

ECON 4389-1 (21723) Spring 2015

Contemporary Economics – Food and Agriculture,

Instructor information:

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Office Hours: TTh 1to 2:20 PM, 5:20 to 6 PM

Course Information:

Start/end: January 20, 2015-May 15, 2015

Day/time: Tuesday and Thursday 2.30PM-4.00PM

Room: M115

Course Objective:

The objective of this course is to provide reading material and lectures which facilitate a better understanding of the world, its politics, its agriculture and food production, the dynamics of population, the problems facing the global environment and the changing global economy in which we live. We will also explore the diversity of different cultures and peoples and the condition of those who have experienced a dramatic transformation and improvement in the conditions of their life and those that have not. The

diversity of the reading matter and topic assignment is considerably greater than can be achieved in a three hour course in one semester. The boundaries for the course are wide allowing the students to fashion a course that responds to their particular needs and interests as long as they in some way cover all three topics of the course title, use all of the assigned sources and largely within the course boundaries.

Required reading:

Hybrid: The History and Science of Plant Breeding by [Noel Kingsbury](#), University of Chicago Press (November 15, 2011)
ISBN-10: 0226437132
ISBN-13: 978-0226437132

The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy (Oxford Handbooks in Economics) by [Jayson L. Lusk](#), [Jutta Roosen](#), [Jason Shogren](#) Oxford University Press; (September 15, 2013)

ISBN-10: 0199681325

ISBN-13: 978-0199681327

The Oxford Handbook of Food History (Oxford Handbooks) by [Jeffrey M. Pilcher](#) (Editor), Oxford University Press (October 16, 2012)
ISBN-10: 019972993X
ISBN-13: 978-0199729937

[The Chlorine Revolution: Water Disinfection and the Fight to Save Lives](#) **PB** by [Michael J. McGuire](#), American Water Works Assn (September 20, 2013)
ISBN-10: 1583219137
ISBN-13: 978-1583219133

[Consider the Fork: A History of How We Cook and Eat](#) by [Bee Wilson](#), Basic Books; (October 8, 2013)
ISBN-10: 0465056970
ISBN-13: 978-0465056972

The extra credit independent study courses are open only to students taking one of my two courses and who are trying to graduate in May 2015 or August 2014. A student can earn 1, 2 or 3 hours extra credit. Students WILL HAVE TO ENROLL for these hours (ECON 4398-1, ECON 4398-2, ECON 4398-3, Independent Study) at the beginning of the Semester.

Assignments (general guidelines):

Please read the syllabus carefully. I have taught these courses for many years. Over the last decade, I have made major changes to the way that it is taught and I have not until now changed the syllabus to fully reflect these changes.

1) You have five books to read for the course. I assume that you can read and understand them so I will occasionally refer to them but I will not lecture on them. Since I will not be testing you on them, the only way that I know that you have read them is if your papers reflect a general understanding of them and every paragraph in your papers cites at least one assigned source and all the assigned sources are substantially used in your papers.

2) You are to write two papers 25 to 30 pages total submitted at the due dates given below

A . The 1st paper will examine the history of food production that took humans form earliest times when humans number just a few million to circa 1960 when there were three billion of us. At least four of the five books can be used on this paper and it is to be a minimum of 10 pages.

B The 2nd paper will examine the technological changes in food production and basic hygiene (using water as an example) that have allowed for population growth from 800 million in circa 1800 to 7.2+ billion today. These changes involved a nine fold increase in population and a doubling of life expectancy.

Included will be the changes that have allowed our food production system to be globalized. My 4 to 5:20 PM Economic Development class will examine the technological changes in transportation and refrigeration that allow food to be transported globally; this class will focus on how it is grown and processed and its implications for human wellbeing. All five books could potentially be used in this paper - minimum 15 to 20 pages in length.

- 3) Class will form into groups for project presentations beginning March 24th. Project topics and presentation dates are posted. All groups will be formed by March 12th before Spring Break. Doing the reading, writing your papers and being part of a group making a presentation is the larger part of the learning process for the course and the receipt of a grade. Class attendance is also an important part of your learning for the course. Since there are no exams, class attendance is the only measure of what you are learning in class, however imperfect it may be. Attendance is particularly important for the project presentations. Most everyone works hard to give their presentation so they deserve the courtesy of your attendance and attention – no looking at cell phones, no reading books or online, no sleeping – just as you want their attention when you make your presentation.
- 4) If you attend class regularly, pay attention and do your other work satisfactorily, there will be no exams as stated elsewhere. However, if you have more than two unexcused absences for my lectures and one or more for the presentations, then you will have a final exam at the regularly scheduled time. The more absences that you have, the more questions that you will have to answer and the more difficult that it will be to complete the exam during the allotted time and therefore the more difficult that it will be to get a decent grade for the exam and for the course. Even more excessive absences will bring a

grade penalty in addition to the severity of the final exam. Late papers are also subject to a grade penalty.

- 5) For any deviation from the syllabus, an exchange of emails is required verbal authorization is not sufficient - with the email granting permission being attached to your paper.
- 6) Please number your pages. Every paper should have two reference sheets with your name, course name and number, and number of pages of your paper. In other words, if the text for your paper is 15 pages (not counting separate cover sheet if you use one) then the reference pages will be numbered 15a and 15b. I will check to see that all the referenced sources were used in the paper and put an identifying mark on it. When you turn in your 2nd paper, tear off the marked reference page from your 1st paper and attach it to the 2nd paper.

