Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

NUTR 285
Food Justice: Critical Approaches in Policy and Planning
Fall 2014

Class Meetings: Tuesday 1.30-4.00pm in Brown House, 97 Talbot Ave, Medford

Instructor(s): Professor Julian Agyeman 617-627-4017 julian.agyeman@tufts.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 10:00 am–4.00pm by appointment

Graduate Credits: 1 credit

Prerequisites: Graduate Standing

Course Description:
This class offers students different lenses, such as critical race theory to see how the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability and citizenship play out in the development of systemic structural and socio-spatial inequities and injustices in food systems. It develops an understanding and contextualization of the role of food justice activism within the broader narrative of the alternative food movement and offers emerging ideas about how policymakers and planners can take a role in increasing food justice beyond the more mainstream and ultimately contested notions of what is ‘local’ and ‘sustainable.’ The course will help participants chart their role(s) in advocating for ‘just sustainability’ as a defining factor in becoming food systems planners and policymakers.

Course Objectives:

Goal 1 - Understanding and Contextualizing the Role of Food Justice in the Alternative Food Movement

This class first seeks to build an understanding of food justice in the food system and in the food movement. This entails building the theoretical lenses that bring justice to the forefront of the dialogue. It is through these lenses that we will look at the role of the planner and policy maker in the food system.

Goal 2 - Understanding the Role(s) of the Planner in the Food System: International, National and ‘Local’ Contexts

The second goal of this course is to build a general understanding of the role of the planner and policy maker in the food system. To do this we will look at the strategies and dialogue, particularly within the American Planning Association, regarding the role that planners and policy makers can take in building a stronger food system. This includes dialogue around food policy councils, advocating for urban agriculture (re-)zoning, integrating healthy foods in public schools, including food systems in comprehensive plans and as part of a community economic development planning, supporting direct marketing schemes, etc. The established theoretical lenses will help inform our analysis of this dialogue and our introduction to food systems in planning and policy making.
Goal 3 - Understanding Potential Roles for the Planner in Planning for Food Justice

The third goal of this class involves combining our theoretical approaches and our growing knowledge of current strategies in food systems planning. Here students will have the chance to tease apart the role of policy and planning in an organization or project and consider how social justice plays out in its work in policy and planning on the ground.

Texts or Materials:

The course book is:


The Required Readings in this syllabus are either in the Course Book, or are available as PDFs in the relevant class “Resources” folder on Trunk, in boxes that fit each class 1-12. Where the relevant reading/video is a web-based resource, simply click on the url in the syllabus. Clearly, to cover the ground of this syllabus will require that students complete all the Required Readings before each class and come to class ready to discuss these readings. I have also added Additional Readings for some classes.
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/judicialaffairs/Academic Integrity.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.

Style Guidelines:

All written work must be consistent with the style guidelines of one of the two major style guides used at UEP - the Chicago Manual of Style (MLA) or the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Both provide clear guidelines for referencing and citing other works. You may buy either of these - they will be a useful long-term reference. The Purdue Online Writing Lab also has extremely good guidance to both styles.

Classroom Conduct:

The course is reading-intensive, discussion-driven and hands-on. In addition to discussing readings in a seminar style setting, we will also hear from guest speakers and you will have a practical project to complete as a group.

Assessment and Grading:

The assignments below will attract the specified marks and will be awarded the following letter grades:

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Assignments and Submission Instructions:

Class Participation 10%

Active class participation is a crucial part of this seminar and makes 10% of your final grade. To achieve full marks in class participation, you will need to make useful and insightful comments in each class. Remember however that we respect all opinions and positions and that we treat every class member and his/her opinions with grace and dignity.
Assignment 1: Weekly Forum contribution 20%

Beginning after Class 1 (September 2) I’d like you to submit to our Trunk Forum by Friday at 5.00pm each week, a 500-750 word ‘thought piece’ on your reflections on the week’s readings/speakers including your own thoughts (challenges, conflicts, agreements, disagreements) about how you as an intending policy/planning professional relate to the readings and class discussion. For Class 2 (September 9) your contribution will focus on initial thoughts on your semester long project.

