

1-2014

## ENST 480.01: Food, Agriculture and Environment

Brianna M. Ewert

*The University of Montana*, [ewert@post.harvard.edu](mailto:ewert@post.harvard.edu)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

---

### Recommended Citation

Ewert, Brianna M., "ENST 480.01: Food, Agriculture and Environment" (2014). *Syllabi*. 739.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/739>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

## ENST 480: FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT

SPRING 2014

TUES. & THURS. 11:10AM-12:30PM

LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING, ROOM 138

**Instructor:** Brianna Ewert

**Email:** [brianna.ewert@umontana.edu](mailto:brianna.ewert@umontana.edu)

**Office hours:** Tues. 9:30-10:50am and Thurs. 12:40-2:00pm in the EVST Bullpen (Rankin Hall)

If these times are impossible for you, please contact me to make an appointment.

### **PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:**

According to Wendell Berry, “eating is an agricultural act.” Food is central to our lives, and it has the capacity to profoundly connect us with nature and the place where we live. But most of us know very little about how the food we eat each day is produced, how production processes might impact the environment and human health, or how our food reaches our plates.

Overall, the purpose of the course is to introduce you to some of the contemporary issues in the study of food and agriculture in the U.S. and to demonstrate an approach to interdisciplinary study and practice. We will look at the conditions created by the dominant, “industrial” food and agricultural system, as well as investigate emerging alternatives – such as “sustainable agriculture,” “organic farming,” and “local food systems.”

You will have the opportunity to improve your critical thinking, writing, and oral communication skills through class discussions and a series of assignments aimed at encouraging you to engage with the readings and other course materials. Through a term paper assignment, you will hone your research and presentation skills.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

**Readings:** A class schedule with assignment deadlines and the planned readings are attached. Readings will be posted on the Moodle site for this course, which you can access through the UM homepage. You will need your Net/ID and your password to login. Once logged into Moodle, if you are enrolled in the course, you can access it through “My Courses.”

In addition, please get these books, which will be available in the bookstore:

Estabrook, Barry. 2012. *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, Inc.

Ackerman-Leist, Philip. 2013. *Rebuilding the Foodshed: How to Create Local, Sustainable, and Secure Food Systems*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

**Class Participation and Attendance:** One of your main tasks in this course is to do each reading thoughtfully before class and then to help us discuss it in class. Please bring hard copies of the readings to class! I hope you will enjoy attending class. Please know that I expect you to attend class consistently because if you are not in class you cannot benefit from hearing the discussion of the material, nor can you contribute to the group’s learning together.

I understand that active participation in class discussions is not easy for everyone, but I encourage you to give it a try. I may choose to give you a little extra credit at the end if you have been an active and thoughtful participant in class. Please treat each other with respect when expressing your views and help us to create space so that everyone has a chance to speak.

Active participation in class extends to your involvement with the readings and preparation for class

meetings. Be an active reader! When you read, jot down questions, ideas, connections, thoughts. Highlight key points to make it easier to find them later. All this will make for more engaging, in-depth discussions, plus it will be easier for you to participate in class and to write your essays. And, most importantly, you'll get more out of the experience.

**Analytic Essays:** The course is divided into two sections with an essay assignment due at the end of each section. The assignments will ask you to think critically about what you read, to synthesize the material covered, and perhaps do some extra research or activity. I will distribute the question(s) and specific guidance at least two weeks before it is due. Typically, these papers should be five pages, typed, and double-spaced with normal margins and fonts. I expect these papers to be well organized, grammatically correct, and completely referenced.

**Late Papers:** If you do not turn in an analytic essay assignment on time for whatever reason, you can turn it in as much as one week later – but no later than that – for five fewer points than it would have received had it been on time.

**Maps:** To extend the way we think about and understand the food system, we will be exploring a variety of maps this semester. We will also be creating several of our own maps. Some will be based on our own experience; others may require some additional research and information gathering. More details on each of the map assignments will be provided in class.

**Term Papers and Presentations:** To provide you with an opportunity to research a topic of interest to you in greater depth, each student will produce a term paper and report on their findings in a brief oral presentation to the class at the end of the semester. The goal of a research paper is not to simply summarize what others have said about a topic. Rather it requires that you spend time investigating, evaluating, and interpreting those sources. In other words, you will draw on what others have said and engage them in a meaningful and thoughtful way in order to offer a unique perspective on the issue at hand. You may decide to collect some of your own data. I will say more in class about possible research topics, appropriate sources, style guidelines, and expectations for final product.

Undergraduates will produce term papers that are 12-15 pages in length, including references. Graduate students will produce papers that are 15-18 pages in length, including references, and I expect they will exhibit a greater level of theoretical and methodological sophistication.

**Paper Proposals:** You will submit a term paper proposal on **Tuesday, Feb. 25**. The more specific you are, the more helpful I can be in giving you feedback. I am happy to help you think about ideas during my office hours. I encourage you to attend office hours as you draft your proposal to bounce around ideas, especially if you feel stuck. Discussion, particularly with someone who asks good questions (it doesn't have to be me) can be one of the most valuable tools for developing your own thinking. As you consider about what you want to look at, remind yourself that you can only do so much in this brief period of time. I suggest you define your topic as narrowly and specifically as you can. Please include the following in two to three pages:

- (1) Identify the specific research topic or question you want to explore.
- (2) Discuss briefly why you think it is significant;
- (3) Describe what you will do to answer the question of interest;
- (4) Include a preliminary bibliography.

