture policy
   - Food production and the environment
   - International food and agricultural trade
   - The food manufacturing industry
   - The food retail and restaurant industries
   - Food safety
   - Dietary guidance
   - Food labeling and advertising
- Food insecurity and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Child nutrition programs

B. Learn to apply four tools or “ways of knowing” for policy analysis:
- Institutional knowledge and history
- Economics
- Statistics and data sources
- Policy theory

C. Practice writing with a purpose: policy analysis and policy impact.

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**Description of assignments, tests, and other required activities:** There are 4 homework assignments, 1 midterm, 1 final, and a term paper.

The homework assignments are made available through the course website. They are submitted online with a due date one day before class so that the instructor can review the assignment in class.

The midterm and final also will be made available through the course website. Students will have 90 minutes for the midterm and 120 minutes for the final, open-book but with no communication with other persons. Advance study and practice is recommended, much as if the midterm and final were in-class tests.

The term paper is described in the Assignments folder. Students submit a term paper topic memo in October. There is an early term paper submission option in November and regular submission in December.

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**Summary of Assignments and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
<th>Grading Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework (4 assignments)</td>
<td>40% (10% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</table>

**Late or incomplete assignments:** For homework and term paper: 10% penalty up to 7 days late, no grade beyond that. We cannot extend the December due date for the term paper, because of the Friedman School’s final grade due date. Inform us of expected absences from tests as soon as you know of the conflict. For excused absences from the midterm, we may choose to schedule a makeup or omit the midterm and give double weight to the final. For excused absences from the final, we will provide a makeup date.
Course texts and materials: The course textbook is: *Food Policy in the United States: An Introduction*. The second edition is from Routledge/Earthscan (2018). Available free online at Tufts libraries. If you choose to purchase, it is available from reputable online booksellers.

The weekly reading list is divided into core reading and supplementary reading.

- **Core reading**: should be completed in advance of each class, whether it is a light week or a busy week for you. The core readings provide the best study guide for the midterm and final.
- **Supplementary reading**: is essential for getting your time’s worth out of this course, and for preparing for future work in U.S. food policy, but you have more flexibility about the choice of readings and your schedule for completing them. Many references cited in the course textbook are excellent supplementary readings. Read deeply on the topics that inspire you most, but also select some readings that are outside of your usual comfort zone.

Most books mentioned in the reading list are on reserve at the Hirsch Health Sciences Library. Journal articles may be accessed by journal name through the Tufts online journals at library.tufts.edu. Other readings will be accessible on the Internet, through links from the course website.

The Canvas site has many resources. Generally, seven tabs are most important: (1) the “modules” tab contains links to all or nearly all readings, slides, and exercises, organized by week; (2) the “quizzes” tab contains homework and tests, (3) the Zoom tab contains links to synchronous classes, office hours, and recordings, (4) the “media” tab contains video lectures, (5) the “assignments” tab contains the drop box for the term paper assignment, (6) the “discussion” tab has threads for course content and course mechanics, and (7) the “announcements” tab has a saved version of key announcements, which should also be received at your email that is on record for this course.

For some in-class interactive elements, we will use the PollEverywhere polling platform. PollEverywhere will not be graded. Two links are useful:

- For student sign-in: [https://access.tufts.edu/poll-everywhere](https://access.tufts.edu/poll-everywhere)
- For in-class questions and responses: [https://PollEv.com/parkewilde145](https://PollEv.com/parkewilde145)

In the coming fall, there will be big developments on many food policy topics. I sometimes post food policy news and commentary on a blog, *U.S. Food Policy*, at [www.usfoodpolicy.com](http://www.usfoodpolicy.com), but it has been less active in recent years. More frequently, updates are posted to Twitter @usfoodpolicy.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
We want this class to promote justice, through how we cover issues in the U.S. and global food systems, and through how we manage this class. As Dr. Rona Ramos at Yale has written: “This class strives to be an inclusive community, learning from the many perspectives that come from having differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all. We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including but not limited to those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status.”

