COURSE SYLLABUS
Determinants of U.S. Food Policy (NUTR 303)
Fall 2017

Tues and Thurs 8:45 am - 10:15 am, Jaharis #118

Instructor: Parke Wilde
parke.wilde@tufts.edu | Phone 617.636.3495
Usual Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm, Jaharis #134 (subject to change).

Teaching Assistant:
Mehreen Ismail | mehreen.ismail@tufts.edu | 848-228-6617
Usual Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30 – 3pm, 75 Kneeland (room #844)

Tufts Graduate Credit: 1 credit

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 the student cares 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.

**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 on a day before class so that the instructor can review the assignment in class.

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.

**Summary of Assignments and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
<th>Grading Weight</th>
</tr>
</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>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Penalties for late or incomplete assignments:** For homework and term paper, there is a 10% penalty for submission up to 7 days late and no grade for later submission. There can be no further extension on the final deadline for the term paper, because of the Friedman School’s schedule for final grade submission. Expected absences from tests should be discussed with the instructor as soon as the schedule conflict is known. For excused absences from the midterm, the instructor may choose to schedule a makeup midterm or to omit the midterm and give double weight to the final. For excused absences from the final, a makeup date will be provided.

Based on weighted assignment grades, on a 100-point scale, the semester grade uses the following thresholds: A (>94%), A- (90 - <94%), B+ (87 - <90%), B (84 - <87%), B- (80 - 84%), and so forth.

**Course texts and Materials:** The course textbook is: *Food Policy in the United States: An Introduction*. The current edition is from Routledge/Earthscan (2013). A new revision is being prepared for publication in March 2018. Hence, it is optional and not
necessary to purchase the current edition. If you choose to purchase, the textbook 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, and other readings are listed below in this syllabus. Some of the supplementary readings are “refreshers” on policy or economic fundamentals, while others provide further detail on the topic of the week. 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 this syllabus 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.

In the coming fall, there will be big developments on many food policy topics. I frequently post food policy news and commentary on a blog, U.S. Food Policy, at www.usfoodpolicy.com. The blog’s sidebar has links to many other good sources of information, including advocacy groups, government sources, food industry groups, and blogs. U.S. Food Policy’s comment feature allows you to post your own input and discussion, either anonymously or under your name. Blog updates are posted to Twitter @usfoodpolicy, which provides another way to respond or to share links of your own.

In-Class Response System (Learning Catalytics)
We will be using the Learning Catalytics in-class response system. This allows the instructor to post questions and discussion topics for student response in live time. This system replaces one we used previously (which had required students to purchase a handset).

First, to use this system, please bring to class a smartphone, laptop, or another device with WiFi access. If you do not already have such a device, loaner laptops may be available on the fourth floor of the Hirsch Health Sciences Library during staffed hours. Learning Catalytics registration instructions will be posted to the course website.

Accommodations of Disabilities
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 ([http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents](http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents)). 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TOPIC #</th>
<th>TOPIC NAME</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/5 and 9/7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12 and 9/14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agricultural policy</td>
<td>On your own: start Homework #1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19 and 9/21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Food production and the environment</td>
<td>Homework #1 (due 9/18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/26 and 9/28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>International agricultural trade</td>
<td>On your own: begin reading potential sources for term paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/3 and 10/5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Food manufacturing</td>
<td>Term paper topic (due 10/2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/10 and 10/12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Food retailing and restaurants</td>
<td>Homework #2 (due 10/11, Wed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Midterm (10/17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/19 (Thurs) and 10/24 (Tues)</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>10/26 (Thurs) and 10/31 (Tues)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dietary guidance</td>
<td>On your own: complete rough draft of term paper and begin revising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/2 (Thurs) (no class 11/7), and 11/9 (Thurs)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Food labeling and advertising</td>
<td>Homework #3 (due 11/8, Wed)</td>
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<td>11/14 (Tues), 11/16 (Thurs), and 11/21 (Tues)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Food insecurity and SNAP</td>
<td>Term paper (early) (due 11/22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/5 and 12/7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Homework #4 (due 12/7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading period</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/14 (Thurs)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final exam (12/14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revised term paper</td>
<td>Term paper (due 12/21)</td>
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</table>

Note: Plan ahead for the dates of midterm and final.

