

Syllabus Spring 2024

NFS 1073: Farm to Table: Our Contemporary Food System (3 credits)

Meeting Time, Meeting Pattern, Location

MWF

10:50-11:40

Terrill Hall - HOME EC 108

Instructors Names, Contact Information, Office Hours

Dr. Emily Belarmino (Dr. B) Emily.Belarmino@uvm.edu

See me in-person after class or email me to schedule a Teams meeting (MWF 12-1pm)

Teaching Assistant, Contact Information, Office Hours

Michaela Wilson Michaela.Wilson@uvm.edu

Send an email to schedule an in-person or Teams meeting by appointment.

Technical Support for Students

Students, please read this technology check list to make sure you are ready for classes.

<https://www.uvm.edu/it/kb/student-technology-resources/>

Students should contact the Helpline (802-656-2604) for support with technical issues.

General Education Requirements Satisfied

This course satisfies the Diversity Category 2 (Diversity of Human Experience) requirement by intending to:

- Promote an awareness of and appreciation for the diversity of human experience in all its forms including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, language, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and disability; and
- Foster an understanding of global and international issues including the flow of people, cultures, diseases, and capital or other resources within or across political and geographical boundaries.

This course also satisfies the Sustainability requirement by supporting you to:

- Have an informed conversation about the multiple dimensions and complexity of sustainability;
- Evaluate sustainability using an evidence-based disciplinary approach and integrate economic, ecological, and social perspectives;
- Think critically about sustainability across a diversity of cultural values and across multiple scales of relevance from local to global; and
- Recognize and assess how sustainability impacts their lives and how their actions impact sustainability.

Course Description

Most of us know very little about the vast system of agricultural production, food processing, distribution, retailing, marketing, and catering that influences every food choice we make. Neither do we understand the cultural, political, and economic forces influencing food systems. In this course, we will explore the structure and function of contemporary food systems and connect and compare these systems to historical processes and models. We will ask questions about how the systems developed, the problems they are trying to solve, the unintended consequences, and the ways that they are and

might be challenged and improved. In so doing, this course will introduce students to the broad, interdisciplinary type of thinking required to make sense of food systems.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- Identify all components of contemporary food systems;
- Understand a range of possible food systems, using historical cases;
- Understand how food systems have intended and unintended consequences on people and the environment;
- Explore the consequences of industrialization and globalization to the development of contemporary food systems;
- Understand the emergence of multiple interrelated critiques of food systems over the past thirty years; and
- Support the development of student critical thinking & writing skills.

Required Course Materials

This course has one required book:

- *Kitchen Literacy: How We Lost Knowledge of Where Food Comes from and Why We Need to Get It Back* by Ann Vilesis (2010; available at the campus bookstore or can be purchased online)

All other required materials will be posted to Brightspace and are available free of charge.

Required Platforms and Software

Brightspace is the primary platform that we will use for this course. Some videos and other required course materials are presented via the Khan Academy, YouTube, Vimeo, and other outside websites. Links to these websites will be provided on Brightspace. If we cannot hold the class in person, I will present over MS Teams.

Attendance Policy and Classroom Environment Expectations

All students who receive a copy of this syllabus are implicitly agreeing to its terms, and responsible for its contents.

Attendance and participation

- **I expect professional standards of behavior in the classroom.** Cell phones should be on vibrate or turned off unless I have indicated permissible use for a specific task. The only exception to this is for in-class activities for which cell phone use is explicitly permitted.
- **I expect regular attendance in class from every student.** If you are unable to attend due to quarantine, isolation, or feeling unwell, please review the slides on Brightspace and consult a classmate for notes. If you have a health issue or personal circumstance that will affect your attendance or participation for multiple sessions, please work with Student Health Services (SHS), the Dean's office, or Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to coordinate accommodations. These offices communicate with instructors when academic flexibility is required.
- **I expect preparation from every student for every class.** Please read and view all assigned readings and videos before class on their due date. Failure to prepare adequately will affect your grade.

- **I expect participation from every student.** This is a highly interactive class. Seize the day. I intend to have conversations during class and will call on people during discussions.

Classroom conduct

In this class, we will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. As a learning community we will seek to encourage and appreciate expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs in the spirit of Our Common Ground. Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class. This requires mutual respect, willingness to listen, and open-mindedness to opposing points of view. Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will be maintained at all times in this class. Conduct that substantially or repeatedly disrupts the ability of faculty and instructors to teach and the ability of students to engage may result in me asking a student to temporarily leave the classroom. [See Undergraduate Catalogue - Classroom Code of Conduct \(p. 443-444\).](#)

UVM expects students, faculty, and staff to remain compliant with all COVID-19 recommendations and measures in place for UVM, the State of Vermont, and the City of Burlington.

If a student will not be able to attend in-person classes for qualifying health reasons, SHS will send a notification to the appropriate student services office or designated staff member informing them of this along with the dates the student is unable to attend. The SHS notification will specify whether the request for flexibility is only around in-person class attendance or includes additional flexibility for assignments and tests because the student is too ill to participate. Students are responsible for working with me to make up class content and work they miss due to a documented illness.

