

## **Perspectives on Food and Water Security**

### **Course Description**

Human interaction with the natural environment is often experienced through our relationship to food and water. Ensuring access to adequate food and water for individuals and communities is considered a global priority by the United Nations, various aid organizations, and national governments, yet lack of adequate access to food and water persists. This class will explore how constraints to access to food and water are experienced throughout the world, focusing on the choices made by communities to manage scarce resources. Specifically, the course will concentrate on how environmental, economic, political, and social factors combine to influence access to adequate and appropriate food and water for various populations. It will also explore how discourses of food and water security, food sovereignty, and the right to food and water differ and how these discourses address or fail to address the various factors (i.e. economic, environmental, political, and social) that influence access. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to evaluate real world case studies to identify different factors that contribute to lack of food access and propose solutions using different approaches to ensuring access to sufficient supplies of food and water. The course will also develop students' critical reading, writing, and discussion skills.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

*By the end of this course, students will be able to:*

- Define and distinguish between concepts of food security, food sovereignty, and the right to food.
- Articulate the differences between availability of a resource and access of a resource and how these concepts relate to food and water.
- Evaluate case studies to identify factors (i.e. environmental, economic, political, and social) that limit access to food and water.
- Compare how concepts of food security, food sovereignty, and the rights to food address or fail to address various factors (i.e. environmental, economic, political, and social) that influence access to food.

### **Course Literature**

There are no required books to purchase for this course. Course materials will be available in electronic format on Blackboard and paper copies will be on hold in the Environmental Studies Office and available in our offices during office hours. If you have trouble downloading any of the articles email [ndreher@uoregon.edu](mailto:ndreher@uoregon.edu) or [dshtob@uoregon.edu](mailto:dshtob@uoregon.edu).

### **Assignments**

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#### **In-class Participation**

Attendance will be taken each day, and will comprise a part of the in-class participation grade. However, students must come prepared to ask questions, engage the reading materials and actively participate in class discussions to receive full credit for in-class participation. During many class sessions, students will participate in small group discussions about the reading and must be prepared to engage the reading material in an analytical and substantive way with other students. Students should prepare at least one comment or question from each reading to share in class the day that reading is assigned.

#### **Short Essays**

Short essays (approximately 1000 words each) will critically reflect upon assigned readings, drawing out themes, trends, connections, and potential weaknesses in these readings. These essays must be refined, substantive, and polished papers that make clear arguments supported by detailed evidence. The exercise is designed to facilitate critical reading (analysis), to connect diverse themes, and to practice making arguments in writing. Your essays must go beyond summaries of the reading.

Essay #1 will compare and contrast discourses of food and water security and sovereignty in the international context, taking into account readings on food and water as human rights. Specifically, this essay will discuss how each discourse is useful in addressing the challenge of access to food and water. Your essay should refer to: (1) at least two readings from Classes 1 & 2, (2) one reading from Class 3, and (3) one additional source. However, there is no maximum number of sources that you may use. This essay is due through Safe Assign on Blackboard by 11:59 PM on 10/19.

Essay #2 will compare and contrast the impacts of environmental factors on food and water security with any one of the other factor categories discussed between weeks 3 and 6 (economics, national politics and governance, international politics and aid, and social and cultural factors). Your essay should discuss how the environment and your chosen additional factor are separate or interrelated, including how they influence one another. Your essay must incorporate: (1) two readings assigned during week 4; (2) at least two other readings assigned in classes 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12; and (3) at least one of the readings assigned for class 1. However, there is no maximum number of sources that you may use. Essay #2 is due through Safe Assign on Blackboard by 11:59 PM on 11/16.

### **Fishbowl Paper and Participation**

You will work in a group of four or five to enact an in-class debate or “Fishbowl” on the topic of what are the factors that most impact food and water security and access, and which of these factors people should focus on to ensure food and water security. The five groups will each argue in favor of their own position and against the positions of the other groups. The five positions in the debate will focus on (1) environmental and ecological matters, (2) cultural and societal matters, (3) economics, (4) international politics and governance, and (5) national or local politics and governance. Your group will submit a “Fishbowl Paper” of approximately 1,500 words summarizing your arguments for your position and against the other groups’ positions on the day of the event.<sup>1</sup>

### **Research Paper**

Students will write a research paper on a topic related to an issue on the course syllabus. Research papers will identify a clear research question and provide a critical analysis of issues facing countries and/or communities in their efforts to ensure food and water security. You may choose to explore issues facing a particular community or environment, or look more broadly at a common issue facing multiple communities and environments. I encourage you to narrow it down to a particular region of the globe, though, if you take the latter approach. Your final research paper must be submitted through Safe Assign on Blackboard.

- **Research Paper Proposal and Abstract due Week 3.** Research paper proposals should include a proposed research question, a justification and overview of what you plan to explore in your research paper, and an abstract that is approximately 250 words. For examples of abstracts, visit: <http://undergradsymposium.uoregon.edu/writing-an-abstract/sample-abstract/>.
  - **Research Paper Outline and Annotated Bibliography due: Week 6.** Your outline should illustrate the issues you plan to explore in your research. Your annotated bibliography should include at least 8 sources, including 2 primary sources (manuscripts, oral histories, newspapers, government documents, etc., if possible based on your research topic), 4 peer-reviewed sources, as well as at least 2 sources from the class syllabus. For more information on writing an annotated bibliography, visit: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>.
  - **\*\*Draft paper due 11/25.** *Students can submit a draft paper by 11/25 and will receive comments by 12/2. This draft will not be graded. You are highly encouraged to submit a draft for comments.*
  - **Final research paper due by 11:59 PM on 12/19.** Students will submit an 8-12 page double-spaced research paper. The paper should have citations but they will not be counted in the page limit. Final research papers should include all sources included in the annotated bibliography but may include additional sources. Citations must be in a recognized professional format (APA, MLA etc.) For more information on properly using APA format, visit: <http://www.apastyle.org>.
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