Student Accessibility Services
Tufts University is committed to providing equal access and support to all students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may access their curricula and achieve their personal and academic potential. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the Friedman School Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at 617-636-6719 to make arrangements for determination of appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

Academic Conduct
Academic integrity, including avoiding plagiarism, is critically important. Each student is responsible for being familiar with the standards and policies outlined in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures manual (https://nutrition.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/documents-forms/20222023PolProc.pdf). It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of, and comply with, these policies and standards. In accordance with Tufts University’s policy on academic misconduct, violations of standards of academic conduct will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from grade reduction or failure on an assignment; grade reduction or failure of a course; up to dismissal from the school, depending on the nature and context of any infraction.
## Course & Assignment Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TOPIC #</th>
<th>TOPIC NAME</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/6, 9/8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>On your own: start Homework #1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13 and 9/15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agricultural policy</td>
<td>Homework #1 (due 9/19, Mon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20 and 9/22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Food production and the environment</td>
<td>On your own: begin reading potential sources for term paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/27 and 9/29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>International agricultural trade</td>
<td>Homework #2 (due 10/3, Mon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/4 and 10/6*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Food manufacturing</td>
<td>Term paper topic (due 10/10, Mon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11 and 10/13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Food retailing and restaurants</td>
<td>On your own: study for midterm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18 and 10/20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm: choose 90min, 8am-noon.</td>
<td>Midterm (10/20, Thurs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25 and 10/27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Food safety</td>
<td>On your own: begin drafting term paper and bring questions to instructor and TA office hours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/1 and 11/3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dietary guidance</td>
<td>Homework #3 (due 11/9, Wed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/10 and 11/15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Food labeling and advertising</td>
<td>On your own: complete rough draft of term paper. Start revised term paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/17, 11/22,</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Food insecurity and SNAP</td>
<td>Term paper (early) (due 11/23, Wed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29 and 12/1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Child nutrition programs</td>
<td>Homework #4 (due 12/5, Mon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6 and 12/8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading period. Study for final exam.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/15 (Tues)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final exam: you choose 2h period from 8am-noon.</td>
<td>Final exam (12/15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revised term paper</td>
<td>Term paper (due 12/22)</td>
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Note: Plan ahead for the dates of midterm and final (on Canvas). *10/16 class meets in Med Ed 316.

This schedule is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.
Overview of Supplementary Readings Used in Multiple Weeks


**TOPIC 1: Introduction**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 1**: Students will be able to:
- Describe key features of the major stages of the food marketing chain.
- Explain the role of market failures in motivating government interventions in U.S. food policy.
- Use basic supply and demand analysis to analyze factors that influence price and quantity of a food commodity or product.
- Apply the steps of the policy cycle to U.S. food policy examples.
- Identify the executive agencies and legislative committees with influence over U.S. food policy.
- For legal principles underlying U.S. food policy, explain the sources of law (what), causes of action (who), and federal or state jurisdiction (where).
- Summarize the budget and appropriations process for mandatory and discretionary food and agricultural programs.

**Readings for Topic 1**:

**Core**:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 1).

**Supplementary Course Reading**:
- Congressional Research Service (2022). *Preparing for the Next Farm Bill* (pp. 1-10). Provides an overview of the Farm Bill and its budgetary setting.
Topic 2: Agricultural Policy

Learning Objectives for Topic 2: Students will be able to:

- Describe the geography and composition of the agriculture sector in the United States.
- Apply the political science concepts of interest groups and advocacy coalitions to agricultural policy examples.
- With supply and demand analysis, explain the effects of broad classes of agricultural policy interventions on prices and quantities.
- Use the analysis of supply and demand in competitive markets to anticipate winners and losers from government agricultural policies.
- Interpret federal data sources on farm income and farm program spending.
- Explain factors that influence the labor conditions and economic security of farmworkers and farm operators.
- With supply and demand analysis, explain the effects of factors that could raise or lower farmworkers wages.
- Summarize the history of land loss and demographic transition for African American farmers in the U.S. South in the 20th Century.

