

Food Systems, Social Justice, and the Environment

Fall 2024



Image: "Food Justice" by Meredith Stern, <https://justseeds.org/product/food-justice/>

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Program Description:

In this program, students will delve into understanding food as part of wider systems (relating to production, distribution, consumption, and waste). Guiding questions include: What is a food system? Who benefits from our current food system? What are the social and ecological impacts of our food system? Who gets excluded and burdened with these costs? What are the causes of hunger? How is hunger a social construction? The concept of food justice, which is a holistic and structural view of the food system that treats real, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food as a human right and addresses structural barriers to that right, will be a core theme of this program. Students will gain historical grounding in how our current food system came to be, with a focus on understanding the legacies of

settler colonialism and enslavement on our food system. We will explore our studies of the food system in an intersectional manner, with significant attention given to the intersections of food and structural racism, along with the ways in which food justice intersects with other social issues like gentrification, the prison industrial complex, racial justice, Indigenous sovereignty, environmentalism, farmworker and labor organizing, healthcare, and more.

Assignments will consist of four bi-weekly discussion board posts, 5 bi-weekly collective annotations on the week's readings, and one case study project, where students individually research a food justice organization or movement and create a power point describing their case. This program will be taught fully online with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The program will meet synchronously on Zoom during mostly odd weeks (for seminar and workshops). During mostly even weeks, students will complete asynchronous modules on Canvas, which consists of recorded lectures, film, and discussion boards. Please note that synchronous (Zoom) classes will take place during weeks 1, 3, 7, 9, and 10. Students will need a computer with camera, microphone, and internet access.

Credit Equivalencies:

4 credits in Food Systems History

4 credits in Food Justice Social Movements

Criteria for Earning Credit:

The criteria for earning credit are outlined in full in our shared Learning Agreements document. Students are responsible for knowing all requirements for credit and keeping track of their progress in the program, such as through the Canvas gradesheet. Faculty will reach out no later than the fifth week to inform students at risk of not earning full credit and provide guidance on how to get caught up.

Learning Modalities:

This course will be taught in an online format. Online learning will include synchronous (scheduled) and asynchronous (completed on your own time) activities.

- Bi-weekly workshops conducted via Zoom (6 hours roughly every other week)
- Bi-weekly asynchronous modules completed on Canvas (roughly 10-14 hours a week).
- Weekly readings (posted on Canvas)

- The workload in this program is designed for approximately 15-20 hours a week, so in addition to online class time (6 hours roughly every other week), students must allocate time during the week to complete readings and assignments (roughly 10-14 hours a week).

To successfully participate in this program, students will need a computer (including a microphone and preferably including a camera) and internet access. Grants or other resources may be available to support students with technology needs, so students with tech needs should contact faculty for additional information. If students find themselves unable to participate due to technology, caregiving obligations, economic disruption, health risk, or illness, they can work with faculty to pursue alternate options to earn credit.

Learning Goals:

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Have developed an intersectional understanding of food justice and core analytical concepts within this field.
- Have expanded their knowledge of the histories of food justice social movements, especially in regards to race, class, and gender historical inequities.

Schedule:

Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 pm – 8:20 pm on the following weeks only: 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10 (please note that we do not have class on Monday of week 7).

Assignments:

- 2 credits: 4 synthesizing Discussion Board posts and comments to classmates' posts (instructions are posted on Canvas). These posts are due in weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8. In order to receive full credit, students must integrate the two weeks (the current week and the week prior) of learning engaging with the workshop, films, readings, recorded lectures, etc for those weeks. In addition, students must make at least 2 substantiative comments on classmates' synthesis posts. Additional instructions are posted on Canvas.
- 2 credits: 5 annotations on Hypothesis, due during weeks 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8. Students will collectively annotate one chapter for the week's readings. Additional instructions posted on Canvas.

- 2 credits: Case Study Project, due in week 10. Students will complete research and present to the class on a contemporary example of food justice or food sovereignty, whether by a social movement, Indigenous nation, community-based organization, or project. Detailed instructions posted on Canvas.
- 2 credits for class participation. The attendance policy is outlined in the Learning Agreements document. Since this is an online course that is taught partially asynchronously, we have limited live, synchronous class time. As a result, it is vital for students to attend each of our Zoom classes and come to class prepared to engage in discussions.

Required Books:

Cote, Charlotte. (2022). *A Drum in One Hand, A Sockeye in the Other: Stories of Indigenous Food Sovereignty from the Northwest Coast*. University of Washington Press. Free [eBook](#) available through the Evergreen library with your login credentials.

Norgaard, Kari. (2019). *Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People: Colonialism, Nature, and Social Action*. Rutgers University Press. Free [eBook](#) available through the Evergreen library with your login credentials.

White, Monica. (2018). *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*. University of North Carolina Press. Free [eBook](#) available through the Evergreen library with your login credentials.