

CFAN3480: How we talk about fixing food
220 Blegen | 3:35-5:30 Wednesdays (Jan 19-March 9)

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Course overview and requirements

Despite the rising popularity of books, films, and policies addressing the issue, deep differences still exist in how we talk about fixing food. Depending on who's speaking, we face threats of overpopulation, overwhelming obesity rates, untested biotechnology, climate-changed induced famine, the loss of rural communities, food deserts, looming food price spikes, or oil-dependent farming methods. Proponents of each argument refer to conflicting forms of evidence and appeal to wide-ranging values in arguing for the best path forward. On university campuses, this shows up in the social and spatial distance between departments, as well as the divergent places we talk and write about food. How does one make sense of all this? How can we promote conversation across disciplinary lines?

Over the course of our seven meetings, we will discuss the rationales and practices involved in interdisciplinary work. We will read articles by authors in a wide array of disciplines—including the humanities, social sciences, agronomy, and applied economics—identifying elements of this work that make conversation difficult as well as potential questions that could promote greater future collaboration. Class times will largely be focused around digesting the pieces we read through small and large group discussion.

This class is offered in tandem with “How We Talk about Feeding the World,” a symposium held on campus Thursday and Friday, March 3-4. You and your classmates will create and present posters at this symposium focused on a question arising from our readings. You will also be required to attend at least two panel discussions from this event. A final 4-5 page reflective paper will ask you to use both the class readings and your observations at the symposium to describe what you see as the key challenges or opportunities of interdisciplinary work on food.

Course objectives

Students in this course will...

- Develop their understanding of the reasons interdisciplinary work is difficult and why it might be important.
- Improve their ability to talk/work/think about food issues with those from other backgrounds.
- Be better equipped to read and respond to food research from unfamiliar disciplines.

Texts

Most of our readings for the course come from academic books and articles. Class discussions will focus on developing our understanding and reaction to these pieces. Readings will be made available through the Moodle course site in PDF format and are listed at the end of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to download these readings and print them if desired. All students should come to class having read the days' reading(s) and being prepared to talk specifically about them, having a hard copy, extensive notes, or a laptop with a PDF at hand for easy reference.

Class schedule

Week	Activities
Jan 19 th Week 1	Introduction to the course and to one another; Review of course policies, assignments and schedule; Reading activity in class with two recent editorials on improving food accessibility, Hahn Neiman (2011) and Longworth (2011)
Jan 26 th Week 2	Why might interdisciplinary work on food be important? How does it happen?; Tips on reading across disciplines Assignments: Read Hinrichs (2008) and Schurman and Munro (2010): Introduction
Feb 2 nd Week 3	Workshop readings discussion, week 1; More on thinking through our disciplines Assignments: Read the first article from your chosen topic; Bring in article titles and abstracts for three articles about agrifood issues from your major/discipline
Feb. 9 th Week 4	Workshop readings discussion, week 2; Brainstorming poster options Assignment: Read the second article from your chosen topic
Feb. 16 th Week 5	Conversation with an author from the workshop; Start poster planning Assignment: Two readings TBA
Feb. 23 rd Week 6	<i>This week's class in Humphrey 50 computer lab.</i> Work time for poster project
March 2 nd Week 7	Practice poster presentations with one another; Pulling readings together Assignment: Posters should be submitted on Moodle by Monday, Feb. 28 th at 4 PM
March 3-4	Symposium: How Do We Feed the World: The Politics of Talking About Food. <i>Attendance required for opening talk and poster session on Thursday, and at least two panel discussions on Friday.</i>
March 9 th Week 8	Reflection on the symposium and sharing of thoughts from your final paper; Course evaluation Assignment: Reflection paper due on Moodle by 11:55 PM, Wed., March 9

Grading

Course grades will be determined out of 200 total points. The distribution of those points will be as follows:

- Class participation (attendance, discussion, completion of readings): **40 points**
- Poster project: **80 points** (55 across the group and 25 points individually)
- Final reflective paper: **80 points**

Final grades will be determined from points using a standard grading scale, as follows:

A+ 200-196	B: 175-165	C- 144-140
A 195-185	B- 164-160	D+ 139-136
A- 184-180	C+ 159-156	D 135-120
B+ 179-176	C 155-145	F 120 and below

The grading policy in this course conforms to university guidelines. Therefore a "C" is equivalent to basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a "C" a student must perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:

- A--Achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- B--Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- C--Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
- D--Achievement worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully
- F--Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed, and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an "I."

Moodle

Grades, readings, and assignments will be handled through the course Moodle site. The easiest way to access this site is to go the URL for Moodle at the U: <http://moodle.umn.edu>. Click on the "Login with Internet or Guest ID" on the left hand side and enter your x.500 username and password. A link to the course site should appear. Alternatively, you can also access the site by going to the MyU site (<http://www.myu.umn.edu>), logging in, and clicking on the "My Courses" tab. The course Moodle site should be listed on the resulting screen.

Late work

This class has few formal written assignments, just the group poster presentation and final reflective paper. In the event either of these is turned in after the deadline noted on the course schedule, there will be a *10 point late penalty* applied to the project. Any assignment not turned in by *one week* after the deadline will be given a 0.

Absences

Attendance is required at all class meetings and at the March symposium. Since illnesses and emergencies happen, you are allowed one absence without penalty. Any additional absences will result in a *5 point deduction* from your class participation grade.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The Student Conduct Code defines plagiarism along with other forms of scholastic dishonesty in this way: "Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis."

Plagiarism is a serious offense anywhere, but especially so in a university environment. Any assignment that uses another's work without proper acknowledgement will be penalized.

Plagiarism that is clearly intentional and extensive will result in a failing grade for the course. For more information, see: http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quick_help/online_resources.htm#plagiarism

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability condition (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, systemic, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations should contact Disability Services (612-626-1333) and me at the beginning of the semester.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code governs all activities in the University, including this course. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code. This includes any behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities. Students responsible for such behavior may be asked to cancel their registration (or have their registration canceled).

Grade Disputes

If you feel that your work is not being assessed fairly, please contact me within a week of receiving the disputed grade. You should provide substantive reasons for your dispute, such as reference to the assigned goals of the assignment. I will respond to any such requests promptly. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, you may also contact the Student Dispute Resolution Center.

Electronic Devices

Use of cell phones, laptops, or similar electronic devices for non-class purposes during class time is permissible only in cases of emergencies. Please also remember to silence your phones during class.

Course Bibliography

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