

COURSE SYLLABUS
IGA-422
GLOBAL FOOD POLITICS AND POLICY
Fall 2016
(July 26 draft)

Faculty: Robert Paarlberg
Robert_Paarlberg@hks.harvard.edu
Belfer L-2D
617-384-5899

Faculty Assistant: Beth Tremblay
Beth_Tremblay@hks.harvard.edu
617-496-0668

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:00-4:30 pm, and by appointment

Class Meetings: Mon/Wed, 10:15AM – 11:30PM
Room: Weil Town Hall

Course Description:

This course reviews the political landscape of both food and farming, in both rich and poor countries. This is a highly contested political space. Scientists, economists, commercial farmers, agribusiness and food companies, environmentalists, consumer organizations, and social justice advocates often hold sharply different views. Policy actions by national governments frequently conflict with the preferences of international organizations, private companies, NGOs, social entrepreneurs, and humanitarian relief agencies. Understanding the foundation of these conflicts is key to effective public policy making.

Public policies differ country by country. Poor countries still reliant on low-resource farming systems give little public policy support to agriculture, while rich countries with productive and highly capitalized agricultural sectors give generous subsidies to farmers. Nutrition circumstances differ as well, as persistent hunger is still a deadly challenge in many tropical countries, while in rich countries, particularly the United States, excessive food consumption and obesity are now a more prominent diet-linked challenge to health. Understanding the policy interventions governments might take in response both to hunger and obesity will be an objective of this course. Understanding the environmental sustainability of different food and farming systems will be a centerpiece of the course as well.

Course requirements will include 1) in-class briefs and debates on assigned topics, 2) periodic take home exams on course materials, to be submitted in the form of op-ed style essays, and 3) a structured memo to a decision maker, making a concise but informed policy recommendation.

Book to Purchase:

Robert Paarlberg, *Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*.
New York: Oxford University Press, **Second Edition**, September 2013

All course readings will either be drawn from these two sources, or they will be linked in this syllabus or posted on the course page. There will be an optional packet of online course readings for sale at the Course Materials Office, for anyone who wants a hard copy of the material posted on the course page.

To follow current events in this policy area:

Read the daily *AGree NEWSFEED*. Subscribe at <http://www.foodandagpolicy.org/news>

Read the weekly *Global Food For Thought*. Subscribe at <http://globalfoodforthought.typepad.com/>

Brief Summary of Graded Course Requirements

1. *Oral in-class briefs and debates:* Each student will participate in either a 10-minute in-class brief or a 20-minute in-class debate. These will be team assignments, with details provided after we know the enrollment for the class. These in-class presentations will be individually graded and will count 15 percent of the final course grade.
2. *Decision memo:* Each student will research a defined food or agricultural policy problem and compose a 7 page single-spaced memo (addressed to an actual decision-maker) recommending the actions that individual should take in response. A list of suggested food and agricultural policy problems (and relevant decision-makers) will be circulated in the second week of the class, but students may also select their own policy problem (and identify their own decision-maker) *with permission of the instructor*. The completed memo will consist of a 2-page segment framing the problem for the decision-maker, a 2-page segment reviewing policy options, a final 2-page segment recommending the best policy choice, and a 1-page cover memo summarizing the problem, the options, and the solution. This decision memo is due by electronic submission to the instructor no later than 11:59 PM on Friday, December 9. Late submissions will be penalized ½ grade. The memo will count 30 percent of the final grade. Students are encouraged to discuss their memos with the instructor at any time, and to submit outlines or rough drafts by November 23, to receive written feedback.
3. *“Op-Ed” Take Home Exams:* Students will be given three “Op-Ed” take home exams over the course of the semester. The exams will list several topics covered in recent class readings and discussions, and students will be given 72 hours to compose an “Op-Ed essay” (850 words in length) that makes an *informed policy argument* about one of the topics. The three Op-Ed Exams will be given out electronically on September 20, October 18, and November 15. Students may work together on these assignments, but each exam must be individually authored. Exams will be due at a specified time by electronic

submission to the instructor, and late exams will be penalized $\frac{1}{2}$ grade. Each Op-Ed essay will count 15 percent of final grade (45 percent total).

4. *Class Attendance and Participation:* 10 percent of final grade.