YOU MAY USE OTHER RESEARCH MATERIAL AS WELL. IF YOU USE INFORMATION FROM THE WWW, PLEASE GIVE AS COMPLETE A CITATION AS POSSIBLE INCLUDING THE URL.

Give PAGE NUMBERS for all citations from printed matter. For e-books, if there are no page numbers, give the chapter or other identifying features so I can find the cited material. As a VERY ROUGH RULE-OF-THUMB, use only sources published this century, particularly for data unless there is a compelling reason to use an older source. All material that is not original to you must have a citation. Quotation marks are required only when you are using someone else's wording. If you are using their ideas and facts that are put in your own words, you still need to cite the source but quotation marks would be inappropriate.

Please do not start a sentence with "I feel" or in "my opinion." Instead use phrases such as "I conclude" or "it is my judgment based upon the evidence" etc. If you present solid evidence on an issue and then follow it with a rational argument to reach a conclusion, I will assume that this is not only your conclusion but it is also how you "feel" or that it is your "opinion." I care about your feelings but for the purpose of evaluating your work, I need to know what you have learned.

Assignment due dates (with some flexibility):

Tuesday January 20, 2015 – 1st day of class

Tuesday – January 27, 2015 - Last day to add a class

February 26, 2015 - 1st paper is due

March 3 & 5 2015 – Due dates for students who have exams or other academic commitments that make February 26 difficult. This is purely an Honor system so I assume that I will see most papers on March 5th but I hope to see some before that. Note that turning your 1st paper in later, gives you less time to do your 2nd paper. Given the extended date, no further extensions will be given except for a verified medical emergency.

Spring holiday; Independence Day holiday - March 16- 21, 2015 Monday - Saturday

March 24, 2015 or March 31 –to April 26, 2015 – Project presentations

March 24, 2015 - Second paper due in class

March 26 & April 2, 2015 Due dates for students who have exams or other academic commitments that make March 24th difficult. Again, this is purely an

Honor system so I assume that I will see most papers on April 2nd but I hope to see some before these dates. Given the extended date, no further extensions will be given except for a verified medical emergency.

If Project presentations begin on March 24th, students giving presentations on March 24th & 26th or April 2nd may turn in their paper on April 7th. Given the extended date, no further extensions will be given except for a verified medical emergency.

April 28 & 30 – Final Summary Presentations

April 23, 2015 - Last day any assigned submitted can be guaranteed to be graded in time for graduation

April 28, 2015 - Last day any assigned work can be submitted

(April 23rd & 28th deadlines are for special assignments and not for the two regular assigned papers.)

April 30, 2015 Last day of class for this course

May 4, 2015 Last day of class for the University

May 5, 2015 Tuesday - Make up days for class days officially canceled by the university (if necessary) or Reading Period

General guidelines:

Under current University policy, your email address given in People Soft is considered the official method of notification making you responsible for any information sent to that address. The best advice is to check it daily. Not having checked it will not be an acceptable excuse for failing to comply with the

instructions given there. If you turn in your papers for my class in the main economics office - 204 M - as I often allow you to do, please do not call or email me asking if I received them. And do not ask what grade that you received. I do not mean to be rude but your calls or emails will not likely be answered. Keep digital copies of all of your papers in the very unlikely event that they are somehow lost. After the due date, ALL PAPERS turned in other than in class, must be turned in on the date that I gave you before 3 PM, Turning in papers other than in class is permitted only under special circumstances and permission must be given by me in advance. Under no circumstances are you to slide a paper under my office door. It is very difficult for me to retrieve it and I often roll over it before even being able to try and pick it up.

If you have an acceptable, verifiable reason beyond your control why you were unable to complete your work such as hospitalization, then you may either bring or send the documentation to me and receive an "I." Please no elaborate excuses, only documented cases can be accepted. Since we have to fill out a form for the "I" with your signature, send the documentation only if you are physically unable to bring it. It also has to be approved by the department. Needless to say, without adequate documentation to support the form, an "I" cannot be given. Unlike an "I," a grade of "F" can no longer be removed except in the most extreme set of circumstances. If towards the end of the semester, it becomes obvious to you that you will not be able to complete your work, you might consider dropping the course by the last day to drop a course or withdraw without hours counting towards the Enrollment. I hope that none of you find it necessary to withdraw. You will not be given a failing grade for withdrawing since I have not given any exams. If you drop the course using People Soft and for some reason the system fails to record your drop, contact the Registrar's Office in order to correct the

problem. Do not contact me or my T.A. or the Economics Department about this matter. If you receive an "F," I will gladly change it to a "W" if notified to do so by the Administration. I am not allowed to do it on my own nor am I allowed to give you a "W" for a final grade unless the final role sheet shows that you have dropped.

Every semester, a large number of students used to take my courses as independent study without attending class. I have always sought to make my courses available to those who could not attend for whatever reasons. This option is NOT open for any of my classes except my Asian Development class taught in summer and only available as independent study. Over the last few years, I have substantially restructured the way that I teach my courses in a way that makes independent study impossible. If for some reason after the semester begins, you can no longer attend class (other than for a verified medical emergency), then I am afraid that you will have to withdraw from the course. Please do not ask to be allowed to do the course as independent study.

My word may be my sacred bond but my memory for promises made is not. If you wish some change in paper topic or other course change, you may seek permission verbally BUT such permission is only valid if confirmed by an exchange of emails shortly after permission is granted. The student will return printed out a copy of the email approving a change and turn it in with whatever you are submitting. Do not ask me later in the semester to “remember” having given you permission to for a special request.