I understand that we all have real lives and challenges. It is your responsibility to communicate proactively about matters that affect your attendance or performance in class, and to seek help for the challenges that you face. I encourage you to contact me directly, but you also may ask a Dean or other school staff member to communicate with me about these issues. While I will not waive any course requirements or offer additional extra credit opportunities, I am happy to work with you – but only if you proactively communicate with me.

Grading Criteria/Policies

The grade cut-offs are as follows; please note, I do not round up at the end of the course as it may introduce bias:

A+: ≥ 98%	A: 93% - 97%	A-: 92% - 90%
B+: 88%-89%	B: 83% - 87%	B-: 82% - 80%
C+: 78%-79%	C: 73% - 77%	C-: 72% - 70%
D+: 68%-69%	D: 63% - 67%	D-: 62% - 60%
F: < 60%		

Unless you have a documented illness or experience a dire emergency, I do not accept late assignments. No excuses, please.

Assessments (Graded Work)

Participation Reflections

34%

Every week, you will write a reflection to a question prompt provided in class. These reflections are submitted through Brightspace and are due by 11:59pm each Friday night. Some weeks, additional

reflections will be completed and submitted in class. Each reflection is worth 5 points. We will drop your two lowest reflections scores.

Interview Reflection

12%

This assignment will involve interviewing a person born before 1960 and writing a reflection about your interview. If you do not have someone in your life born before 1960 who you would like to interview, we will connect you with a prospective interview participant. This assignment is due via Brightspace by 11:59pm on February 16, 2024.

Food Environment Assessment

12%

This assignment involves completion of a food environment assessment in your community. One class session will be cancelled to give you time to complete your assessment. Please let us know by February 23 if you are unable to walk two miles so that we can modify the assessment assignment for you. This assignment is due via Brightspace by 11:59 on March 8, 2026.

Volunteering and Reflection Assignment

12%

This assignment will involve identifying a food system volunteering activity and writing a reflection about your experience. This volunteering assignment must be completed with an organization or business in the food system. You must volunteer for at least 4 hours during this semester. One class session will be cancelled to give you extra time to dedicate to your volunteering experience. The assignment is due via Brightspace by 11:59pm on April 5, 2024.

Showcase

30%

This project will build on skills and information learned throughout the course. You will work in a small group to select a food systems topic of interest and use credible evidence to argue either a position or a solution. You will present your final showcase "science fair style" and complete a reflection paper in which you formally evaluate both your work and your peers' work. The showcase will be presented during the final week of class and the paper is due via Brightspace by 11:59pm on May 3, 2024.

Extra Credit

1%

Helping you improve your writing skills is one of the course objectives. The Undergraduate Writing Center is a free resource where peer writing tutors can support you at any stage of your writing process. [Appointments](#) are free and offered in person and online; drop-ins are welcome. Whether you are brainstorming and planning, drafting and revising, or editing and polishing your writing, getting feedback from an experienced peer is valuable! You may earn up to 1% extra credit by visiting the Undergraduate Writing Center for one of the course's written assignments (excluding participation reflections) and submitting your post-session client report form to show you are making an extra effort by taking advantage of this support resource.

Recording Class Sessions

If we are required to change the course format, our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the chat feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Lived Name and Pronoun Information

The UVM Directory includes fields for indicating your lived name and your pronouns. Lived names (preferred names, names in use) are names that an individual wants to be known by in the University community. Entering your pronouns is strongly encouraged to help create a more inclusive and respectful campus community. To update your information, login to the UVM Directory. A preview box will allow you to see how this information will appear in other systems used on campus such as Microsoft Teams and Brightspace.

More information about how to make changes to your lived name and pronouns is available in the Knowledge Base.

Research and Citation Help

For help selecting research topics, finding information, citing sources, and more, ask a librarian. The UVM Libraries are eager to help. You may ask questions by phone, e-mail, chat, or text, or make an appointment for an individual consultation with a librarian.

Howe Library: <https://library.uvm.edu/askhowe>

Dana Medical Library: <https://dana.uvm.edu/help/ask>

Silver Special Collections Library: <https://specialcollections.uvm.edu/help/ask>

Course Evaluation

You are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. Evaluations will be anonymous and confidential, and we will use the information gained, including constructive criticisms, to improve the course.

If you have questions, please see the [student instructions on how to access Blue course evaluations](#).

Potential Changes During the Semester

The University of Vermont reserves the right to make changes in the course offerings, mode of delivery, degree requirements, charges, regulations, and procedures contained herein as educational, financial, and health, safety, and welfare considerations require, or as necessary to be compliant with governmental, accreditation, or public health directives.

Intellectual Property Statement/Prohibition on Sharing Academic Materials

Students are prohibited from publicly sharing or selling academic materials that they did not author (for example: class syllabus, outlines or class presentations authored by the professor, practice questions, text from the textbook or other copyrighted class materials, etc.); and students are prohibited from sharing assessments (for example homework or a take-home examination). Violations will be handled under UVM's Intellectual Property policy and Code of Academic Integrity.