Ethics

- You are expected to abide by the University policies on academic honesty and integrity as given in the Student Handbook. Violations of these policies will not be tolerated and are subject to severe sanctions up to and including expulsion from the university.
- While study groups are encouraged, their proper purpose is not to do the homework assignments, but to help you learn the material. Each student is responsible for writing up and submitting the assignments. Separate copies of a group-constructed assignment are not acceptable.

Class Meetings and Reading Assignments

August 29

Shopping

August 31

The Role of Governments in Food and Agriculture

- Governments, versus MNCs, versus NGOs
- The dietary transition
- Links between agriculture and nutrition

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 14 (**book**)

Optional: Robert Paarlberg, “Governing the Dietary Transition: Linking Agriculture, Nutrition, and Health,” IFPRI, February 2011

<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020anhconfpaper08.pdf>

(posted on course page)

September 2, 7

Malthusian Concerns

- Demographic projections and realities
- Numbers of people versus the diets of people
- The role of innovation and technology change

Readings:

Paarlberg, R., *Food Politics*, Chapter 2 (**book**)

Jason Bremner, “Population and Food Security: Africa’s Challenge,” Population Reference Bureau, Policy Brief, February 2012. Download from:

<http://www.prb.org/Publications/PolicyBriefs/population-food-security-africa-part1.aspx>

World Resources Institute: Shifting Diets for a Sustainable Food Future

(**summary only**), pp. 1-13. Download at <http://www.wri.org/publication/shifting-diets>

Jesse Ausubel, “The Return of Nature: How Technology Liberates the

Environment,” <http://thebreakthrough.org/index.php/journal/issue-5/the-return-of-nature>

September 12

The 2008 World Food Crisis

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 3

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, “When Hunger Strikes,” download at [https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/Report When Hunger Strikes_1604.pdf](https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/Report%20When%20Hunger%20Strikes_1604.pdf)

CLeila Demarest, “Food Price Rises and Political Instability,” CRPD working Paper No. 17, January 2014. Paste this PDF: <http://soc.kuleuven.be/web/files/12/80/wp17.pdf>

Optional: IFPRI, “Foreign Direct Investment in Land in West Africa,” 2012, download at: <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/foreign-direct-investment-land-west-africa>

September 14, 19

International Policy Responses to Hunger

- Modern famine prevention
- Food aid versus agricultural development assistance.
- Bilateral ODA versus IFIs
- Philanthropy, PPPs, advocacy NGOs, and social entrepreneurs

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapters 4, 5 (**book**)

Global Nutrition Report 2016, “From Promise to Impact: Ending Malnutrition by 2030,” **Summary only**. Download at <https://www.ifpri.org/publication/global-nutrition-report-2016-promise-impact-ending-malnutrition-2030>

Remarks by the President at White House Summit on Global Development, July 20, 2016. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/20/remarks-president-white-house-summit-global-development>

World Food Programme, watch first 10 short videos:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=UUT-FJ4sgZ-0OCTmyf1tmKwQ>

Optional: Peter Little and John McPeak, “Resilience and Pastoralism in Africa South of the Sahara,” May 2014, download at:
<http://www.2020resilience.ifpri.info/resources/papers/>

September 21, 26

The Green Revolution Debate

- Implications for food production, poverty, hunger, and the environment
- Impacts in Asia versus Latin America, prospects for Africa

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 6 (**book**)

Evenson, R.E., and D. Gollin. 2003. “Assessing the Impact of the Green Revolution, 1960 to 2000,” *Science* Vol. 300, no. 5620, pp. 758-762 (**posted on course page**)

Hazell, Peter. 2009. *The Asian Green Revolution*. IFPRI Discussion Paper. Available at <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/asian-green-revolution> (**posted on course page**)

Jayne, T.S., et al., 2016, “Africa’s Changing Farmland Ownership,” unpublished manuscript available on course web page.

Peter Rosset, “Do We Need New Technology to End Hunger?”
<http://www.foodfirst.org/media/opeds/2000/4-greenrev.html> (**posted on course page**)

September 28, October 3

Environmental Damage from Farming

- Environmental damage from low input farming
- Environmental damage from high input farming
- Precision farming?

