



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN | OSHKOSH

Politics of FOOD

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

About This Course

We all love to eat. Thanksgiving turkey, birthday cake, Christmas cookies, a quick trip through the lines at Blackhawk or Reeve, a midnight snack while studying for an exam... our lives find rhythm and comfort in food. But food is about so much more than just *eating*. As you'll learn in this course, food is one of the most intensely political topics around, and disentangling the many ways in which government ends up on your plate everyday takes some detective work and a lot of patience. After the semester is through, chances are that you'll never look at food the same way again (for better or for worse).

In this course, we'll learn about how food policy is made at the national, state, and local levels. Then we'll examine how those policies impact the type and quantities of the food we eat, food distribution, food safety, and

nutrition. Throughout, we'll have an eye to the future: is our current food system

sustainable? That is, will it last beyond our lifetimes? Our class will encounter these issues not only in the classroom, but also by working with the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry and the Winnebago County Health Department/re:TH!NK. Through our work with these community partners, we'll see how topics in our course play out in reality while helping our community partners fulfill their missions in the process.

Basic Course Information

PROFESSOR TRACY H. SLAGTER
Ph.D., University of Iowa (2006)

Office Location: Sage Hall 4626

Office Hours: T, 11:30-1:30 and
F, 10:30-11:30

Email: slagtert@uwosh.edu

DEPARTMENT MAIN OFFICE

Contact: Ms. Angelee Hammond

Office Location: Sage Hall 4631

Office Phone: (920) 424-3456

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 ounce Servings in bag 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 155 **Calories from Fat** 93

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 11g 16%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Trans Fat

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 148mg 6%

Total Carbohydrate 14g 5%

Dietary Fiber 1g 5%

Sugars 1g

Protein 2g

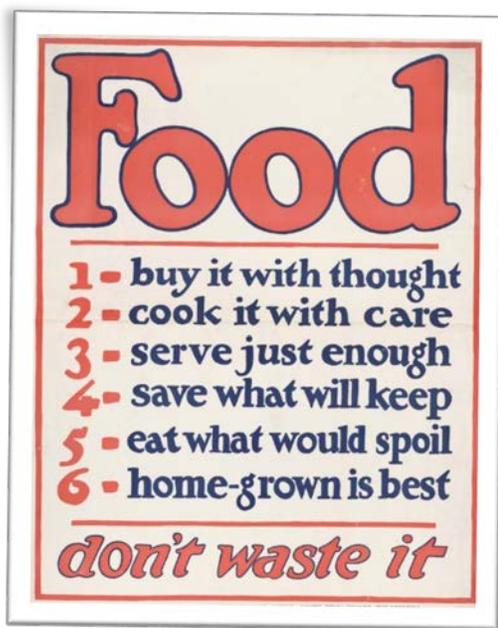
Vitamin A 0% • **Vitamin C** 9%

Calcium 1% • **Iron** 3%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Course Meeting Times | 84:214
MWF, 1:50-2:50pm
Sage Hall 3235

NOTE: *There will be time required of you outside of our normal class time. There will be days where we will NOT meet so that you can be at the Community Partner sites.*



(Left) This poster was created for the US Food Administration in 1917 by Frederic G. Cooper.

Quest III & the Signature Question

This is a **Quest III** course in the University Studies Program (USP), which means that this is your chance to get out in the community and examine your final Signature Question: **How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?**

You might think sustainability is just about the environment, but it's really a very wide lens through which

we can look at almost anything—it's been called "the ultimate liberal art (and science)" (Rhodes 2006). At the core, sustainability is about the interconnectedness of **ecological integrity, economic well-being, and social justice**. More than that, sustainability is about limits: how far can our current practices take us, and how are our current practices impacting our collective future? In this course, we'll examine our food system as a whole to gain insight into its ecological, economic, political, and social limits. Can the food system we have today serve our needs into the future?

About Our Community Partners

The **Oshkosh Area Community Pantry's** mission is "to establish a collaborative community food pantry that addresses the food and nutritional needs of our customers, identify and evaluate our customer's broader needs and provide access to other community resources that foster independence" (OACP website). In order to fulfill its mission, the OACP collects and distributes food to its customers through its store on Jackson Street, deliveries to those

who are homebound, and its Food4Kidz Backpack program. It also offers cooking classes and nutrition information.

