

**Department of Sociology  
St. Francis Xavier University**

*Sociology 364: Food & Society*

Winter Semester 2021

Dr. John Phyne

e-mail: [jphyne@stfx.ca](mailto:jphyne@stfx.ca)

Class Times: Time Slot I1/I2 – Monday: 5:15 to 6:30 PM; Thursday, 6:45 to 8:00 PM

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesday: 1:00 to 2:30 PM or by appointment.

Course Guidelines: In order to have a productive semester, the following guidelines will be used:

1. There are no extra assignments or tests. If you perform below your expectations, it is your responsibility to contact me so you can improve on your performance in the next test.

2. Please keep track of your grades. If you are unsure about a grade, you just have to go the results for each test in the Moodle section for this course.

3. Academic Integrity: The Academic Integrity Policy may be found at:  
[http://www.sites.stfx.ca/registrars\\_office/academic\\_integrity](http://www.sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_integrity).

4. E-mail Policy: Please restrict your e-mails to necessary communications. These include extended absences from class (more than one week) and family emergencies. I refuse to use e-mail to cover lectures from missed classes. My virtual office hours are be used to cover materials pertaining to the course. You may also talk to me after Monday night's class. *I will not answer e-mails between 4:00 PM on Friday to 7:00 PM on Sunday. I am out of the office during this time frame.*

5. Read the course syllabus: If you e-mail me with a question pertaining to something that is clearly pointed out on the course syllabus, I will just direct you to the syllabus. Make sure that your e-mails are necessary and constructive. Lazy e-mails will receive very brief or no responses.

## Course Description

This course explores the linkages among food production, distribution and consumption within the changing global political economy. Consideration is given to these issues within the Global North and Global South. We also consider the historical and contemporary linkages between the Global North and South. These linkages are also assessed through an examination of food policy issues (health, safety, security, and sustainability). The course is divided into four sections.

In *Section One*, we examine ‘food’ as an interdisciplinary research topic. While it is obvious that we all need to eat to survive, power relations, culture, the environment and health concerns inform the types of foods we eat and how these foods change over time. Attention is given to the long-term historical changes that have shaped the ways human societies have produced and consumed food. Emphasis is also given to the social and ecological consequences of global food production and consumption patterns. We deal with the consequences of the ‘liberalisation’ of trade in food products for food producers and consumers. Attention is also given to the role of culture and gender in food consumption practices. The conceptual apparatus introduced here is the basis for the consideration of material in the rest of the course (four classes).

*Section Two* emphasizes the social organisation of food production and consumption in the Global North. Much of the period since the end of WWII was characterised by state intervention in order to maximize food production. Policies endeavoured to link production to consumption. This is referred to as the Fordist food regime. Case studies of the Fordist regime and the gradual decline of this regime include: supply management in Canadian dairy production, the social and ecological consequences of beef production, the roots of ‘permanent’ migrant labour in Canada’s seasonal fruit and vegetable sectors, the transition in fisheries from wild catches to aquaculture, and the role of ‘permanent’ migrant labour in that food sector (Six classes).

*Section Three* covers the social reorganisation of agricultural production in countries in the South and the linkages of this with Northern consumption practices. This ‘Post Fordist’ period arguably began in the late 1970s and accelerated in the 1990s. It consists of a growing emphasis on ‘free markets’ in the sourcing of agricultural products. This process was engineered by Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in the revision of lending practices from Northern to Southern countries and is stressed in the recent policy provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This growing liberalisation of trade in food products coupled with the rise in agro-export industries in the South has resulted in changing patterns in the relationships between producers and consumers. Food is now sourced from a wider variety of places in the Global South. Here, we examine trade liberalisation and its implications for the rise of ‘buyer-driven’ food chains for coffee exports from the Global South – including the rise of ‘Fair Trade’ coffee, and for export agriculture in Chile and South Africa (Six classes).

*Section Four* covers selected issues in food policy. The topics covered include health, safety, security, and sustainability. These will be discussed within a holistic perspective. The 21<sup>st</sup> century increasingly brings forward the need to view food within a wider global perspective. Whether we are ordering food on-line, visiting a local restaurant or even cooking at home, we are usually

‘eating out’. Our food has ‘local’ and ‘global’ linkages that speak to health, safety, security, and sustainability (Five classes).

