

Geography 496-S
Learning Geography through Service: Food Justice

Department of Geography – San Diego State University
Fall 2012, Monday 11 to 11 :50am

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*What you hear, you forget;
What you see, you remember;
What you do, you know
--Ancient Chinese Proverb*

Course Description

This course is designed to provide undergraduate students with an opportunity to apply theory to practice and gain hands-on research experience while also helping advance social change in the local community. Working with community partners, students will gain valuable knowledge of local communities, help identify their needs and resources, and work in partnership with a local organization to develop solutions that foster greater food justice. The service experience provides a context for observing and testing geographic theories and concepts, while the classroom discussions and required readings enrich and inform the service by raising questions about community food security and providing a forum for an in-depth examination of those issues and students' experiences, as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves.

Learning Outcomes

Through this course, students will:

- Develop community awareness: explore cultural differences, understand community conditions and identify community needs;
- Apply skills and knowledge to real world problems: use geographic approaches to understand community food security and promote food justice in three San Diego neighborhoods;
- Cultivate social responsibility and promote social justice: become prepared for active civic participation in a diverse democratic society;
- Enhance interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others;
- Develop effective communication skills to reach multiple audiences.

Required Textbook and Readings:

- Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyman. 2011. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press

Note that the book is not available at the bookstore, but can be purchased online through several retailers. Additional readings, including book chapters, journal and newspaper articles will be made available through the Blackboard page for this course. See course schedule below for details.

Course Evaluation and Requirements

For this class, you will need to attend and participate in weekly class meetings on Mondays as indicated in the schedule below. Classes will be organized in a seminar format. Before each of these meetings, there will be readings and/or other assignments that you will need to complete. These are very important as they will guide and facilitate our discussions.

Most of your work will take place “in the community” where you will collaborate with community partners to identify needs and resources and help promote food justice through research, advocacy, educational outreach and service provision. We expect you to work approximately 4 hours per week, starting on week 3 until week 12 (total of 40 hours). At the end each week of fieldwork, you will need to submit a blog entry on Blackboard. Your blog entries will form the basis of our class discussions and your final project assignment. Plan to write at least once a week (250 to 500 words) -- as soon as possible after each fieldwork or community-based activity. Entries for the each week should be posted by Sunday night at the latest. Your entries should consist of: 1) reflections on the readings, 2) reflections on your field experiences, and 3) reflections on how the readings help you make sense of your field experiences. You will occasionally be given specific questions to think about as you write. If not, you are free to reflect on any aspect of the course material or experience that you encountered while doing fieldwork or volunteering with one of the organizations. Feel free to post newspaper articles, photographs, flyers, or other material relevant to your work, organization or neighborhood. These blog entries are not expected to be polished essays, but they should not be purely stream of consciousness, either. Writing in your blog will be most valuable if you use it consistently to record, reflect upon and analyze specific issues and experiences. We will monitor blogs regularly and post comments on your entries.

During our last class meeting, you will be asked to write and present a report on your service-learning experience. First, the paper should identify and describe in details the central food justice problem facing the community in which you are working. Second, your paper should address the primary causes of the problem and main obstacles your organization is confronting. Third, your paper should focus on a specific policy or intervention that could contribute to greater food justice in the community in which you worked. Community-partners will be invited to participate to this event. In your paper, you are expected to connect what you have learned in the field with theories and concepts discussed in class during the semester or in the geographic literature.

Grading

Your grade for the course is based on the following:

Participation (including class and community work):	30%
Blog	30%
Final project	40%

General Course Policy

Regular attendance, communication and participation are very important to the success of this course. You should not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns (see contact information above), and we (including your class mates) should be able to get in touch with you to schedule meetings or plan for teamwork in the community or on campus. We ask that you check your email daily and provide us with the most efficient and reliable contact information. We will use Blackboard's communication capabilities as a central way to stay in touch and share information and experiences.

Reading prior to class is required to be able to participate and be successful in this course. You should expect to be asked to discuss the assigned reading for the day, so read before class! Readings are listed in the schedule below, with required readings marked by a star *. Non-starred readings provide a different perspective or add depth to the required readings. They may be useful for your research and contribute to the quality of blog entries and class discussions. We strongly encourage you to take a look at them. Do not hesitate to see either of the instructors if you have questions about the material discussed in class or any of the assigned readings. If you cannot make the posted office hours, we are available by appointment.

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct includes conduct which is aimed at falsely representing a student's academic performance such as cheating, plagiarizing, unauthorized collaboration on course work, falsifying records or data, or intentionally assisting another individual in any of the above. Students who cheat will receive an "F" and the SDSU's Judicial Coordinator will be notified. You are responsible for learning about SDSU's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct.

By the second class meeting, you will need to complete, sign, and return a Service-Learning Agreement, which outlines your responsibilities as a student, researcher and volunteer as well as the responsibilities of the university and the community-based organization.