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 9 (**book**)

Miguel A. Altieri, “Agroecology, Small Farms, and Food Sovereignty,” *Monthly Review*, 2009, download at: <http://monthlyreview.org/author/miguelaltieri>

S. D. Williams and Heidi Fritschel, “Farming Smarter,” *Insights*, Vol. 2 no. 2, 2012. Available at:

<http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15738coll2/id/126967/rec/9>

Ecomodernist Manifesto, download at <http://www.ecomodernism.org/>

Paarlberg, “Precision Agriculture: Can Small Farmers Participate?”
<https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/blog/global-food-thought/precision-agriculture-smallholders-paarlberg-harvard>

October 5

Constraints on Food and Farming from Climate Change

- Temperature, moisture, and atmospheric carbon effects
- Mitigation versus Adaptation
- Climate Aid: In-class debate

Readings:

Oxfam, “Hot and Hungry – how to stop climate change derailing the fight against hunger,” Media Briefing 06/2014. Download here:
<http://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/policy/hot-and-hungry>

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Advancing Global Food Security in the Face of a Changing Climate*, 2014. Download at:
http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/files/Studies_Publications/TaskForcesandStudies/GADI/advancing_global_foodsecurity_in_face_climate_change.aspx

October 12

Meat

- Meat and nutrition
- Meat and the environment
- Meat and animal welfare

Readings:

Paarlberg, Robert, *Food Politics*, Chapter 10

Michael Pollan, “An Animal’s Place,” <http://michaelpollan.com/articles-archive/ananimals-place/>

HLPE Report on Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: what roles for livestock? Extract from the Report: Summary and Recommendations (23 June 2016),
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_S_and_R/HLPE_2016_Sust-Agr-Dev-FSN-Livestock_S-R_EN.pdf

Nathanael Johnson, "To Make Meat Greener, Make it More Efficiently,"
<http://grist.org/food/the-practical-case-for-producing-meat-more-efficiently/>

October 17

Fish

- Consumption trends and nutrition
- Capture fishing versus aquaculture

Readings:

Naylor and Burke, 2005, "Review: Aquaculture and Ocean Resources,"
http://www.annualreviews.org/eprint/j7PBCt5t8YyPCVGPKRCE/full/10.1146/annurev.energy.30.081804.121034?utm_source=&utm_medium=envirom&utm_campaign=eprint&

October 19

The Politics of Farm Subsidies:

- Why do farm subsidies persist?
- How have farm subsidy policies changed?
- Who is helped by farm subsidies, and who is hurt?

Readings:

Paarlberg, Robert. *Food Politics*, Chapter 8.

Marc Bellemare, 2013, "In an Industrialized America, Why Do Members of Congress Support Farm Subsidies?"
http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/sites/default/files/ssn_key_findings_belle_mare_on_congress_support_of_agricultural_protection.pdf

EWG, "Cost of Farm Subsidies Skyrocket"
<http://www.ewg.org/agmag/2016/06/costs-farm-subsidy-programs-skyrocket#.V1b3qthTsmJ.twitter>

USDA, 2014 Farm Bill Fact Sheet,
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/2014_farm_bill_customers.pdf

October 24

Food vs. Fuel

- Links between food prices and energy prices.
- The political economy of biofuels subsidies

Readings:

Zilberman, et al., “Political Economy of Biofuel,”
<http://www.choicesmagazine.org/choices-magazine/theme-articles/economic-and-policy-analysis-of-advanced-biofuels/political-economy-of-biofuel>

American Petroleum Institute, 2016, “Renewable Fuel Standard: Fill Up on Facts”
<http://www.api.org/~media/Files/Policy/Fuels-and-Renewables/13-rfs-primer/Renewable-Fuel-Standard-primer-high-res.pdf?la=en>

October 26, 31

Government Policy and Obesity

- What has created the modern obesity crisis?
- Is this an issue of public health or personal responsibility?
- What have governments done to address the crisis?
- In-class debate

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 7 (**book**)

Marron, Gearing, and Iselin, 2015, “Should We Tax Unhealthy Foods and Drinks?” Urban Institute and Brookings Institution, download at
<http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/publications/should-we-tax-unhealthy-foods-and-drinks>

Wright, Donley, Gualtieri, and Strickhouser, 2016, “Food Deserts: What is the Problem? What is the Solution?” download at
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295192481_Food_Deserts_What_is_the_Problem_What_is_the_Solution

Optional: “Kid’s Meals: Obesity on the Menu,” Center for Science and the Public Interest, <http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/cspi-kids-meals-2013.pdf>

Optional: Marc Ambinder, “Beating Obesity,” *The Atlantic*, May 2010
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/05/beating-obesity/8017/1/>
(posted on course page)

November 2

Genetically Engineered Foods

Readings:

Listen to lecture by Vandana Shiva, “The Future of Food and Seed,”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYwOTLopWIw>

Mark Lynas, Lecture to Oxford Farming Conference, January 2013,
<http://vimeo.com/56745320>

Michael Specter, “Seeds of Doubt: An activist’s crusade against genetically modified crops,” *The New Yorker*, August 25, 2014 issue,
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/25/seeds-of-doubt>

Optional: William Saletan, “Are GMOs Safe?,” *Slate*, July 2015,
http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2015/07/are_gmos_safe_yes_the_case_against_them_is_full_of_fraud_lies_and_errors.html

Optional: Keith Kloor, “The GMO-Suicide Myth,” *Issues in Science and Technology*, Winger 2014, https://www.google.com/?gws_rd=ssl#q=the+gmo-suicide+myth

November 7, 9

Agribusiness, Food Companies, and Supermarkets

- Do agribusiness companies control seed supplies, and farmers?
- Do food companies control food policy?
- Why are supermarkets spreading in poor countries?

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 11 (**book**)

Listen to lecture by Jennifer Clapp, “Over 1 Billion NOT Served: The Global Economic Crisis and Food Governance,” <http://www.cigionline.org/videos/over-1-billion-not-served-global-economic-crisis-and-food-governance-jennifer-clapp>

David Stuckler, et al., “Manufacturing Epidemics,”
<http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1001235>

Malden Nesheim and Marion Nestle, “The Internationalization of the Obesity Epidemic: The Case of Sugar Sweetened Sodas,” 2013, download paper at:
<http://ppafest.nutrition.cornell.edu/authors/nesheim-nestle.html> (or listen to lecture at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-FvmgpOtis>)

Tom Reardon, et al, “The Rise of Supermarkets in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,”
<http://ip.cals.cornell.edu/courses/intag402/documents/RiseofSupermarket sinAfricaAsiaandLatAm.pdf> (**posted on course page**)

November 14

Food Safety

- The role of policy, corporate power, and technology in food safety
- When, where, and how should food be regulated for consumer safety?

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 13 (**book**)

Tsunehiro Otsuki, John Wilson, Mirvat Sewadeh, “Saving two in a billion: A case study to quantify the trade effects of European food safety standards on African Exports,” World Bank, DECRG, 2001.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRANETTRADE/Resources/Topics/aflatoxins.pdf>

Food Safety in China, SSRC, 2014, pp. 1-15, 40-49

<http://webarchive.ssrc.org/cehi/PDFs/Food-Safety-in-China-Web.pdf>

Chipotle: What Happened? <https://chipotle.com/2015incidents>

CNN, June 2016, “Chipotle Stock Hits Lowest Level in Three Years,”

<http://money.cnn.com/2016/06/14/investing/chipotle-stock/>

Optional: Renee Johnson, *The Federal Food Safety System: A Primer*. Congressional Research Service, 2011. Download under Food Safety at

<http://www.nationalaglawcenter.org/crs/index.phtml#foodsafety>

November 16

Fast Food

- How is fast food taxed and regulated in the United States and Europe?
- What role is fast food playing in East Asia?

Readings:

Lisa Young and Marion Nestle, 2007. “Portion Sizes and Obesity: Responses of Fast-Food Companies,” *Journal of Public Health Policy*. **Available on JSTOR**

Jason Block, et al., 2004, “Fast Food, Race/Ethnicity, and Income: A Geographic Analysis” Read abstract at:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379704001394-item1>

James Watson, 2000. "China's Big Mac Attack," *Foreign Affairs*. **Available on JSTOR**

November 21, 28

Organic and Local Food:

- What drives current preferences for organic, local, and slow food?
- Should government policies promote organic, local, and slow food?

Readings:

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 12

Speech by HRH the Prince of Wales, Georgetown University, May 2011.
http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speechesandarticles/a_speech_by_hrh_the_prince_of_wales_to_the_future_for_food_c_848967946.html

Summary of Merced study on potential for local production:
<http://www.ucmerced.edu/news/2015/most-americans-could-eat-locally-research-shows>

Rachel Laudan, "A Plea for Culinary Modernism,"
<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/05/slow-food-artisanal-natural-preservatives/>

Optional: UNEP and UNCTAD, *Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Africa*, http://unctad.org/en/docs/ditcted200715_en.pdf

November 30

Conclusion

Paarlberg, *Food Politics*, Chapter 15