Assignment 2: The ‘aha’ Chapter! (10%)

For any chapter in Alkon, A and Agyeman, J (eds) (2011) *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability* (MIT Press), write a 2 page, single space ‘aha’ piece on a) why the chapter has excited you and b) how it might inform your professional practice (I know you don’t know what job you may be doing!). Due Class 12 November 26.
Assignment 3: Semester long project (60%)

There are 4 possible projects that you could undertake this semester. We will discuss them on September 9th and allocate groups. You will meet in your groups with the project leader and begin to map out ways of approaching your work including a) issue/research definition, b) literature/data needs, c) interviewing (where appropriate) d) group-project leader contact and check-ins, e) group member roles and f) possible group meeting times.

The outcomes of these projects will be a Final Report and final presentations to our clients in Class 13 on December 2. In addition, I would like to have 2 formal 30 minute check ins with 4 page written assignment (each 15%):

October 15, Wednesday between 10-4 by arrangement to discuss (a) issue/research definition, b) literature/data needs, c) interviewing (where appropriate)

November 19, Wednesday between 10-4 by arrangement to discuss final report/presentation.

**Project 1 Everett Community Growers (ECG): Food Stories (Kathleen O’Brien/Sylvia Navarro-Olivares)**

Background: Everett Community Growers (ECG) works toward food justice and health equity in Everett. One way they are doing this is by creating spaces across the city for food growing - and maybe even selling. They currently run the Florence Street Community Garden, but want (and need) lots more food growing spaces across the city. This project will help ECG get the word out in the Everett community.

Project: A team of up to 6 students will work through Sylvia Navarro-Olivares and Kathleen O’Brien to produce a historical timeline of Everett Community Growers and a set of stories, recipes and traditions from 13-15 garden users. They will develop the text for the timeline (using http://timeline.knightlab.com), stories, recipes and traditions from interviews with key actors and will produce a visual resource that can be used on a future Everett Community Growers website, and hard copies to be used for publicity with the city council and in local media.

**Project 2 Conservation Law Foundation (CLF): What are the policies that advance urban agriculture? (Jennifer Rushlow)**

Background: In order for urban agriculture to thrive, our local, state, and federal laws and policies must be structured in such a way that allows agriculture as a permitted land use and removes barriers that could prevent agriculture from taking root. CLF is a New England-based environmental advocacy organization that uses law and policy tools to support healthy communities in the region, including by helping to grow a sustainable regional food system. CLF has helped the New England cities of Boston, Burlington, New Haven, and others to develop better rules for zoning, soil quality, and animal husbandry, and better comprehensive plans in the name of supporting urban agriculture.

Project: Students working with CLF will research local and state level policies in the US
that exemplify how policy can advance urban agriculture, both by reducing barriers and creating opportunities. The policies identified will serve as models that can be adopted in the New England states, and which CLF can call upon in their advocacy. Research will include interviews with policymakers and other stakeholders to gain insight into the policymaking process.

Project 3 Boston Collaborative on Food and Fitness (BCFF): Evaluation of BCFF (Brandy Brooks/Julian Agyeman)

Background: The Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness (BCFF) is a citywide partnership of organizations dedicated to improving Boston’s food and fitness environments. BCFF’s mission is to increase equity of access to healthy food and open space for all Boston residents. The collaborative was awarded a four-year, $900,000 grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to support these efforts. BCFF is primarily known for its work with Boston farmers markets and its administration of the Boston Bounty Bucks program, although BCFF does participate in other efforts focused on active living. Recently, BCFF has undergone some internal transition and some lapses in funding for certain initiatives, so the collaborative is at a turning point and in the midst of determining where its priorities will lie in the future.
The project: BCFF completed its annual evaluation utilizing methods prescribed by the Kellogg Foundation, and while this provided the collaborative with valuable feedback from its community partners, there is still a need to discern what kind of impact BCFF has made and can make in the realm of food justice. In other words, how can BCFF measure its impact on the community in terms of changes in equity? The purpose of this project is to help BCFF come up with some equity-based metrics and evaluate future opportunities to further integrate the values of food justice into the collaborative’s work. This will first involve an assessment of the current literature on measures of equity, both conceptually and within the food system itself. Students will then apply this body of knowledge to BCFF by speaking with the collaborative’s stakeholders and gauging how equity influences their programming, organizational structure, and partnerships. Students will also attend BCFF supported events, including farmers markets and Circle the City, and speak with other food and fitness collaboratives about the role food justice plays in their organizations. Ultimately, this equity-based evaluation will help explain how BCFF, in its unique role as a collaborative, can further its equity and food justice-based mission and enhance community representation throughout all aspects of the food system.

