

Disclaimer: This is an indicative syllabus only and may be subject to changes. The final and official syllabus will be distributed by the Instructor during the first day of class.

The American University of Rome Food Studies Program

Department or degree program mission statement, student learning objectives, as appropriate

Course Title: Food and the Environment
Course Number: FS 201
Credits & hours: 3 credits – 3 hours
Pre/Co-Requisites: any lower level course in International Relations, Communication, Economics or Business

Course description

The course addresses the key environmental and sustainability challenges faced by our contemporary food system, from production to processing, marketing, consumption and disposing of food. It reviews the historical developments of the agri-food system and the identified challenges, framed through evidence, practices and debates of the scientific communities and of civil society. The psychological, social, ethical and cultural factors influencing food consumption patterns and practices will also be examined. The potential solutions and innovations for more sustainable food production and consumption will be reviewed through the study of cases, selected policies and regulatory frameworks at international and national levels. The course may include a field-trip.

Selected Readings (subject to change)

- Clapp, J., 2020 Food, Polity.
- Sage, C. (ed.) 2022. A Research Agenda for Food Systems, Elgar.

Useful websites (subject to change)

The Food Timeline: a portal on the history of food www.foodtimeline.org
FAO, USDA Research Service, World Food Programme: on the world and countries' food situation www.fao.org; www.usda.org; www.wfp.org;
Research organization on the environment and development World Resources Institute <https://www.wri.org/>; Alliance-Bioversity International <https://www.bioversityinternational.org/>

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of the history and components of the global agri-food system, through multidisciplinary perspectives;
2. appraise and discuss the social, cultural and psychological factors influencing food consumption practices and patterns;
3. demonstrate knowledge and articulate the core debates regarding the key environmental and sustainability challenges of the food system;
4. describe and analyze cases of policies and product innovations in the food sector and industry aimed at addressing the identified environmental and sustainability challenges.

Course Learning Activities

- Lectures, with use of videos and with discussions involving students' participation. (LOs 1-4)
- One-two presentations by academics and professionals, with opportunity for students' engagement. (LO 2-4)
- Guided reading (LOs 1-4)
- Oral presentations by students (LOs 1-4)
- Writing of well-organized and well-informed essays and policy brief on selected topics of the course (Los 1-4)

Assessment tools

Class participation	10%
Research Exercise	10%
Oral presentation with written summary note	15%
In-class mid-term exam: short essays in response to questions	30%
Final exam: in class written policy brief paper	35%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading and other Assignments
Week 1	Course "Tour" and introduction: Sustainable Food Production and Consumption. Objectives of the course. Syllabus & Rubric review & general 'housekeeping' information.	
Week 2	The Agri-food System Historical perspective on developments of the agri-food system: from hunter-gatherers to industrial agriculture	Albala, K.(ed), 2014. <i>The Food History Reader</i> . Primary sources, Bloomsbury
Week 3	Contemporary food system: processing, distribution, sale/retail, preparation -- Food retail and the food service industry. Food industry concentration	
Week 4	Socio-ecological sustainability challenges Climate, land, soils, water, marine resources, biodiversity, waste, Urbanization and the nutrition transition, Population growth and food demand, Food security and nutrition	Sage, C. (ed.) 2022. <i>A Research Agenda for Food Systems</i> , Elgar and various articles and publications on the state of the art of pressure on natural resources and social phenomena
Week 5	Socio-ecological sustainability challenges (cont'd)	
Week 6	Socio-ecological sustainability challenges (cont'd)	
Week 7	Course Review and Mid-term exam	Mandatory attendance
Week 8	Social, economic, cultural and psychological factors in food consumption practices and patterns	Counihan, C. and Van Esterik, P., 2013. <i>Food and Culture. A Reader</i> , Routledge.
Week 9	Social, economic, cultural and psychological factors in food consumption practices and patterns (cont'd)	
Week 10	Social, economic, cultural and psychological factors in food consumption practices and patterns (cont'd)	
Week 11	Food Policy and product innovations	Wilde, P.2013. <i>Food policy in the United States. An Introduction</i> , Earthscan. Zimmeroff, L., 2021. <i>Technically Food. Inside Silicon Valley's Mission to Change What we Eat</i> , Abrams Press, NYC
Week 12	Food policy and product innovations (cont'd)	
Week 13	Food policy and product innovations (cont'd) Course review	
Week 14	Final exam	Mandatory attendance

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In keeping with AUR's mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University's attendance policy is as follows:

1.0. Minimum Attendance Requirement: Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

1.1. Automatically Accepted Absences

Students will not be penalized for one absence from classes meeting once a week;
Students will not be penalized for three absences from classes meeting twice a week;
Students will not be penalized for four absences from classes meeting more than twice a week, as in the case of some intensive courses.

1.2. If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the Instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus, and following the institutional parameters given in the Note* below.

1.2.1. If the Instructor does not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement, and any penalized absences recorded above the basic 70% attendance requirement for the course will be invalidated.

1.3. During Summer sessions where courses are taught more intensively over a shorter period the following applies:

- Students will not be penalized for two absences from class.

2.0. Tolerated Absences

Certain categories of absence will not be penalized but they will be counted as an absence (for a 3-credit course meeting twice a week). These absences are:

- The Model United Nations (MUN);
- Permit to Stay,
- SG's "Ambassador Program" (Student Government initiative)
- Religious Holidays

The American University of Rome makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate students who must be absent from classes to observe religious holidays. (Please refer to the Provost's Office list of accepted absences for religious holidays)

Not attending a class due to the observance of a religious holiday will normally not be counted as an absence.

Students who will need to miss class in order to observe religious holidays must notify their Instructors by the end of the Add/Drop period (first week of classes), and must make prior arrangements with their Instructors to make up any work missed.

2.1. The list does NOT include academic field trips because these (including arrangements for travel) must not overlap with other classes.

3.0. Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors.

*Note: No Instructor may penalize a student more than half a letter grade for each absence beyond the tolerated limit (e.g. from A- to B+).

Grade Point Average

A student's grade point average (GPA) is computed by multiplying the quality points achieved by the number of credits for each course. The result is then divided by the total number of credit hours taken. The Cumulative or Career Total Grade Point Average (CGPA) is the grade point average for all credit hours taken at the University and at approved study abroad programs. The GPA and CGPA are calculated by truncating after the second digit after the decimal point. Transfer credits have no effect on the CGPA at The American University of Rome.

Grades

Grades are posted on a secure area of the University's official website and are mailed to AUR degree students only upon written request. Grades are mailed to the various study abroad programs. Grades computed in the (GPA) reflect the following grade equivalents:

GRADE		GPA	
A	Excellent	4.00	94 – 100 points
A-		3.70	90 – 93.99 pts
B+	Very Good	3.30	87 – 89.99
B	Good	3.00	83 – 86.99
B-		2.70	80 – 82.99
C+		2.30	77 – 79.99
C	Satisfactory	2.00	73 – 76.99
C-	Less than Satisfactory	1.70	70 – 72.99
D	Poor	1.00	60 – 69.99
F	Failing	0.00	59.99 – 0
WU	Unofficial withdrawal counts as an F	0.00	
P	Applicable to development courses	0.00	
<i>Grades not computed into the grade point average are:</i>			
W	Withdrawal		
AUDIT (AU)	Only possible when the student registers for a course at the beginning of the semester as an audit student		
I	Incomplete work must be completed within the ensuing semester. Failure to do so results in automatically converting the I grade to the default grade, which is then computed into the grade point average		
P	Pass grade is applicable to courses as indicated in the catalog.		
WIP	Work in progress		