Sustainability is at the heart of what the OACP does: it recognizes the economic and social limits placed on those who rely on its services and at the same time attempts to ensure a healthy future for them.

re:TH!NK, Winnebago's Healthy Living Partnership, is the community engagement "arm" of the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD). re:TH!NK coordinates efforts with help from local partners to create a place where everyone has the opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. Over 500 partners from over 60 organizations support re:TH!NK. Community partnerships are fundamental to their mission: "Through effective community collaboration, we create an environment that enables healthy lifestyle choices and deters substance abuse in order to improve the quality of life for all Winnebago County residents."

Course Textbook

The following textbook is **required** and is available from University Books & More and online retailers:

Wilde, Parke. 2013. *Food Policy in the United States: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge/Earthscan.



Laptops v. Longhand

There's mounting evidence (see, for example, Berninger, et al., 2006; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014) suggesting that people who take notes longhand (vs. on a computer) learn better and retain more. I *strongly* suggest you take notes the old-fashioned way: by hand, on paper. I will give you some tips on effective and creative note-taking in the first weeks of class.

Why a "Community Experience?"

A lot of the courses you take in college will fill your head with knowledge, inspire you, and make you excited to keep learning. But Quest III courses do more than that: they allow you to put your knowledge and excitement to work *as part of your course*, preparing you in a unique way for your future after college. Think of this as practice for *real* life: putting knowledge into action to address *real* problems and help *real* people right in your own backyard. If you're uneasy about this at first, that's OK—it's uncomfortable to try new things, but real learning happens outside our comfort zones.

OSHKOSH AREA COMMUNITY PANTRY INFORMATION

Address: 2551 Jackson St.
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Bus Line: Route 2 (GO Transit).
Riding the bus is *free* for UW Oshkosh students with your student ID.

Phone: (920) 651-9960

Web: www.oacptoday.org

Contacts: Terri Green (Director) and Hope Eike (Program Coordinator)

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- *Describe* the way food policies are made in the United States;
- *Understand* the basics about how food policy is made in other countries, and the advantages and disadvantages associated with different approaches;
- *Identify* the major actors in shaping food policy and associated programs;
- *Explain* the ways in which food policy impacts different constituencies;
- *Outline* the ways in which food policy touches all aspects of sustainability (social justice, ecological integrity, and economic well-being);
- *Assess* the effectiveness of local solutions to food insecurity in Oshkosh;
- *Evaluate* the ways in which food policy impact nutrition and health in the Oshkosh community, and
- *Impact* their community through experiences with our Community Partners.

Quest III and Our Community Partners

As part of our class, every student will work either with the OACP or re:THINK (Winnebago County Health Department) directly or indirectly. Your experiences will be eye-opening and valuable to you and the community. You will soon realize that organizations like this, while separate, are connected in complex and important ways.

Students working with the OACP might do some of the following:

- Prepare bags for student backpacks and ready them for delivery to area elementary schools;
- Assist in the creation and maintenance of a OACP/UW Oshkosh food assistance program for UW Oshkosh students in need of food;
- Assist in the staffing, maintenance and programming for the “Kids Corner” at the OACP;
- Help with various other tasks at the OACP as they arise.

Students working with re:TH!NK might do some of the following:

- **Healthy Habits:** teaching elementary-school children how to prepare and eat healthy snacks that they can also make at home. These lessons will be held during after-school-care programs at select elementary schools in Oshkosh.
- **Kids LiveWell Healthy Children’s Meal Program:** Students will work with re:TH!NK staff to gather information from restaurant owners and families visiting local restaurants in support of a project to increase the number



of healthy children’s meals available and consumed in local restaurants.

- **Nutrition Education/Farm to Preschool:** For this opportunity, students will create and deliver nutrition lessons to pre-school children, including sampling of a fresh fruit or vegetable, with the goal of helping children to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Getting to the Community Partner Sites

You are free to drive yourself to the OACP or other locations, and I encourage you to carpool when you can. GO Transit, our local bus service, also offers free bus rides to UW Oshkosh students when you present your campus ID.

Representing UW Oshkosh

Students are expected to abide by the UW Oshkosh Student Academic and Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures during their Quest III Community Experience. All students will be asked to acknowledge in writing that they have been made aware of these policies. Other policies that may be relevant to the Community Experience in this course are described in the online Quest III Handbook on our course D2L site.

Course Format

This is a course that requires us to get to know each other and work together. Meaningful student input is required for the course to be successful (and fun). As such, I expect that students will attend class each week prepared to discuss the readings and work hard; completing the readings ahead of time is essential. *My ability to teach is severely limited if you do not read.*

Academic Dishonesty

I will not tolerate plagiarism or intellectual theft of any kind. All students should familiarize themselves with the University's policies on academic dishonesty and know the consequences of plagiarism or cheating. In this course, plagiarism on any assignment will result in a grade of F for the course and the Dean of Students Office will be notified. If you have any questions about citation, please see me.

