Economics of Global Food Problems
Syllabus
Economics 239/ Environmental Studies 239/International Studies 239
Fall 2019
Carnegie 305

Instructor: Amy Damon
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Office Phone: 696-6862 (office)

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday: 1:20-2:50

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30 & Tuesday 10:00-11:15; or by appointment. Please feel free to email me anytime.

Preceptor: Jasmine Davidson (jdavids2@macalester.edu); Office hours by appointment.

Course Description:
This class will examine food distribution, production, policy, and hunger issues from an economics perspective. It explores and compares food and agriculture issues in both industrialized and developing countries. Basic economic tools will be applied to provide an analytical understanding of these issues. Topics such as hunger and nutrition, US farm policy, food distribution, food security, food aid, biotechnology and the Green Revolution, the connection between food production and health outcomes, as well as others related themes will be explored in depth throughout the semester. We will be collaborating with a local CSA farm to learn about agricultural production in the US.

Course Objectives:
• To learn to use economic concepts to analyze world food problems.
• To become familiar with world food problems in general and their relationship to agricultural production, development, and policies.
• Develop basic food policy analysis skills.

Prerequisites:
This course applies economic concepts to global food and agriculture issues. Students should have taken Principles of Economics (ECON 119). Students should be comfortable with concepts such as supply and demand curves, elasticities, basic consumer and producer theory.

Required Text:
Readings will be available through Moodle.

Class Requirements and Grading: Grades will be based on the following assignments and activities:

1. **Problem Sets and Response Papers (25%)**: These problem sets and writing assignments will typically be extensions of the reading assignments for a given unit. They will require you to write short essay responses to analytical questions and solve problems. Additionally, there are several assignments related to your term project that will count toward your homework
grade. Late assignments will be penalized with a 10% grade reduction for each day late. After 3 days a late assignment will not be accepted.

2. **Two exams (40%: 20% each):** Two in-class exams will be given in order to assess your understanding of the material.

3. **Term Paper (25%):** This is a semester long effort to integrate and apply class concepts to a particular issue in agricultural economics. You will be able to choose a topic of your choice. You will be required to turn in portions of this paper throughout the semester. See the assignment description for more details.

4. **Class Participation (10%):** Success in this class is dependent on class participation and interaction with your peers. It is therefore necessary that you attend class on a regular basis. I expect you to come to class prepared, having done the readings. Engaged, active, and respectful participation is expected from all class participants. When formal responses are not due, I will often begin class with a write-pair-share which you will turn in at the end of the exercise. This will allow us to understand what you took away from the articles and points of confusion.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected not to cheat. Cheating includes copying another student’s homework, looking at another student’s paper during a test, copying another author’s work without proper citation. Please do not do any of these. Doing so will result in an F in the course and more problems than the cheating is worth. Please talk to me if you have any questions about this, or if you feel so swamped that cheating looks appealing.

**Accommodations:** I am committed to ensuring access to course content for students. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Contact the Office of Student Affairs, 651-696-6220 to schedule an appointment and discuss your individual circumstances. It is important to meet early in the semester; this will ensure that your accommodations can an implemented early on.

**Classroom Inclusivity:** It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-Sep</td>
<td>Introduction/ State of Food Insecurity</td>
<td>In-Class Video: State of Food Insecurity in the World 2019 (FAO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-Sep</td>
<td>Consumers and Demand for Food in the Global South</td>
<td>1. NAM Chapter 3; 2. Poor Economics: Chapter 2</td>
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<td>19-Sep</td>
<td>Correlation vs. Causation (RCTs and reading regression output)</td>
<td>Problem Set 1</td>
<td>1. Interpreting Regression Output (link on Moodle) 2. Poor Economics Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-Sep</td>
<td>Famines - Entitlements</td>
<td>Term Paper Proposal</td>
<td>1. Sen Chapters 7: &quot;Famines and Other Crises&quot;</td>
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<td>28-Sep</td>
<td>TRIP TO COMMON HARVEST FARM</td>
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<td>1-Oct</td>
<td>International Food Aid</td>
<td>1. Food Aid’s Intended and Unintended Consequences.</td>
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<td>8-Oct</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Lisa Moldan, Wakefield Pork</td>
<td>Problem Set 2</td>
<td>Reading on livestock in US ag. TBD</td>
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<td>22-Oct</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>24-Oct</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
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### Topics in Consumption

**29-Oct** Agriculture in Economic Transformation and Growth

1. Food Economics, Chapter 3. "The Food Sector During Economic Development"

**31-Oct** Dual Burden of Malnutrition / Term Paper check in Term Paper Part 1

1. The World-wide growth in obesity: An economic research agenda.

**5-Nov** Obesity & Overweight

1. Soda tax and the prices of soda and other drinks: Evidence from MX 2. Latin America winning the war on obesity (Washington Post)

**7-Nov** Long term effects of malnutrition

1. The Impact of Early Childhood Nutritional Status on Cognitive Development: Does the Timing of Malnutrition Matter?

### Topics in Production

**12-Nov** Inputs Data assignment


**14-Nov** Green Revolution and Biotechnology Term Paper Part 2


**19-Nov** Land Markets


**21-Nov** Land Market Peer Review


**26-Nov** Gender and Production Response paper


**28-Nov** Thanksgiving


**3-Dec** Implications of Climate Change in Developing Countries.


**5-Dec** Implications of Climate Change in Developing Countries.


### Final Exam: December 17, 2019: 1:30pm (in our classroom)