**Project 4 Metropolitan Area Planning Council** (MAPC): What is ‘Local’?

Background: What do we mean by 'local'? Is it a geographic notion, or is it something else? In terms of what are characterized as ‘local foods,’ there is a disjuncture, a rupture with ecological and agricultural ‘norms,’ when increasingly diverse local populations want to buy locally grown but culturally appropriate foods, which are not what 'should be grown' locally according to the predominantly ecologically focused local food movement. In this way, the construction of 'local food' becomes exclusionary.

Project: This project examines cultural or economic barriers to buying food grown locally; and shows examples of strategies that aim to remove those barriers, that is ‘local food as inclusion’ not exclusion. This group will examine these concepts and strategies in partnership with the Massachusetts Food System Plan’s (MFSP) Team. Through observation, surveying, interviewing and general inquiry, students will identify contexts in which ‘local food’ is exclusive – whether food costs prohibit participation, or the cultural code of local spaces is unwelcoming – and identify environments where ‘local food’ has achieved intercultural and economic inclusion. This project will require students to identify discreet and targeted areas and individuals to do first-hand research with. The group will synthesize their findings, seek to characterize various ‘local food’ spaces, and present recommendations for advancing a more inclusive food system. The group will conclude their research with a presentation of their findings and report (reporting format is flexible). Throughout the project, the MFSP Team will provide resources, connections and consultation where helpful. Where appropriate, student research will be included in the final plan, and students may be invited to present their findings at MFSP events.

Assignments received after their deadline will not be accepted or graded unless extension is approved in advance. Students who are unable to complete an assignment exam on time for any reason should notify the instructor by email, text message or phone call prior to the deadline, with a brief explanation for why the extension is needed.

**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 me confidentially prior to the end of the second week of classes.

Course Schedule:

* This schedule is subject to modification at the instructor’s discretion.

Class 1. September 2 Temporal and Spatial Contexts of Food Systems and Movements

In this class we first review the course of 13 classes, then, in the second half of the class, we review the history and context of the food movement from mainstream to radical perspectives. This is intended to give you a brief reminder of where things stand as regards some of the key food justice issues.

Required Readings

Carolyn Steel 2009 How Food Shapes Our Cities TED Talks

Class 2. September 9 Projects Discussion

Each of the project leaders who you will be working for this semester will first introduce their projects and then spend some time helping your group think about and begin to map out ways of approaching your work including a) issue/research definition, b) literature/data needs, c) interviewing (where appropriate) d) group-project leader contact and check-ins, e) group member roles and f) possible group meeting times.

Class 3. September 16 Theoretical Lenses - Critical Race Theory, gender, feminism and White Spaces

This class introduces a variety of lenses from which we will approach food justice topics throughout the semester.

Class Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRhttqJ-vA4 Alison Hope Alkon, Assistant Professor, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA.

Required Readings

LaDonna Redmond (2013) Food + Justice = Democracy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydZfSuz-Hu8 at TEDxManhattan

What is ‘critical’ research?
http://www.strath.ac.uk/aer/materials/1educationalresearchandenquiry/unit4/whatiscriticalresearch/


Peggy McDonald (1989) White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack


Kobayashi, A., & Peake, L. (2000). Racism out of place: Thoughts on whiteness and an


Center for Social Inclusion (2014) Building the case for racial equity in the food system. Copyright ©2014 by the Center for Social Inclusion (PDF) Read at least the

Executive Summary Additional Readings


Class 4. September 23 The Foundation: American Planning and food

This class builds an understanding of the current context for food systems planning within the planning field. It situates food justice within the context of the American Planning Association. 2007 “Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Systems,” which has sections on ‘Food Systems and Equity’ and ‘Native and Ethnic Food Cultures’

Required Readings:


Additional Readings


Class 5. September 30 Current Policy and Planning Tools 1

This class offers a consideration of various tools at the planner and policy maker’s disposal for addressing food systems issues. These include zoning (which our guest speaker will talk about), licensing, food policy councils, community food assessments, food hubs/regional food infrastructure, health impact assessments, collaboration/community dialogue facilitation, networking, monitoring and evaluation, green infrastructure/inter-agency collaboration with landscape designers, etc

Guest speaker: Jennifer Rushlow, Staff Attorney, CLF Massachusetts
Jennifer will discuss urban agriculture regulation and planning in two major cities in New England (Boston and Burlington), and show processes at different stages of development.

