**Honors 101F: The Politics and Ethics of Food**

Fridays, 1:00-1:50, Peelle 212

Spring, 2016

Dr. Deborah Field

Office: 309 F Jones

e-mail:dfield@adrian.edu

Phone: x.3948

Office hours: Mondays 1-3, Thursday 10-12 and by appointment

Dr. Monica McCullough

Office: 209 Merillat

e-mail: mmccullough@adrian.edu

Phone: x4041

Office hours: Mondays 11-12pm, Wednesday 1-2pm and by appointment

**Course Description**

This class is designed to get you to think analytically about something that is so “everyday” that most of us take it for granted: where our food comes from, why we eat the way we do, and the kind of social and political relationships that are involved in our encounters with food.

**Ribbons of Excellence**

The Ribbons of Excellence express the Adrian College community’s mission and summarize what we hope our students will be doing here at Adrian and beyond. They are:

**1. Caring for humanity and the world**

**2. Learning throughout a lifetime**

**3. Thinking critically**

**4. Crossing boundaries and disciplines**

**5. Developing creativity**

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| Specific Course Objective | Ribbons of Excellence | Assignments |
| To explore the ethical and political implications of what and how we eat | Thinking critically | Readings, discussions, reflection papers, research essay |
| To apply readings to service learning and other activities | Caring for humanity and the world, Crossing boundaries and disciplines | Supermarket scavenger hunt, food drive, Fair Trade finds |

**Required Reading**

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*

Other readings available on the web and through the library databases

**Assignments**

Discussion leading - 20%

Class participation - 20%

3 reflection papers - 30%

Research essay - 30%

**A Note on Grading**

We will determine the discussion leading and class participation grades together. Dr. Field will grade reflection papers and Dr. McCullough will grade the research essays.

**Class participation**

Class participation is required because it is important to learn to express your ideas clearly and because you can learn from your classmates. Your class participation will be assessed according to these standards:

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| **Positive Behaviors**   * Demonstrates preparation * Maintains focus in small group discussion * Provides interesting contribution to class discussions * Asks good questions * Makes comparisons between assignments and materials and/or with other areas of study. | **Negative Behaviors**   * Sleeping * Texting * talking while other people are talking * doing work for another class * consistently arriving late * evincing a disrespectful attitude | **Grade** |
| Consistently | Never | A |
| Usually | Never | B |
| Occasionally | Never | C |
| Rarely | Sometimes | D |
| Never | Always | F |

**Leading Discussion**

In groups, students will be responsible for leading discussions. Students are required to provide a hand- out for the entire class that consists of:

1. Short summaries of the main point of the readings (several sentences long)
2. Five discussion questions.

Your discussion leading will be assessed according to these standards:

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| A | Reading summaries are accurate, complete, and clear; discussion questions spark lively discussion; group members report you were an active participant |
| B | Summaries are mostly accurate and clear; discussion questions spark some discussion; group members report you were an active participant |
| C | Summary are inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear; discussion is dull; group members report you were a lackadaisical participant |
| D | Reading summary inaccurate or unclear; professors have to intervene in discussion; group members report you did not participate |

**Reflection papers (2-3 pages typed).**

Please submit these through Blackboard by 12:30 on the day they are due. You may use MLA, Chicago, or APA style citations. In these papers you must

1. Connect the reading with the activity
2. Explain what you learned
3. Raise at least one further question about the topic.