### **Textbook**

Mustafa Koç, Jennifer Sumner and Anthony Winson, eds. *Critical Perspectives in Food Studies*. Second Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2017.

### **Evaluation**

There are four evaluation components:

Test 1: Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> - 25 per cent of your final grade.

Test 2: Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> - 25 per cent of your final grade.

**Essay on Migrant Farm Workers:** This is worth 15 per cent of your final grade. The guidelines are in Moodle. These will be discussed on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>. The paper is due on Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. You are to deposit the essay in the Moodle section of the course.

Final Examination: 35 per cent of your final grade

### **Required Readings**

All required readings are either in your textbook or located on the Moodle page for the course (see the asterisk for those readings). While much of this material will be covered in class, you are expected to complete all of these readings for your examinations. Read the material in the order in which you find it. The failure to keep up with your readings will most likely result in a poor grade in this course.

*Section One: Perspectives in Food Studies (Four classes: January 14, 18, 21 and 25)*

Mustafa Koç, Margaret Bancercz and Kelsey Speakman, “The Interdisciplinary Field of Food Studies.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 4-18.

Harriet Friedmann, “Changing Food Systems from the Top to Bottom: Political Economy and Social Movements Perspectives.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 19-33.

Jose Johnston and Sarah Cappeliez, “You Are What You Eat: Enjoying (and Transforming) Food Culture.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 81-94.

Jennifer Brady, Elaine Power, Michelle Szabo and Jacqui Gingras, “Still Hungry for a Feminist Food Studies.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 81-94.

*Section Two: Fordist and Post-Fordist Food Chains: The Global North (Six classes: January 28, February 1, 4, 11, 18 and 22): Test 1 is on February 8.*

Nettie Wiebe, “Crisis in the Food System: The Farm Crisis.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds, pp. 138-153.

Tony Weiss, “A Political Ecology Approach to Industrial Food Production.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 118-34.

Emily Reid-Musson, “Grown Close to Home™: Migrant Farmworker (Im)mobilities and Unfreedom on Canadian Farms”. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 2017, pp. 1-15.\*

Aparna Sundar, “The Food System in the Fisheries: Crisis and Alternatives.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 169-84.

Christine Knott, “Contentious Mobilities and Cheap(er) Labour: Temporary Foreign Workers in a New Brunswick Seafood Processing Community.” *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 41(3), 2016, pp. 375-97.\*

*Section Three: Post-Fordist Food Chains: Coffee and Fruit from the Global South (Six classes: February 25, March 1, 4, 11, 15 and 18): Test 2 is on March 8.*

Laura T. Raynolds and Claudia Rosty, “Fair Trade USA Coffee Plantation Certification: Ramifications for workers in Nicaragua.” *Development and Policy Review*, 2020, pp. 1-20.\*

José Bengoa, “Rural Chile Transformed: Lights and Shadows.” *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(4), October 2013, pp. 466–487.\*

Matthew Alford, Stephanie Barrientos and Margareet Visser, “Multi-scalar Labour Agency in Global Production Networks: Contestation and Crisis in the South African Fruit Sector.” *Development and Change*, 48(4), pp. 721-45.\*

*Section Four: Health and Safety, Food Security and Sustainability (Five Classes: March 22, 25, 29, April 5 and 8)*

### Health and Safety

Brenda L. Beagan and Gwen E. Chapman, “Constructing ‘Healthy Eating’/Constructing Self.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 64-78.

Anthony Winson, “Spatial Colonization of Food Environments by Pseudo-Food Companies.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 185- 204.

Debbie Martin and Margaret Amos, “What Constitutes Good Food? Toward a Critical Indigenous Perspective.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 205-20.

### Food Security

Matias E. Margulis and Jessica Duncan, “Global Food Security Governance: Key Actors, Issues and Dynamics.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds. pp. 270-85.

Naomi Dachner and Valerie Tarasuk, “Origins and Consequences of and Responses to Food Insecurity in Canada.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 221-36.

E. Ann Clark, “Questioning the Assumptions of Genetically Modified Crops in Canada.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 253-69

### Sustainability and the Future of Food

Jennifer Sumner, “Conceptualizing Sustainable Food Systems.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 320-31.

Charles Z. Levkoe, “Alternative Food Initiatives, Food Movements, and Collaborative Networks: A Pan-Canadian Perspective.” In Mustafa Koç, et al., eds., pp. 348-62.