**This schedule is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.**
Course Topics
Readings and Learning Objectives

Overview of Supplementary Readings Used in Multiple Weeks


**TOPIC 1: Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives for Topic 1: Students will be able to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Measure value added for the stages of the food marketing chain, overall and for particular industry groups;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Explain the role of market failures in motivating government interventions in U.S. food policy;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe policy and economic factors that influence food choices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply the steps of the policy cycle to U.S. food policy examples;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify the executive agencies and legislative committees with influence over U.S. food policy;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the influence of the Farm Bill in U.S. food policy;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Summarize the budget and appropriations process for mandatory and discretionary food and agricultural programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings for Topic 1:**

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

Supplementary Course Reading:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

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**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;
- Anticipate the impacts of six broad classes of agricultural policy interventions;
- 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 incomes and farm program spending.

**Readings for class 2:**

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

**Supplementary Course Reading:**
- Escalante, C.L. and Luo, T. (2017) “Sustaining a healthy farm labor force:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:
- For agriculture policy news coverage, see Politico Morning Agriculture briefing. Some links to full stories are paywalled. Subscription may be arranged through Tufts University libraries in the future. http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-agriculture

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:

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Topic 3: Food Production and the Environment

Learning Objectives for Topic 3: Students will be able to:
- Explain the role of property rights assignment in environmental market failures;
- Discuss scarcity and abundance in the world food situation;
- Using a simple model of the marginal cost of harvest in a fishery, compare and contrast the unregulated yield, the optimal yield, and the maximum sustainable yield.
- Describe policy challenges that arise from environmental constraints on food production;
- Analyze the policy implications of the local and organic food movements.

Readings for Topic 3:
Core:
- Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 3).
Supplementary Course Reading:

- Food and Agriculture Organization (2014) Building a Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture: Principles and Approaches, Rome, Italy.

Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

- Food & Environment Reporting Network (FERN). Tufts University library link: [http://www.library.tufts.edu/ezproxy/ezproxy.asp?LOCATION=FERNsAg Insider](http://www.library.tufts.edu/ezproxy/ezproxy.asp?LOCATION=FERNsAg Insider)

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:


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**Topic 4: International Food and Agricultural Trade**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 4:** Students will be able to:

- 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;
- Summarize the views of multiple political constituencies regarding international food aid.
- Discuss the economics of immigration and farm labor.

**Readings for Topic 4:**

Core:
Topic 5: Food Manufacturing

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

- Use the concept of value added to compare sectors of U.S. food and beverage manufacturing;
- 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.
- Describe how the competitiveness of U.S. food and agricultural markets is measured and regulated.

Readings for Topic 5:
Core:

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

Supplementary Course Reading:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:


Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:


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Topic 6: Food Retailing and Restaurants

Learning Objectives for Topic 6: Students will be able to:
- Describe the structure of the U.S. food retail and restaurant industries;
- Analyze the behavior of markets with monopolistic competition for branded products;
- Explain the diagnosis of problems with supermarket deserts and inadequate access to food retail;
- Employ both microeconomic analysis and principles of justice in discussing labor markets for unskilled workers in the retail and restaurant sectors;
- Using price indices, describe nutritionally relevant trends in food price inflation.

Readings for Topic 6:

Core:
- Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 6).

Supplementary Course Reading:


Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:


**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, pesticides 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:
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;
- Analyze the incentive-compatibility of proposed strategies for voluntary industry measures to improve the healthfulness of their product offerings;
- Review and analyze policy instruments used to guide Americans toward healthier food choices, ranging from regulation to nudges and behavioral economics.

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:**


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


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**Topic 9: Food Labeling and Advertising**

**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 from both economics and constitutional law.
### Readings for Topic 9:

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

**Supplementary Course Reading:**
- Pomeranz (2016). Chapters on food labeling and advertising law.

**Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:**

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

### Topic 10: Hunger and Food Insecurity

#### 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 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 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:
• USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2012). Fact Sheet on Income, Resources, and Benefits. Alexandria, VA.

Other Readings and Links for Interest or for More Detail:

Books | Long-Form Journalism | Documentaries:
• A Place at the Table (2012). Magnolia Pictures.

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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 legislative proposals in the next child nutrition reauthorization;
- Analyze the substance and politics of efforts to improve child nutrition.

**Readings for Topic 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 11).</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplementary Course Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading TBD on new child nutrition reauthorization.</td>
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</table>

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


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