Grading

The following grading scale will apply to all assignments in this course:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	65-66
F	0-64

Note that I do not typically grade on a curve.

Early Alert

As in Quest I and II, I will post "Early Alert" grades for you in the fourth or fifth week of the semester. These are to allow you to

see your own progress in the course to this point, but the grades are not permanent and will never appear on your transcript. If your Early Alert grade is lower than you expected, please see me to talk about how you can improve.

Alumni Mentor

Many Quest III courses have Alumni Mentors, but not many can boast having the best one ever: *Mr. Marty Strand!* Marty is the Assistant Director for Dining Operations here, and is thus one of our "Titans x 2": he's an alum AND he loved it so much he works here, too. Marty knows a thing or two (or a billion) about food and sustainability, so I'm excited for you to meet him on 2/13.

Assignments

Participation (10%):

You can earn a solid participation grade by coming to every class, responding to and asking questions in class, visiting my office hours, and participating in or initiating conversations on our closed class Facebook page. I'll also start each class period by asking about "food in the news," so bring news stories to share. The blogs listed on D2L might be a good place to start.

American Politics Bootcamp Exam (30%): We'll spend the first several weeks of the course ensuring you have a good grasp on the way American politics works. There will be an exam that covers that material, and it will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Interteach (20%): Interteach is a method of guided discussion that

allows us have better classroom interactions. It involves advance preparation and group work. You will see days noted as "Interteach" on the syllabus. *Note that Interteach assignments cannot be made up for any reason.* More details will follow in class.

Food Profile (20%): As you'll soon learn, the companies that produce most of our food have highly political agendas. For this assignment, you'll choose a major food company and explore how they interact with government agencies and Congress. More details will follow in class.

Final Project (20%): Students will work on this project throughout the semester as they work with our

ABOUT POLITICAL SCIENCE

After completing this course, you might want to know more—you'll see that politics impacts everything you do, no matter what your future career plans are. I encourage you to explore our department further, and am happy to answer any questions you might have or connect you with my colleagues in the department. We also have a deep network of Political Science alumni who are eager to help you understand what a major or minor in Political Science has to offer. Take a look:

http://www.uwosh.edu/political_science/political-science-alumni/alumni-profiles

Community Partners and reflect on how that work connects with our course readings and discussions. For this project, students will evaluate the effectiveness of programs that already exist to help feed the Oshkosh community and uncover how those programs are impacted by local, state, and national regulations. Full details will be provided in class.

Changes

I will likely make changes to our course schedule as the semester progresses. I'll let you know well in advance via email and on our course Facebook page when I do. If you have questions about the course, please post them on the Facebook page; chances are good that someone else will have the

answer for you even if I am unable to respond right away.

To join the course FB group, please head here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1121048074601389/>

If you don't use Facebook but would still like to see the group's posts and be able to comment,

please see me or send me an email. I highly recommend doing so; it can be a quick and effective way of communicating that won't clog your email inbox!

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: readings should be completed by the date they appear on the syllabus.



Introduction to the Course and American Politics

- January 30 Introduction to the course and Quest III Community Partnership(s)
Read: this syllabus and join the course Facebook page
- February 1 Food Policy in the U.S.: who are the major players?
Read: Wilde, Chapter 1
- February 3 American Politics Bootcamp I
Read: The Constitution of the United States of America. Found multiple places online, but here is a link from the National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>
 Note that the hyperlinked text refers you to the Amendments to the Constitution, showing you how the original document has changed over time. Be sure to read the Amendments, too.

American Politics Bootcamp, Part I

- February 6 American Politics Bootcamp: Thinking About Our Democracy
Inter teach: Dahl: *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* (Excerpts; D2L)
- February 8 American Politics Bootcamp: Thinking About Our Democracy
Inter teach (con't): Dahl: *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* (Excerpts; D2L)
- February 10 American Politics Bootcamp: Political Parties
Read: "Political Parties and Participation." Chapter 7 in Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert and Spitzer, 2017. *We the People*. New York: W.W. Norton.

American Politics Bootcamp, Part II

- February 13 Our Community Partners and Alumni Mentor (*Ellie Nelson, Lydia Penn and/or Hope Schaefer, and Marty Strand*; possible guest appearance by *Mike Lueder*, who is our Civic Engagement Coordinator)
Discuss & Plan: the community engagement experiences you'll have
- February 15 American Politics Bootcamp: Congress
Read: "Congress." Chapter 9 in Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert and Spitzer, 2017. *We the People*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- February 17 American Politics Bootcamp: Presidency
Read: "The Presidency." Chapter 10 in Ginsberg, Lowi, Weir, Tolbert and Spitzer, 2017. *We the People*. New York: W.W. Norton.

