

Food, Population, and the Environment (Lecture), Fall 2013

ECON 4389-01_LEC 13695

Day/time: Monday-Wednesday 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

August 26, 2013 – December 20, 2013

Room: H 43

Instructor: Dr Thomas R. DeGregori

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Office Hours: TBA

THERE WILL BE NO EXAMS OR QUIZZES

THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM

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 geography, its conflicts and resolutions, the changing global economy in which we live, the diversity of different cultures and peoples and 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 the main themes of development presented in the course and in the reading - science and technology for development, agriculture, and globalization and that they use all of the assigned sources and write largely within the course boundaries.

Required reading:

Genetically Modified Food and Global Welfare (Frontiers of Economics and Globalization) by [Colin Carter](#) , [GianCarlo Moschini](#) and [Ian Sheldon](#) (Editors) Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2011

Successful Agricultural Innovation in Emerging Economies, [David J. Bennett](#) and [Richard C. Jennings](#), Editors, Cambridge University Press; 1st edition (February 14, 2013)

The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food by [Lizzie Collingham](#), Penguin, 2012

In each of my courses this semester, I am using a book on World War II. Students taking my Econ 4298 or my Econ 4398 will be required to read both of them. These are not course in World War II. From these books in writing your papers, use only the minimum factual information about the war in order to

explain the larger point of the books. Namely for the Collingham book, it is the importance of food production in conflicts between nations and for the Kennedy book, it the importance of science, technology and creative innovation for nations to succeed in an international conflict. In other words, what do we learn from them about succeeding in a globalized world? Important note - war is a zero or negative sum game where there are both winners and losers. Globalization can have competitions or conflicts that are win/lose but it can also have competitions that are win/win or lose/lose. What do we learn from these books about different kinds of competition and how to succeed in them?

One of the following two:

Just Food: Where Locavores Get It Wrong and How We Can Truly Eat Responsibly by [James E. McWilliams](#), Back Bay Books; Reprint edition, 2010

Or

The Locavore's Dilemma: In Praise of the 10,000-mile Diet by Pierre Desrochers,

And

One of the following two:

Japanese Foodways, Past and Present by [Eric C. Rath](#) and [Stephanie Assmann](#) Editors, University of Illinois Press; 2010

or

Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War: Food in Twentieth-Century Korea, [Katarzyna J. Cwiertka](#), Reaktion Books (November 15, 2012)

Course Calendar:

First day of [classes](#) – Monday, August 26, 2013

Labor Day holiday – Monday, September 2, 2013

Last day to add a class – Tuesday, September 3, 2013

Last day to drop a course or withdraw without receiving a grade – Wednesday, September 11, 2013

Last day to drop a course without hours counting towards [the Enrollment](#) Cap for Texas Residents – Wednesday, September 11, 2013

Last day to drop a course or withdraw with a 'W' – Friday, November 1, 2013

Thanksgiving holiday - Wednesday-Saturday, November 27-30, 2013

DUE DATE FOR ALL PAPERS – in class Monday, December 2, 2013

(Papers are guaranteed to be graded in time for the posting of final grades. If papers are turned in later, they might not be graded in time for posting resulting in an F for the course. If graded in time, late papers still face a late paper penalty.)

Last day of class – Saturday, December 7, 2013

Official closing of the semester - Friday, December 20, 2013

Except for the final due date, in previous semesters, there were no firm dates for turning in your papers. Students have often requested due dates for papers so I am providing them below along with the penalties for late papers.

There is the possibility of earning 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 – see posted instructions for these course) at the beginning of the Semester. In addition to filling out the form there will be an exchange of emails between me and each student taking these specifying the requirements. A copy of these emails must be submitted along with any final written work.

Project Topics for 4389 are:

- Trends in Food Safety over the last 100 years or so.
- Trends in Technology in Food Production, Preservation, Preparation and Nutrition over the last 100 years or so.
- Trends in Global Poverty and Hunger since 1950.
- Trends in Global Life Expectancy since 1950.
- Trends in Global Population since 1950.

Trends in Global Infant and Child Mortality Since 1960.

Biotechnology in Agriculture - Yields, Safety (in production and consumption), Environmental Impact and Benefits (ex. Vitamin A enhanced rice).

General guidelines:

I am offering Econ 4198 and Econ 4398 for Fall 2013 only for those taking either Econ 3351 or Econ 4389 and who are participating in a class project. It is mainly for students intending to graduate in December 2013 who need the hours to graduate in December or who will be unable to complete their Spring graduation in May 2014 without the extra hours. I will rely on the judgment of Marion Foley for the latter determination. Econ 4298 will be offered only in very strict compliance with the foregoing rules. Students will not be allowed to take all three courses - Econ 4198, 4298 and 4398.

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 regularly. 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 request that you do, please do not call or email me asking if I received them. Turn in to room 204 M only on Th & F. For M&W, turn in only in class. Please 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 FOR ALL PAPERS – in class Monday, December 2, 2013 or the previous week in the Economics office, 204 M, emails and calls will not be taken and returned. There are NO EXCEPTIONS except one. If you have an acceptable, verifiable reason beyond your control why you were unable to complete papers such as hospitalization, then you may either bring in 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. The decision on such matters is no longer mine to make. 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 http://www.uh.edu/provost/stu/stu_enrollcapqs.html Enrollment Cap for Texas Residents (Wednesday, September 11, 2013) or the last day to drop a course or withdraw (Friday, November 1, 2013). 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 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 remains open (only with permission for this class this semester - see above) but it is no longer encouraged except for those who have absolutely no other options since past experience shows that those who attended class regularly were vastly more likely to finish the course on time and not need an "I."