Readings for class 2:

Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 2).

Supplementary Course Reading:

- Congressional Research Service (2022). *Preparing for the Next Farm Bill* (pp. 10-17). Agriculture and crop insurance programs.
Learning Objectives for Topic 3: Students will be able to:

- List and discuss environmental constraints on food production, and evaluate their influence on global food security.
- Explain how food prices respond broadly to changes in scarcity and abundance.
- Explain the role of property rights assignment and negotiation in determining solutions to political conflicts over environmental consequences of food production.
- Using a simple model of the marginal cost of harvest in a fishery, compare and contrast the unregulated yield, optimal yield, and the maximum sustainable yield.
- Summarize the operations and politics of U.S. conservation programs.
- Analyze the policy implications of environmental food movements.

Readings for Topic 3:
Core:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

- For agriculture policy news coverage, see Politico Weekly Agriculture briefing. Some links to full stories are paywalled. Subscription may be arranged through Tufts University libraries in the future.
- USDA Economic Research Service. Farm and Commodity Policy topic page. Follow link to “Background” and browse other links.

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:

Learning Objectives for Topic 4:

- Explain economic and non-economic perspectives on gains from trade and food sovereignty.
- Analyze the consequences of several types of trade policy, using a 2-panel partial equilibrium trade model illustration.
- Describe the motivations for and limitations of six varieties of trade policies.
- Discuss trade negotiations and trade conflict for food and agricultural trade between nations.

Topic 4: International Food and Agricultural Trade

Supplementary Course Reading:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

- Fall 2020 Friedman Wednesday Seminar: Jess Fanzo on sustainable dietary guidelines
- Fall 2020 Hoch Cunningham Environmental Lecture: Julian Agyeman on just sustainabilities
- Food & Environment Reporting Network (FERN).

Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 3).
Learning Objectives for Topic 5: Students will be able to:

- Use the concepts of value added to compare sectors of U.S. food and beverage manufacturing.

Readings for Topic 4:
Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 4)

Supplementary Course Reading:
- Congressional Research Service (2022). *Preparing for the Next Farm Bill* (pp. 36-40). Trade programs.

Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

Topic 5: Food Manufacturing

Learning Objectives for Topic 5: Students will be able to:

- Summarize the views of multiple political constituencies regarding international food aid.
- Discuss the economics of immigration and farm labor.
Learning Objectives for Topic 6: Students will be able to:

- Analyze the behavior of markets with several varieties of imperfect competition, including monopoly, monopsony, oligopoly, and oligopsony.
- Summarize highlights in the history of anti-trust regulation in U.S. meat production.
- Explain the tension economic goals and nutrition goals in assessing food processing and distribution.
- Describe how the competitiveness of U.S. food and agricultural markets in measured and regulated.

Readings for Topic 5:

Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 5).

Supplementary Course Reading:

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:

Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

- A video from Parke discussing the meatpacking industry in Chicago.
Readings for Topic 6:
Core:
  • Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 6).

Supplementary Course Reading:
  • George and Tomer (2021). Beyond ‘food deserts’: America needs a new approach to mapping food insecurity.
  • Food Mktg. Inst. V. Argus Leader Media. Supreme Court of the United States, April 22, 2019, Argued June 24, 2019, Decided. No. 18-481.

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:

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Topic 7: Food Safety

Learning Objectives for Topic 7: Students will be able to:
  • Diagnose food safety problems as problems of imperfect information.
  • Distinguish efficient from inefficient food safety strategies, and analyze choices among the efficient strategies.
  • Define risk assessment and discuss its stages.
• Summarize safety rules for food additives, pesticide and ingredients that are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS).
• Explain the jurisdiction of federal food safety agencies.

**Readings for Topic 7:**

**Core:**

• *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 7).