American Politics Bootcamp, Part III

- February 20 American Politics Bootcamp: Interest Groups
Read: Drutman, Lee and Stephen Teles. 2015. "Why Congress Relies on Lobbyists Instead of Thinking for Itself." <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/03/when-congress-cant-think-for-itself-it-turns-to-lobbyists/387295/>
- February 22 American Politics Bootcamp: American Dysfunction?
Interteach: Mann, Thomas E. and Norman J. Ornstein. 2012/2016. *It's Even Worse than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*. New York: Basic Books. Chapters 2 and 5. (D2L)
- February 24 Review for Exam
 Bring your questions to class!

Changing Gears: Politics + Food?

- February 27 🍷 **American Politics Bootcamp Exam**
- March 1 Community Partners
- March 3 Where does our food come from?
Read: Wilde, Chapter 2

Exporting American Food

- March 6 How does U.S. food impact other countries?
Read: Wilde, Chapter 4
- March 8 Community Partners
- March 10 Exporting the Standard American Diet
Read: "You Are What Washington, D.C. Wants You To Eat."
<http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/06/29/nafta-tpp-free-trade-food?cmpid=foodinc-fb>
 and also: Norris, John. "Make Them Eat Cake." *Foreign Policy*, Sept/Oct 2013.

Telling Americans What to Eat

- March 13 Influencing the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
Read: Wilde, Chapter 8
- March 15 Community Partners
- March 17 Give 'Em What They Want, I
Interteach: Moss, Michael. 2014. *Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*. New York: Random House. Chapters 2, 3, and 4.
- March 20 **Spring Break:** Eat Well!
- March 22 **Spring Break:** Be Safe!
- March 24 **Spring Break:** Stay Healthy!

Sugar, Sugar, Sugar...

- March 27 Give 'Em What They Want, II
 Read: Nestle, Marion. 2015. *Soda Politics: Taking on Big Soda (And Winning)*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 7 and 8. (D2L)
- March 29 Community Partners
- March 31 Government, Science, and Public Health: A Sugar Story
Interteach: Taubes, Gary. 2016. *The Case Against Sugar*. New York: Knopf. (Excerpts, D2L)

And Even More Sugar...

- April 3 Government, Science, and Public Health: A Sugar Story (Continued)
Guest Lecture: Dr. R. Shelly Lancaster, Ph.D., RN
- April 5 Community Partners
- April 7 Good Sugar, Bad Sugar?
Read: Taubes, Gary. *Good Calories, Bad Calories*. (Excerpt, D2L)

Government: It's What's For Dinner (and Lunch... and Breakfast...)

- April 10 WIC, SNAP, and the NSLP
Read: Wilde, Chapter 11
- April 11 Long Night Against Procrastination in Polk 101, 6:00-9:00pm (note: this is a Tuesday)
Work: on your papers in the library, eat some treats, and get some help. I'll be there!
- April 12 Community Partners
- April 14 National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
Interteach: Poppendieck, Janet. *Free for All*. (Excerpt on D2L)

Enough Food for Everyone?

- April 17 Food Insecurity in America
Read: Wilde, Chapter 10
- April 19 Community Partners
- April 21 🍷 **Papers Due!**
No class. Turn papers in via D2L Dropbox as PDFs only.

Does Government Make a Difference to Hungry People?

- April 24 Two Views on Food Insecurity
Read: "How Much Does the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Reduce Food Insecurity?" *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 2011. And also: "What I Learned After Taking a Homeless Mother Grocery Shopping." <http://www.babble.com/best-recipes/what-i-learned-after-taking-a-homeless-mother-grocery-shopping/>
- April 26 Community Partners
- April 28 The Umbrella of Sustainability
Read: Orr, David W. "Four Challenges of Sustainability." (D2L)

How Does Food Impact the Planet?

- May 1 Food and the Environment
Read: Wilde, Chapter 3
- May 3 Community Partners
- May 5 **Read:** Lang, Tim and Michael Heasman. 2015. *Food Wars: The Global Battle for Mouths, Minds, and Markets*. New York: Earthscan/Routledge. Chapter 4. (D2L)

What Now?

- May 8 Conclusions: What Did We Learn?
- May 10 Community Partners, if needed
- May 12 🍷 **Final Presentations DUE in the D2L Dropbox** by class time!
No class: enjoy your summer!