Student Learning Accommodations

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing ADA accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS), the office of Disability Services on campus for students. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly recommended to discuss with their faculty the accommodations they plan to use in each course. Faculty who receive Letters of Accommodation with Disability Related Flexible accommodations will need to fill out the Disability Related Flexibility Agreement. Any questions

from faculty or students on the agreement should be directed to the SAS specialist who is indicated on the letter.

Contact SAS:

A170 Living/Learning Center;

802-656-7753

access@uvm.edu

www.uvm.edu/access

Important UVM Policies

Academic Integrity

The [Academic Integrity policy](#) addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

Code of Student Conduct

[UVM's Code of Student Conduct](#) outlines conduct expectations as well as students' rights and responsibilities.

FERPA Rights Disclosure

The purpose of UVM's [FERPA Rights Disclosure](#) is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

Final Exam Policy

The University [final exam policy](#) outlines expectations during final exams and explains timing and process of examination period.

Grade Appeals

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures [outlined in this policy](#).

Grading

[This link](#) offers information on grading and GPA calculation.

Religious Holidays

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time. The complete policy is [here](#).

Promoting Health & Safety

The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community:

[Center for Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Counseling & Psychiatry Services \(CAPS\)](#) Direct Phone Line: (802) 656-3340

C.A.R.E. If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by [visiting the C.A.R.E. Team website](#).

Alcohol and Cannabis Statement

As a faculty member, I want you to get the most you can out of this course. You play a crucial role in your education and in your readiness to learn and fully engage with the course material. It is important to note that alcohol and cannabis have no place in an academic environment. They can seriously impair your ability to learn and retain information not only in the moment you may be using, but up to 48 hours or more afterwards. In addition, alcohol and cannabis can:

- Cause issues with attention, memory and concentration
- Negatively impact the quality of how information is processed and ultimately stored
- Affect sleep patterns, which interferes with long-term memory formation

It is my expectation that you will do everything you can to optimize your learning and to fully participate in this course.

Course Schedule

Unit	Topics	Learning Outcomes
<p>1 – History of Food Systems</p> <p>1/17 – 2/2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course • Early diets and the dawn of agriculture • The Columbian Exchange • Early American foodways and diets • Food systems as systems • Industrialization and globalization of food systems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define foodway 2. Explain possible reasons for and key impacts of the dawn of agriculture 3. Describe major social, environmental, and economic consequences of the Columbian Exchange 4. Characterize early American foodways, including BIPOC foodways 5. Define a food system and identify the major constituent elements 6. Describe the benefits of applying systems thinking to understand food systems 7. Define industrialization, globalization, and related key terms 8. Identify factors that have contributed to the industrialization and globalization of food systems
<p>2 – Contemporary Food Systems: Everything from Farm to Table</p> <p>2/5 – 3/22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of food systems • Production • Food processing and packaging • Food distribution • Food systems workforce • Food environments • Consumer behavior and diets • Socio-cultural drivers • Food systems in Vermont and at UVM • Food policy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare different types of food systems 2. Characterize the major activities in food supply chains 3. Understand why food production capacity depends on ecological integrity 4. Describe the US workforce engaged in the major activities in food supply chains 5. Discuss pros and cons of the industrialization and globalization of food systems for different stakeholders in the US and globally 6. Define food environment 7. Assess a food environment and reflect on how it affects food choices and diets 8. Describe the role of modern marketing in shaping the US food system beginning in the late 19th century 9. Consider food choices in the context of the socioecological model

Unit	Topics	Learning Outcomes
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Describe food intakes and eating patterns in the US and major trends in intake since the 1970s 11. Identify how food serves as a vehicle for establishing identity and group belonging 12. Summarize a brief history of food policy in the US 13. Summarize the goals and major programs in the Farm Bill and Child Nutrition Reauthorizations 14. Critically consider how food policies can affect supply, demand, and equity and thus shape food systems 15. Discuss common and unique aspects of Vermont food systems and food policy vis-a-vis US national food systems and food policy
<p>3 – Challenges and Ways Forward</p> <p>3/25 – 5/3 (tentative)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity and justice in the food system • Environmental impacts • Social and economic impacts • Public health impacts • Different perspectives on issues and solutions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe ways in which food systems affect the natural environment and the natural environment affects food systems 2. Discuss how inequities play out across the food system 3. Describe how the structure, function, and power relationships in food systems shape local economies and impact the choices that farmers, workers, consumers, and other food system participants have 4. Describe major food and nutrition challenges, their health and economic impacts, and how dietary risk factors are shaped by food systems 5. Compare the impacts of mainstream industrialized food systems and alternative food systems 6. Critically consider strategies for addressing food system challenges and achieving future food system sustainability 7. Analyze strengths and limitations of different perspectives and strategies