**Supplementary Course Reading:**


**Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:**


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**Topic 8: Dietary Guidance**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 8:** Students will be able to:

• Review historical trends in chronic disease and nutrition.
• Understand the market failures that motivate the government’s role in dietary guidance.
• Describe the process of creating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
• Measure how much U.S. consumption patterns differ from Dietary Guidelines.
• Use own-price and cross-price elasticities to anticipate the potential nutrition consequences of price changes.
Readings for Topic 8:

Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 8).

Supplementary Course Reading

Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:
- Fall 2021 Friedman Wednesday Seminar: *Dietary Guidelines Process* (begins at minute 42), Claire Brown (recent Friedman alum) and Julie Obbagy at USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service.
- Fall 2020 Friedman Wednesday Seminars: *Systemic racism and physical activity in black communities*, Francesca Weak; *Obesity disparities*, Loneke T. Blackman Carr.

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Learning Objectives for Topic 9: Students will be able to:

- Apply principles of information economics to decisions about regulating food labeling and advertising.
- Understand legal principles that regulate commercial speech.
- Describe the Nutrition Facts Panel and merits of mandatory food labeling.
- Review the policy dilemma surrounding food and beverage advertising targeting children.
- Review U.S. rules covering health claims in food labeling and advertising.
- Describe checkoff programs in light of relevant concepts of both economics and constitutional law.

Readings for Topic 9:
Core:

- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 9).

Supplementary Course Reading:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

- Food and Drug Administration (2017) “Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label”
- Pomeranz JL, Harris JL. *Children's fruit “juice” drinks and FDA regulations: Opportunities to increase transparency and support public health*. Am J Public Health. 2020 Apr 16:e1-e10.
Learning Objectives for Topic 10: Students will be able to:

• Diagnose the problem of hunger within the context of persistent poverty in the United States.
• Examine the history and methodology of food insecurity and hunger measurement.
• Use the federal government’s Thrifty Food Plan to analyze nutritional and budgetary tradeoffs in food choices.
• Use economic principles to evaluate the design of federal food assistance programs.
• Describe the history, structure, and effectiveness of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
• Explain the challenges of measuring program impact when participation is voluntary (endogenous).
• Summarize the organization of the charitable emergency food system and its role in U.S. anti-hunger efforts.

Readings for Topic 10:

Core:

• *Introduction to U.S. Food Policy* (Chapter 10).

Supplementary Course Reading:

• Congressional Research Service (2022). *Preparing for the Next Farm Bill* (pp. 30-36). Nutrition assistance programs.
• Berg, Joel (2022). To End U.S. Hunger, We Must Cut Poverty, Boost Economic Opportunity, Reduce Inflation, and Bolster the Middle Class. Available online. [online]
Learning Objectives for Topic 11: Students will be able to:

- Recognize principles and tradeoffs in the design of nutrition assistance programs for children.
- Distinguish the main features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Explain how competing policy viewpoints regarding child nutrition programs may have roots in alternative specifications for evaluation research.
- Conduct a policy analysis of legislation proposals in the next child nutrition reauthorization.
- Analyze the substance and politics of efforts to improve child nutrition.

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

- Food Sec 25 (2022). The final conference from a small grants program directed by Parke Wilde and Irma Arteaga. Available online: [https://sites.tufts.edu/foodsec25/](https://sites.tufts.edu/foodsec25/).

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**Topic 11: Nutrition Assistance Programs for Children**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 11**: Students will be able to:

- Recognize principles and tradeoffs in the design of nutrition assistance programs for children.
- Distinguish the main features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Explain how competing policy viewpoints regarding child nutrition programs may have roots in alternative specifications for evaluation research.
- Conduct a policy analysis of legislation proposals in the next child nutrition reauthorization.
- Analyze the substance and politics of efforts to improve child nutrition.

**Readings for Topic 11**

Core:

- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 11).

Supplementary Course Reading:

This schedule is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.


Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries: