COURSE SYLLABUS
Determinants of U.S. Food Policy (NUTR 303)
Fall 2013

Tues and Thurs 11:15 am - 12:45 pm, Jaharis #118

Instructor: Parke Wilde
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Usual Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm, Jaharis #134 (subject to change).

Teaching Assistants:
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- Trisha Chakrabarti | Trisha.Chakrabarti@tufts.edu | Tel 925-984-1340 | Skype address: trisha.chak.

Tufts Graduate Credit: 1 credit

Prerequisites for taking this course:
- NUTR 203 (Fundamentals of Public Policy) or equivalent.
- NUTR 207 (Statistics) / 307 (Regression Analysis for Nutrition Policy) or equivalent.
- NUTR 238 (Fundamentals of Economics for Food Policy) or equivalent.

Course Description:
This course offers a broad introduction to food policies in the United States. Food policy encompasses laws, regulations, decisions and actions by governments and other institutions that influence food production, distribution and consumption. Real-world controversies and debates motivate the course’s attention to economic principles, research tools, policy analysis, and contemporary data sources. The course addresses both normative issues (how to evaluate policy options) and positive issues (how policy actually is made). The course assumes that the student cares not just about the economic interests of farmers, but also about nutrition, sustainable agriculture, the environment and food security.

Course Objectives:
A. Understand contemporary U.S. food policy, focusing on 10 topics:
   - Agriculture policy
   - Food production and the environment
   - International food and agricultural trade
   - The food manufacturing industry
   - The food retail and restaurant industries
   - Food safety
   - Dietary guidance
   - Food labeling and advertising
- Food insecurity and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Child nutrition programs

B. Learn to apply four tools or “ways of knowing” for policy analysis:
- Institutional knowledge
- Economics
- Statistics
- Policy theory

C. Practice writing with a purpose: policy analysis and policy impact

Description of assignments, tests, and other required activities: There are 4 homework assignments, 1 midterm, 1 final, and a term paper.

The homework assignments are made available through the course website on Trunk. They are submitted online with a due date on a Monday evening so that the instructor can review the assignment in class on Tuesday.

The term paper is described in the Term Paper Assignment in the Resources folder on Trunk. Students submit a term paper topic memo in October. There is an early term paper submission option in November and regular submission in December.

Summary of Assignments and Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment(s)</th>
<th>Grading Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homework #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework #2</td>
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<td>Homework #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
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Penalties for late or incomplete assignments: For homework and term paper, there is a 10% penalty for submission up to 7 days late and no grade for later submission. There can be no further extension on the final deadline for the term paper, because of the Friedman School’s schedule for final grade submission. Expected absences from tests should be discussed with the instructor as soon as the schedule conflict is known. For excused absences from the midterm, the instructor may choose to schedule a
makeup midterm or to omit the midterm and give double weight to the final. For excused absences from the final, a makeup date will be provided.

**Course texts and Materials:**

The course textbook is recommended for purchase: *Food Policy in the United States: An Introduction*, by Parke Wilde (Routledge/Earthscan, 2013). It is available at the Tufts Boston Campus Bookstore on Kneeland Street, directly from the publisher, and from reputable online booksellers.

The weekly reading list is divided into core reading and supplementary reading.

- **Core reading** should be completed in advance of each class, whether it is a light week or a busy week for you. The core readings provide the best study guide for the midterm and final.

- **Supplementary reading** is essential for getting your time’s worth out of this course, and for preparing for future work in U.S. food policy, but you have more flexibility about the choice of readings and your schedule for completing them. Many references cited in the course textbook are excellent supplementary readings, and other readings are listed below in this syllabus. Some of the supplementary readings are “refreshers” on policy or economic fundamentals, while others provide further detail on the topic of the week. Read deeply on the topics that inspire you most, but also select some readings that are outside of your usual comfort zone.

Purchase of an iClicker handset is recommended. The course website on Trunk has links to information about iClickers from Tufts UIT and the Tufts Medford Campus bookstore. There is an active resale market among Friedman School students. As a low-tech alternative, the course website also describes how to use flash cards instead of an iClicker.

Most books mentioned in this syllabus are on reserve at the Hirsch Health Sciences Library. Journal articles may be accessed by journal name through the Tufts online journals at library.tufts.edu. Other readings will be accessible on the Internet, through links from the course website.

In the coming fall, there will be big developments on many food policy topics. I frequently post food policy news and commentary on a blog, *U.S. Food Policy*, at www.usfoodpolicy.com. The blog’s sidebar has links to many other good sources of information, including advocacy groups, government sources, food industry groups, and blogs. *U.S. Food Policy*’s comment feature allows you to post your own input and discussion, either anonymously or under your name. Blog updates are posted to Twitter @usfoodpolicy, which provides another way to respond or to share links of your own.
Academic Conduct

Academic integrity, including avoiding plagiarism, is critically important. Each student is responsible for being familiar with the standards and policies outlined in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures manual (http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents). It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of, and comply with, these policies and standards. In accordance with Tufts University’s policy on academic misconduct, violations of standards of academic conduct will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from grade reduction or failure on an assignment; grade reduction or failure of a course; up to dismissal from the school, depending on the nature and context of any infraction.

Course & Assignment Schedule:

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<th>ASSIGNMENTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</th>
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<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>9/10 and 9/12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agricultural policy</td>
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<td>9/19</td>
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<td>Agricultural policy (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24 and 9/26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Food production and the environment</td>
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<td>10/1 and 10/3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>International agricultural trade</td>
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<td>10/8 and 10/10</td>
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<td>Food manufacturing</td>
<td>Homework #1 (due 9/18)</td>
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<td>10/17</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Midterm (10/17)</td>
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<td>10/22 and 10/24</td>
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<td>Food retailing and restaurants</td>
<td>Term paper topic (due 10/21)</td>
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<td>11/5 and 11/7</td>
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<td>11/19 and 11/21</td>
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<td>Food insecurity and SNAP</td>
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<td>11/26</td>
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<td>Child nutrition programs</td>
<td>Optional early term paper (due 11/27)</td>
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<td>12/3 and 12/5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td>12/10</td>
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<td>TERM PAPER DUE</td>
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This schedule is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.
Course Schedule  
(Readings and Learning Objectives)

TOPIC 1: Introduction

Learning Objectives for Topic 1: Students will be able to:

- Discuss the policy-making process in the federal government;
- Explain the economic approach to evaluating government actions in the economy;
- Recognize food policy and economic topics that arise the social ecological framework for analysis of food choices;
- Describe the role of the Farm Bill in U.S. food policy;
- Identify federal government agencies with food policy authority.

Readings for Topic 1:
Core:  
- Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 1).
Supplementary:

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Topic 2: Agricultural Policy

Learning Objectives for Topic 2: Students will be able to:

- Describe the geography and composition of the agriculture sector in the United States;
- Explain six broad classes of agricultural policy interventions;
- Use the analysis of supply and demand in competitive markets to anticipate winners and losers from government agricultural policies;
- Interpret federal data sources on farm incomes and farm program spending.

Readings for class 2:
Core:
- Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 2).
Supplementary:
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**Topic 3: Food Production and the Environment**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 3:** Students will be able to:
- Explain the role of property rights assignment in environmental market failures;
- Discuss scarcity and abundance in the world food situation;
- Describe policy challenges that arise from environmental constraints on food production;
- Analyze the policy implications of the local and organic food movements.

**Readings for Topic 3:**
Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 3).
Supplementary:

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**Topic 4: International Food and Agricultural Trade**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 4:** Students will be able to:
- Analyze the consequences of several types of trade policy, using a 2-panel partial equilibrium trade model illustration;
- Describe the motivations for and limitations of trade policies in the United States;
- Discuss the economics of immigration and farm labor.

**Readings for Topic 4:**
Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 4)
Supplementary:
- Trostle (2011). *Why Have Food Commodity Prices Risen Again?*

### Topic 5: Food Manufacturing

**Learning Objectives for Topic 5:** Students will be able to:
- Recognize distinctive features of several sectors of U.S. food and beverage manufacturing;
- Analyze the behavior of markets with several varieties of imperfect competition, including monopoly, monopsony, oligopoly, and oligopsony;
- Describe how the competitiveness of U.S. food and agricultural markets is regulated.

**Readings for Topic 5:**
- Core: 
  *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 5).
- Supplementary:

### Topic 6: Food Retailing and Restaurants

**Learning Objectives for Topic 6:** Students will be able to:
- Describe basic features of the structure of the U.S. food retail and restaurant
industries;
• Analyze the behavior of markets with monopolistic competition for branded products;
• Explain the diagnosis of problems with supermarket deserts and inadequate access to food retail;
• Describe nutritionally relevant trends in food price inflation.

Readings for Topic 6:
Core:
• Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 6).
Supplementary:

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Topic 7: Food Safety

Learning Objectives for Topic 7: Students will be able to:
• Diagnose food safety problems as problems of imperfect information;
• Define and discuss risk assessment;
• Summarize safety rules for food additives, pesticides and ingredients that are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS);
• Explain the jurisdiction of federal food safety agencies.

Readings for Topic 7:
Core:
• Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 7).
Supplementary:

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**Topic 8: Dietary Guidance**

**Learning Objectives for Topic 8:** Students will be able to:
- Review historical trends in chronic disease and nutrition;
- Understand the market failures that motivate the government’s role in dietary guidance;
- Understand the process of creating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans;
- Understand how U.S. consumption patterns differ from Dietary Guidelines;
- Review and analyze policy instruments used to guide Americans toward healthier food choices.

**Readings for Topic 8:**

**Core:**
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 8).

**Supplementary**

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**Topic 9: Food Labeling and Advertising**
Learning Objectives for Topic 9: Students will be able to:
- Use economic principles to analyze food and nutrition information policy;
- Understand legal principles that regulate commercial speech;
- Understand the Nutrition Facts Panel and merits of mandatory food labeling;
- Review the policy dilemma surrounding food and beverage advertising targeting children;
- Review U.S. rules covering health claims in food labeling and advertising;
- Describe and understand checkoff programs.

Readings for Topic 9:
Core:
- *Food Policy in the United States* (Chapter 9).
Supplementary:

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Topic 10: Hunger and Food Insecurity

Learning Objectives for Topic 10: Students will be able to:
- Use economic principles to understand how federal food assistance programs are designed;
- Examine history and methodology of food insecurity and hunger measurement;
- Understand the federal government’s Thrifty Food Plan;
- Describe the history, structure and effectiveness of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Describe charitable emergency food systems.

Readings for Topic 10:
Core:
- *Introduction to U.S. Food Policy* (Chapter 10).
Supplementary:
Assistance Program (SNAP).”


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Topic 11: Nutrition Assistance Programs for Children

Learning Objectives for Topic 11: Students will be able to:
- Recognize principles and tradeoffs in the design of nutrition assistance programs for children;
- Distinguish the main features of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC);
- Analyze the substance and politics of efforts to improve child nutrition.

Readings for Topic 11

Core:
- Food Policy in the United States (Chapter 11).

Supplementary:


This schedule is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.