Rubric

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| **Responses: what did you learn**  Have you clearly explained what you learned? | |  | | 2  clearly expressed responses | | 1  responses unclear, confusing | | | 0  Absent or completely incoherent |
| **Connections**  Have you explained the connection between reading and activities? Have you accurately cited specific examples from the reading? | | 3  Multiples connected described; evidence from the readings is cited and explained | | 2  At least one connection described; evidence from the readings cited and explained | | 1  Connection isn’t clear; or you haven’t accurately cited specific examples from the reading | | | 0  vague or absent |
| **Questions**  Have you raised thoughtful questions that provide a good basis for discussion? | | 3  More than one thoughtful question | | 2  At least one thoughtful question | | 1  cursory or shallow question | | | 0  No questions |
| **Writing style**  Elements of “flair” include variation in sentence length and structure;  interesting, correctly deployed vocabulary;  appropriate tone: neither overly informal nor pompous; tightly constructed paragraphs | | 3  written with flair | | 2  clearly written, with complete sentences and well- formed paragraphs | | 1  occasional lapses in grammar and form | | | 0  significant problems in grammar and form |
| A=11 | A-=10 | | B+=9 | | B=8 | | B-=7 | C+=6 | |
| C=5 | C-=4 | | D=3 | | D-=2 | | F=1,0 |  | |

**Supermarket Scavenger Hunt Activity**

Team up with a classmate (or two) and go food shopping together (simulated or real) at Country Market. Pretend you are putting a special meal together of wine and cheese, salad, seafood, meat, a vegetable, fruit, dessert and coffee for four adults. Take notes of where the various food items come from (geographical location), and the varieties of the food item (organic, fair trade, local). To whom are the various products meant to appeal? How much would this meal cost?

**Fair Trade Finds**

Team up with a classmate (or two) and walk around campus and find out how many items are Fair Trade. Create a list of the items and where they are available for purchase on campus. Roughly what percentage of the items available are Fair Trade in a particular establishment? For instance at the bookstore, what percentage of the cards are Fair Trade?

**Research Essay**

Five page minimum. Use at least five sources in addition to course materials. Of these at least two must be from scholarly journals (ie, contain academic citations). Your essay must contain these components:

1. background and history of topic
2. current controversies - locally, nationally or globally
3. areas for further research/or a service project or local awareness

**Possible topics:**

1) The rise of bottled water (or: How (bottled) water became a commodity)

2) Biofuels and their effects on agriculture

3) The impact of food aid [in a specific place]

4) The effects of the green revolution in India

5) Sustainable agriculture in the US: Is it really feasible?

6) A history of the sustainable agriculture movement in the US

7) The history of farmers’ markets in Michigan

8) The WTO and national food policy in [country name]

9) The root causes of hunger in [country name]

10) The controversy over GMOs

11) Food security in [country name]

12) US food policy and the WTO

13) The problem of overfishing

14) The pros and cons of aquaculture as an alternative to wild fisheries

15) The rise of the farmed shrimp industry

16) The environmental impacts of aquaculture (pick a type: salmon aquaculture, shrimp aquaculture)

17) Will GMOs solve world hunger?

18) The effects of bovine growth hormone (BGH) on the US dairy industry

19) A comparative study of bovine growth hormone (BGH) regulation in the US and Canada (or Europe)

20) Comparing public attitudes toward genetically modified food: US and Europe

21) The effects of antibiotic use in meats

22) The obesity problem in the US - for children and adults.

23) The history of Coca-Cola

24) The issues with food safety regulations

25) The global meat trade

26) Avian flu

27) A history of US food safety policy

28) NAFTA, Transgenics, and the Mexican corn sector

29) The effects on NAFTA on the US agricultural sector

30) Fair Trade and Poor Farmers: Assessing the evidence

31) Over-usage of insecticides and pesticides on crops

32) Farmworkers - labor conditions in Michigan or elsewhere

33) Controversies in school (K-12) lunches

34) "Slow food" vs "Fast food"

