

# Sustainability of Food: ES 391

*Spring 2011*

*M. Elsbeth McPhee*

## Course description

This course will be like playing with academic Legos: we as a group are going to build a course that will explore the evolutionary underpinnings of our food preferences and how those preferences translate into the food systems in place today. To begin, we will read Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*. As we read this book, we will identify topics and ideas that we want to explore further. From these discussions, we will build the rest of the course. So this will be a "by the people and for the people" kind of class.

Also, given that this is a course about food, each week different people will be responsible for bringing food in for the whole class to share. You can bring a cooked meal made of all local organic foods or you can bring several bags of Doritos. It's up to you. But whatever you bring, we will discuss the lifecycle of the food and the reasons that you chose it (convenience, price, impact on the planet, etc.).

## Instructor/class information

### *Instructor*

M. Elsbeth (Misty) McPhee

mcpheem@uwosh.edu

424-0644

office hours:

Mon 9:00 – 10:00 am

Wed 12:40 – 2:00 pm

Thurs 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

If these don't work for you, I'm happy to set up an appointment at a more convenient time. My schedule is posted on D2L so you can see when I'm available.

office: 313 Swart

### *Class*

Meeting times/locations:

Thursday

6:00 – 9:00 pm

Clow 237

### Required Texts & Materials

- Pollan, M. 2007. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. Penguin Books.
- Other readings as determined by the class; to be posted on D2L.

### Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on four primary things: class participation, weekly reading responses, teaching your class, and your final paper (explanations below).

Class participation	200
Full Reading Responses (7 @ 30 pts each)	210
RR/only discussion questions (4 @ 10 pts)	40
Your class	220
Final paper	200

**Total points: 870**

I will post grading rubrics on D2L so you can see what I'm looking for in each assignment.

To figure your grade at any point throughout the term, add the total points earned and divide by the total points possible up to that point.

<u>% of total points</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>% of total points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
94-100	A	73-76	C
90-93	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	≤ 59	F

#### 1. Class participation

This is a discussion-based class – participation is very important and heavily weighted in your grade. **Participation** will be graded based on attendance and overall participation and engagement in the course. Obvious signs of engagement are questions and participation in discussion; other signs are coming to talk to me in office hours or before/after class; and finally, just general attitude and attendance in the classroom.

Participation grades will be given as follows:

- A = Always comes to class, participates often and meaningfully
- A- = Always comes to class, participates a fair amount
- B = Always comes to class, participates some
- B- = Always comes to class, participates rarely
- C = Always comes to class but never participates
- F = Never comes to class

## 2. Reading responses

For every discussion you will write a response to the assigned readings. There are a total of 11 discussions throughout the semester. For 7 of them you will write full responses that must:

- include at least 3 questions that you can use in class discussion
- be 2-4 pages (I'm fairly loose on this)
- be double-spaced
- reference each assigned paper in the text and provide a literature cited section at the end
- have your name **at end** of the response, not at top
- be saved as a **PDF** document

For the other 4, you only need to submit three discussion questions. You can choose which weeks to submit a full RR, and which to submit just questions.

- Your discussion questions will NOT be questions about details of the readings but big-picture questions that foster discussion. For example, do not ask, "How many bushels of corn were harvested in 2004?" but, "What implications does the increase in corn production have on family farms?"
- I grade all assignments electronically. The positives: no paper; the negatives: you get less feedback (it's harder to make comments, save, and then upload than to jot thoughts on a piece of paper and hand it back). So – please let me know if you want more detailed feedback and I will give it.
- You only will write one RR per night, but it will incorporate all of the readings.

### 3. Your class

As we read Pollan, we will identify a number of topics of particular interest to the class. Then, you will be responsible for teaching a class along with one or two other students your choice of those topics. This will consist of putting together a bibliography, assigning readings, giving a short presentation (about 15 min), and lead a class discussion.

- You do not have to write a reading response on the night you present.
- **Two weeks** prior to your class, you must meet with me about your topic, bibliography, and plans for the class.
- You will have to post your assigned readings and bibliography **one week** before your class.
- When you give your presentation, don't just preach to the choir – bring up the other side!
- Feel free to include a short video or even an in-class exercise.
- Your presentation will be evaluated by your classmates.

### 4. Final Paper

At the end of the term, everyone will write a final paper that will tie together all of the topics we discussed to talk about the sustainability of food.

- Papers will be about 10 pages (double spaced) with abstract and full citations (citations not included in length limits). Your paper must be *your original work* — plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in 0 points for the paper AND presentation. Papers will be due by **class time** on **12 May**.
- Paper outlines will be due on **21 April**.
- Note: Your reading responses are *informal responses*. This is a formal paper.
- I posted a grading rubric on D2L under "Course documents" so you can see how I will score your paper.

## Miscellaneous – but *important* – comments

1. Cell phone use will NOT be permitted in my classroom. If your cell phone goes off or you text during class, you will be asked to leave and I will automatically deduct 50 points from your overall grade.
2. Laptops: you are more than welcome to use laptops in class to take notes, but you are NOT to use them for any other purpose. If I see you using your laptop for anything other than note-taking, I will ask you to close your computer and automatically deduct 50 points from your overall grade.
3. I will NOT tolerate emails or assignments written in shorthand – if you send me anything in shorthand I will consider it unreadable and thus, won't read it. If it is a graded assignment, you will receive a 0 until you hand in a legitimate version (at which point penalties for handing in the work late will apply).
4. Responses will be accepted late but 2 points will be deducted per day.
5. All assignments will be turned in through D2L, but if you must hand in a hard copy, I consider documents printed on both sides of a sheet of paper, or even printed on scratch paper, to be perfectly acceptable! Let's try to keep our resource use down.
6. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE WELCOME IN THIS COURSE.** Please contact your me in the first week of class so that we may arrange all possible accommodation ahead of time.
7. **EMAIL COMMUNICATION and D2L** will be used frequently throughout the semester to communicate between Instructors and Students. Emails constitute legal, official University communication. Not checking your email is not an excuse for performance problems in the class. Contact Academic Computing or any Campus Computer Lab supervisor for assistance with email and D2L.
8. **ACADEMIC HONESTY** policies are clearly defined at this University and all students are expected to abide by them. Penalties for violations are severe in this course. Cheating on an exam (including looking at someone else's paper) at a MINIMUM leads to zero on that exam, with no opportunity for a make-up or extra credit. A second offense is an F in the course and a report to Dean of Students.

## *Proposed* course schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments due</u>
3 Feb	Introduction to the course Lecture: Evolutionary theory Discussion: <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> Sign up for food list	<u>Read:</u> OD 1-119
10 Feb	Discussion: <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> Movie: <i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i>	<u>Read:</u> OD 123-237 <u>Due:</u> Reading response #1
17 Feb	Discussion: <i>Omnivore's Dilemma</i> Sign up for teaching topics Lecture: How to give a presentation & What is a bibliography?	<u>Read:</u> OD 277-411 <u>Due:</u> Reading response #2
24 Feb	Exercise to be announced	
3 March	Discussion, Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #3
10 March	Discussion, Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #4
17 March	Discussion, Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #5
24 Mar	<i>No class – spring break</i>	
31 Mar	Movie or guest speaker	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #6
7 April	Discussion, Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #7
14 April	Discussion, Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #8
21 April	Discussion, Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #9 <u>Due:</u> Proposed outline for final paper
28 April	Discussion, , Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #10
5 May	Discussion, , Leaders TBA	<u>Read:</u> TBA <u>Due:</u> Reading response #11
12 May	Final meal at Misty's house	<b><u>Due:</u> Final papers</b>