**Required Readings**

Boston Redevelopment Authority Urban Agriculture Rezoning Website, read the most recent version of Draft Article 89 (pertaining to commercial agriculture land uses in Boston)  [http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/a573190c-9305-45a5-83b1-735c0801e73e](http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/a573190c-9305-45a5-83b1-735c0801e73e)


Class 6. October 7 Current Policy and Planning Tools 2 - City Food Strategies

This class looks at how some cities are currently addressing the food system through declarations, food action plans, food strategies and urban food policy plans. In what ways is a space for food-based policy making being created and what roles can planners take? Where are issues of equity either included or lacking in these public documents? What will be necessary to realize the goals stated in these documents?

Class Exercise: SWOT Analysis of Seattle and Toronto

Action Plans  Required Reading


Additional Readings


APA (2009) “Food Policy Councils” (Written by UEP alumna Christina)
Class 7. October 14 Access & ‘Food Deserts’

Contrary to what many economists might tell us, food deserts aren’t simply a market abnormality but are created through a combination of industrial location, city planning, and racist mortgage lending practices.

Required Readings

Ron Finley (2013) A guerilla gardener in South Central LA
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=EzZzZ_qpZ4w


Additional Readings

PolicyLink 2013 “Economic and Community Development Outcomes of Healthy Food Retail” (PDF)


Class 8. October 21 Current Programming: Public Schools & Nutrition Assistance (SNAP, WIC), Health Impact Assessments

What food justice issues are embedded in nutrition assistance programs, and how have these shifted over time? How prescriptive should public assistance programs be? Do we see a lack of cultural competencies embedded in the framework of these programs?

Guest Speaker: Jennifer Obadia, PhD, Adjunct Faculty, Friedman School of Nutrition

Science and Policy Required Readings


Collaborative for Food and Fitness. (PDF)

Amuda, A (2011) Boston Farmer’s Market incentive programs: Increasing access to fresh and local produce. Boston. The Food Project (PDF)

Class 9. October 28 Urban and Rural Transitions

How do urban and rural food insecurities and access issues play out? How are they similar and how are they different (and what does this mean when trying to plan for food justice)? Who is affected? How can planners take into account rural-urban relationships and value each, when working in food systems planning?

Required Readings


McCutcheon, Priscilla. 2011. “Community Food Security By Us, For Us. The Nation of Islam and the Pan African Orthodox Church” p. 177 Cultivating Food Justice


What is the relationship or tension between A) communities taking control of their food system to create democratic and just production and access frameworks through things like land takeovers and ‘guerrilla’ farming and B) the role of the cities, local governments, legal frameworks and private ownership in granting access to resources ‘legitimately?’ In what ways can the planner liaise between these groups, facilitating relationships that foster legal rights/ownership to land (i.e. facilitate city policy change, legal representation for community groups etc.)

Required Readings


2011 “Local Food and Community Self-Governance: An Ordinance to protect the Health and Integrity of the Local Food System in the Town of , County, Maine.” (PDF)


Campaign to Take Back Vacant Land, (2011). “Put Abandoned Land in Our Hands: A City-Community Partnership to Transform Blight Into Jobs, Homes and Parks” (PDF)


Class 11. November 18. Food workers, Farmworkers, Migration and Gender

What can the planner or policy maker do to try to ensure justice and equity for farm and
food workers, in a globalized marketplace? Advocate for labor halls? Facilitate discussions between unionizers and policy makers? How should the planner or policymaker speak ‘on behalf’ of this population?


Required Readings

Center for Social Inclusion (2014) Shining a light in dark places: Raising up the work of Southern Women of Color in the food system. Copyright ©2014 by the Center for Social Inclusion (PDF)


To what extent can agriculture and food be used by low-income communities, people of color and immigrants to create authentic places and streetscapes?

Required Readings


Agyeman, J (2011) “New agricultures, cultural diversity and foodways.”


Urban Vitality Group. ND “Food Cartology: Rethinking Urban Spaces as People Spaces.” (PDF)

“Portland Food Carts: Twitter Me This: Taco Trucks and Cupcakes - Gentrification, Evolution or Something in Between?” (2010) APA (PDF)

Details to follow