35) Food Marketing companies - Junk foods, diet foods, "children's" foods

36) World food program - Syrian Refugees

37) The sugar conundrum

38) Water crises in Flint, MI

39) Unionization efforts among fast food workers

49) SNAP food benefits (formerly food stamps) –various controversies

50) Urban farming in Detroit, MI

Research Essay Rubric

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| **Background /history of topic**  Have you explained the background |  | | 2  Clear, incisive background on the topic | 1  Unclear description of background | 0  Absent or completely incoherent |
| **Current controversies**  Have you explored the relevant controversies | 3  Multiples controversies or perspectives on a controversy | | 2  At least one controversy clearly described | 1  Connection isn’t clear; or you haven’t accurately cited specific examples from the reading | 0  vague or absent |
| **Future Research or Activities**  Have you formulated questions for further research or relevant service learning activities? | 3  More than one research question or activity | | 2  At least one thoughtful research question or activity | 1  cursory or shallow research question or activity | 0  No questions |
| **Research**  Have you done research and cited your sources | 3  More than  five sources, in addition to course materials. Includes at least two scholarly articles; sources cited in your chosen style | | 2  Five sources, in addition to course materials. Includes at least two scholarly articles; sources cited in your chosen style | 1  Fewer than five sources, in addition to course materials. Includes at least two scholarly articles; or incorrect or missing citations | 0  No research |
| **Writing style**  Elements of “flair” include variation in sentence length and structure;  interesting, correctly deployed vocabulary;  appropriate tone: neither overly informal nor pompous; tightly constructed paragraphs | 3  written with flair | | 2  clearly written, with complete sentences and well- formed paragraphs | 1  occasional lapses in grammar and form | 0  significant problems in grammar and form |
| A=14, 13 | A-=12 | B+=11 | B=10 | B-=9 | C+=6 |
| C=5 | C-=6 | D=3 | D-=2 | F=1,0 |  |

**Office Hours**

Please talk to us if you have questions about the class or would like us to read drafts of your papers. If office hours are inconvenient, you can make an appointment for another time.

**Disability Statement**

Students with a documented disability may qualify for academic accommodations. If you have a disability and would like to discuss classroom accommodations, please speak with me or with any of the Academic Services staff on the first floor of Jones Hall.

**Academic Honesty**

Cheating, helping others to cheat, or plagiarizing will result in zero for the assignment, probably an F in the class, and an official disciplinary report to the Dean. See the policy in your student handbook or talk to me if you have any questions about this.

**Food and the Individual**

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| Fri. Jan. 15 | Introduction |
| Fri. Jan 22 | **American Food**  Pollan, intro, chapters 4-6  **Student led discussion** |
| Fri. Jan. 29 | Fast Food  Schlosser, chapters 1, 2, 10 , epilogue, afterward  **Student led discussion** |
| Fri Feb. 5 | Supermarket scavenger hunt and **Reflection paper #1** due |

**Food and the Community**

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| Fri. Feb. 12 | **Hunger in America**  Marion Nestle, “Hunger in America: A Matter of Policy,” *Social Research* 66.1 (1999) Available from General One-File database,  Patricia Allen, “The Disappearance of Hunger in America*, Gastronomica*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Summer 2007)Available on J-stor  **Student lead discussion**  Start Food drive |
| Fri. Feb 19 | Film *Just eat it - a food waste video.*  End of Food Drive  Do Food pantry hours this week. |
| Fri. Feb. 26 | Food Pantry shift  Reflections – discussion  **Reflection paper #2 due** |

“Spring” Break

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| Fri. March 11 | **Local food Systems**  Pollan, 10, 11, 13  **Student lead discussion** |
| Fri. March 18 | Speaker: Rena Basch, founder, Locavorious. “Fitting into the Local Food Economy,”  Choose your paper topic by today! |
| Fri. March 25 | No classes – Good Friday |
| Fri. April 1 | **Reflection paper #3 due** |

**Food and the World**

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| Fri. April 8 | **Fair Trade on Campus**  <http://fairtradecampaigns.org/> Look over this website and come up with a definition of Fair Trade  Fair Trade Finds Assignment due  Presentation from the Fair Trade Committee |
| Fri April 15 | **Fair Trade Controversies**  Christy Getz, Aimee Shreck. “What Organic and Fair Trade labels do not tell us: towards a Place-based Understanding of Certification,” (2006). (on Blackboard).  <http://magazine.good.is/articles/the-fair-trade-controversy-you-didn-t-know-about>  **Student led discussion** |
| Fri. April 22 | Summary and review  Research essays due |