Schedule

Part I: Introduction

❖ **August 27: Introduction to the Course** – no readings

❖ **September 3: Labor Day – no class meeting**

❖ **September 10: Why Service Learning?**

Read: *Wakefield, S.E. 2007. Reflective Action in the Academy: Exploring Praxis in Critical Geography using a “Food Movement” Case Study. *Antipode*: 331-354.

Levkoe, C.Z. 2006. Learning Democracy through Food Justice Movements. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 23: 89-98.

Maxey, I. 1999. Beyond Boundaries? Activism, Academia, Reflexivity and Research. *Area* 31:199–208.

❖ **September 17: Food Justice and Food Security: An Introduction**

Read: *Alkon and Agyeman. 2011. “Introduction: The Food Movement as Polyculture.” Chapter 1 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

Allen, P. 1999. Reweaving the Food Security Safety Net: Mediating Entitlement and Entrepreneurship. *Agriculture and Human Value* 16: 117-129.

View: Cohen, B. 2002. *Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit*. Economic Research Service. Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program. US Department of Agriculture.

Part II: Food Production: Land and Labor

❖ **September 24: Land Ownership and Access**

Read: Norgaard, Reed, and Van Horn. 2011. “A Continuing Legacy: Institutional Racism, Hunger, and Nutritional Justice on the Klamath.” Chapter 2 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

*Lawson, L. 2012. Cultural Geographies in Practice: The South Central Farm: Dilemmas in Practicing the Public. Chapter 7 in in P. Williams-Forson and C. Counihan (Eds.), *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World*. New York: Routledge.

❖ **October 1: : Race, Farming and Food Provision**

Read: *Green, Green, and Kleiner. 2011. “From Past to Present: Agricultural Development and Black Farmers in the American South.” Chapter 3 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

Heynen, N. 2009. Bending the Bars of Empire from Every Ghetto for Survival: The Black Panther Party’s Radical Antihunger Politics of Social Reproduction and Scale. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99(2): 406–422.

❖ **October 8: Immigrant Farm Labor**

Read: *Minkoff-Zern, Peluso, Sowerwine and Getz. 2011. "Race and Regulation: Asian Immigrants in California Agriculture." Chapter 4 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

The Economist. 2010. Migrant Farm Workers: Fields of Tears. January 16.
<http://www.economist.com/node/17722932>

Mitchell, D. 2010. Battle/Fields: Braceros, Agribusiness, and the Violent Reproduction of the California Agricultural Landscape during World War II. *Journal of Historical Geography* 36(2): 143–156.

Part III: Consumption Denied

❖ October 15: Food Deserts

Read: McClintock. 2011. "From Industrial Garden to Food Desert: Demarcated Devaluation in the Flatlands of Oakland, California." Chapter 5 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

*Short, A., J. Guthman and S. Raskin. 2007. Food Deserts, Oases or Mirages? Small Markets and Community Food Security in the San Francisco Bay Area. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26(3): 352–364.

❖ October 22: Hunger and Food Insecurity

Read: *Brown and Getz. 2011. "Farmworker Food Insecurity and the Production of Hunger in California." Chapter 6 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

Heynen, Nik. 2006. Justice of Eating in the City: The Political Ecology of Urban Hunger. Chapter 6 in N. Heynen, M. Kaika, and E. Swynegedouw (Eds.), *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*. New York: Routledge.

Part III: Practices in Food Justice

❖ October 29: Growing Food and Justice: Community Gardens

Read: Morales. 2011. "Growing Food and Justice: Dismantling Racism through Sustainable Food Systems." Chapter 7 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

*Baker, L. 2004. Tending Cultural Landscape and Food Citizenship in Toronto's Community Gardens. *Geographical Review* 94(3): 305-325.

❖ November 5: Forging New Food Routes: Localism

Read: *Mares and Peña. 2011. "Environmental and Food Justice: Toward Local, Slow, and Deep Food Systems." Chapter 9 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

Gottlieb, R. and A. Joshi. 2010. Forging New Food Routes. Chapter 7 in Gottlieb and Joshi. *Food Justice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

❖ **November 12: Veterans' Day: No Class Meeting**

❖ **November 19: Race and the Whiteness of Alternative Food**

Read: *Guthman. 2011. "If the Only Knew": The Unbearable Whiteness of Alternative Food." Chapter 12 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

Slocum, R. 2007. Whiteness, Space and Alternative Food Practice. *Geoforum* 38(3): 520–533.

Harper, B. 2011. "Vegans of Color, Racilized Embodiement, and Problematics of the 'Exotic'." Chapter 10 in Alkon and Agyeman (Eds.) *Cultivating Food Justice*.

❖ **November 26: Conclusion: Cultivating Food Justice**

Read: *Alkon and Agyeman. 2011. "Conclusion" Chapter 15 in Alkon and Agyeman. *Cultivating Food Justice*.

*DuPuis, Harrison and Goodman. 2011. "Just Food?" Chapter 13 in Alkon and Agyeman. *Cultivating Food Justice*.

❖ **December 3: Presentations**