Assignments:

You are to write two papers of (very) roughly 8 to 10 pages each and participate in a class project – details for the projects will be announced in class. No paper is to be less than seven pages. You have considerable latitude as to the length of each paper as long as the total for all four is about 30 to 40 pages. 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 papers. I may give you permission orally for a different topic – a simple email exchange with an OK from me is necessary to confirm it. My word is my sacred bond but my memory is not. For permission for any deviation from the course requirements, please do not tell me that I said it was OK. Provide an email confirmation. Given the large choice of topics, no deviation should be necessary unless there is a topic of specific interest to you! I will be offering the same range of topics to both my classes this semester even though some topics are vastly more relevant to one course than another. Those taking both courses are required to select different topics for each course.

Students not regularly attending class will be required to write three papers for a total of 25 to 30 pages and participate in a class project. Students who receive permission to not participate in a class project must do four papers.

ALL PAPERS HAVE TO INCLUDE CITED MATERIAL (source, date and pages cited) FROM THE ASSIGNED READINGS. Each paper must include at least one of the assigned sources though you may use as many as you wish on any paper. All papers taken together must show that all assigned sources have been read and used. Every paragraph in your papers must have at least one cited source unless it is either drawn from your own experience or is a concluding paragraph. Each paper should have a separate reference page that does not count towards your page requirements. You will lose one letter grade for each assigned source that is not "substantially" used (in other words, used in a way that indicates an understanding of what the book is saying). This may seem like a rigid requirement but since there are no exams or quizzes, it is the only way that I know (or think that I know) that you have done the reading and that the paper is yours and not found on the web. ALL GRADES ARE FINAL UNLESS THE STUDENT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT AN ERROR WAS MADE IN THE GRADING. FINAL MEANS FINAL. DO NOT ASK TO BE ABLE TO RE-DO YOUR PAPERS IF YOUR GRADE WAS LOWERED BECAUSE YOU FAILED TO FOLLOW THE CLEARLY POSTED RULES. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK SHOULD YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THEM. Ruining a 4.0 grade point average or preventing you from graduating are not acceptable reasons for allowing you to re-do your papers. Neither is the claim that a book or books did not fit your chosen topics acceptably. You have a wide choice of topics so pick topics in which you can use all of the assigned sources in doing them. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

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. I have posted supplementary instructions on my webpage; please consult it and follow the instructions. You are not allowed to have two paragraphs in a row that use only non-assigned sources. As a rough rule of thumb, use only sources published this century 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." 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 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."

Attendance will be taken. Those who attend regularly – three or fewer absences – will need to do only two papers and be part of a class project. Being part of a class project is the default position. Students have to obtain permission to substitute a paper for participation in a project. Four to nine absences will require doing three papers and a project. More than nine absences without a medical excuse will result in a grade penalty depending on the number of absences.

Permission to do this course as independent study is usually given before the class begins. In some circumstances, permission might be given during the first week of class giving the student time to drop and add should permission not be forthcoming. Independent study is a possible option primarily for students who have taken a course from me and attended regularly. Even for former students of mine, there must be a compelling reason to do it independent study.

Assignment due dates (with some flexibility):

September 24 - A ten page paper that makes substantial use of at least two of the assigned sources.

October 1 - Students who have exams or other academic commitments that make the September 25 due date difficult, may turn in a fifteen page paper that makes substantial use of at least three of the assigned sources without penalty. Ten page papers by this date will lose one to two thirds of a grade on it - for example A- to either a B+ or a B. After this date, any ten page paper will lose a full letter grade.

October 8 - Students turning in their first paper of fifteen pages which makes substantial use of at least three of the assigned sources by this date will lose one to two thirds of a grade on it - for example A- to either a B+ or a B. After this date, any paper of any length will lose a full letter grade.

October 22 - Second paper due in Economics office before it closes (circa 3 PM)

October 22 option - students who made a B+ or better on their first paper have the option of combining two topics in a ten to fifteen page paper (bringing the total to 25 to 30 pages) using three previously not used assigned sources completing use of all assigned sources. They will turn in a three to five page draft or outline indicating the topics and how they will be combined. This will be returned OK written on it and will be turned back in along with the complete paper on the due date for the third paper.

October 29 - Second paper due in Economics office before it closes (circa 3 PM) with a penalty of one to two thirds of a grade on it - for example A- to either a B+ or a B. After this date, any paper will lose a full letter grade.

November 12 - Third paper due in Economics office before it closes (circa 3 PM)

November 19 - Third paper due in Economics office before it closes (circa 3 PM) with a penalty of one to two thirds of a grade on it - for example A- to either a B+ or a B. After this date, any paper will lose a full letter grade.

December 3 - as stated above - DUE DATE FOR ALL PAPERS - Monday, December 2, 2013 in class or in previous week in the Economics office, 204 M) - guaranteed to be graded in time for the posting of final grades. As often happens, I am able to grade late papers in time for them to be recorded. However, after the due date, there will be a grade penalty that increases the later the paper is turned. I will consider removing the one third grade penalty for students who turn in two of the three papers (including the final paper) by the due dates. Full letter grade penalties will not be removed.

The due date for the fourth paper, if you are required to write one, is Monday, December 3, 2013 in class or in the previous week in class or on Thursday or Friday in the Economics office, 204 M.