**Outlines and Bibliographies:** An outline of your term paper and an updated and annotated bibliography is due on **Tuesday, March 18**. I will say more in class about how to develop and present an effective outline, and what an annotated bibliography should look like.

**Presentations:** During the last few weeks of the semester, you will also make a short, formal presentation on your research/project to the class. Be creative!

**Final papers are due during our final session (see note on Schedule re: Monday May 12).**

**Graduate students:** I expect a greater level of sophistication and synthesis in your papers. In addition, each graduate student will have responsibility for taking a leadership role for 30 minutes in one class session (as part of your participation requirement). This might involve: (1) facilitating a discussion using specific questions that help clarify and engage with the central points in the readings, (2) making a short presentation that augments the assigned readings, and/or (3) creating a participatory exercise that engages the class participants in some unique way. Let me know which sessions you are interested in ASAP.

**Grading:** There are a total of 300 possible points; letter grades will be assigned accordingly.

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>
➤ Class participation (i.e., attendance, contributions to class discussions, leadership)	50
➤ Two analytic essays (50 points each)	100
➤ Term Paper – presentation	50
➤ Term Paper	50
➤ Other requirements and assignments (proposal, outline & bibliography, maps, reading responses, in class assignments)	50

**A note on plagiarism:** Academic honesty and integrity are essential. The student code of conduct expressly forbids plagiarism, which is the representation of another person’s work as your own. It will not be tolerated in this course, and any student whom I suspect of plagiarizing will be subject to the procedures and consequences described in the student conduct code.

**Guest Speakers:** Several guest speakers may be added as appropriate.

**Other Activities:** If there is sufficient interest among the members of the class, we may want to organize a field trip, participate in a service project, and/or have a potluck.

**COURSE MENU**  
SUBJECT TO CHANGE IF NECESSARY

**Tues., Jan. 28 – What’s on Our Plate?**

**PART ONE: AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**Thurs., Jan. 30 – Agrarianism and Industrialism**

Lyson, Thomas. 2004. “From subsistence to production.” Pp. 8-29 in *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*. Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.

Berry, Wendell. 2001. “The whole horse.” Pp. 63-79 in *The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life*, edited by Eric T. Freyfogle. Washington: Island Press.

**Tues. Feb. 4 – Agricultural Development: Structure and Markets**

Lyson, Thomas. 2004. “Going global.” Pp. 30-47 in *Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food, and Community*. Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.

Ogburn, Stephanie Paige. 2011. Cattlemen struggle against giant meatpackers and economic squeezes. *High Country News* March 21. Pdf is available on Moodle. Or go to this link and check out the photos and full story: [http://www.hcn.org/issues/43.5/cattlemen-struggle-against-giant-meatpackers-and-economic-squeezes/article\\_view?b\\_start:int=1&C=](http://www.hcn.org/issues/43.5/cattlemen-struggle-against-giant-meatpackers-and-economic-squeezes/article_view?b_start:int=1&C=)

Chace, Zoe. 2013. “Heard it Through the Grapevine: Raisin Grower Goes Rogue.” *Morning Edition, National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2013/08/16/211890383/heard-it-through-the-grapevine-raisin-grower-goes-rogue>. (You can listen to the radio story, but be sure to print the transcript.)

**Supplemental:**

Hendrickson, Mary and Mara Miele. 2009. “Changes in agriculture and food production in NAE since 1945.” Chapter 2.1, Pp. 20-29 in *Agriculture at a Crossroads: North America and Europe (NAE) Report*. International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD).

**Thurs., Feb. 6 – Credit to Modern Ag**

Hanson, Bob. 2010. “Give modern ag credit for full bellies, good stewardship.” *Great Falls Tribune* Feb. 10. Opinion-Editorial page.

McGovern, George. 2001. “A strategy to defeat world hunger.” Pp. 19-45 in *The Third Freedom: Ending Hunger in Our Time*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

TBA

**Tues., Feb. 11 – The State of Seeds**

Dillon, Matthew and Kristina Hubbard. 2011. “State of Organic Seed.” *Organic Seed Alliance*. Excerpts (pages TBA)

Monsanto. 2009. “Observations on Competition in the U.S. Seed Industry.” Retrieved from <http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/monsanto-submission-doj.aspx>. Excerpts (pages TBA)

TBA (on the DOJ’s investigation into Monsanto)

**Thurs., Feb. 13 – Tomatoland** pp. xiii-middle of page 51 (break)

**READING RESPONSE DUE (INSTRUCTIONS TBA)**

**Tues., Feb. 18** – *Tomatoland* pp. 51-95

**Thurs., Feb. 20** – *Tomatoland* pp. 97-152

**Tues., Feb. 25** – **TERM PAPER PROPOSALS DUE**

**Thurs., Feb. 27** – *Tomatoland* pp. 153 – 197

**Tues., Mar. 4** – **The Role of Data and Knowledge in Agriculture**

Berry, Wendell. 1984. “Whose Head is the Farmer Using? What Head is Using the Farmer?” Pp. 19-30 in *Meeting the Expectations of the Land*, edited by Wes Jackson, Wendell Berry, and Bruce Colman. San Francisco: North Point Press.

Khan, Lina. 2013. “Monsanto’s scary new scheme: Why does it *really* want all this data?” *Salon*. Retrieved from

[http://www.salon.com/2013/12/29/monsantos\\_scary\\_new\\_scheme\\_why\\_does\\_it\\_really\\_want\\_all\\_this\\_data/](http://www.salon.com/2013/12/29/monsantos_scary_new_scheme_why_does_it_really_want_all_this_data/).

Lexington Column. 2013. “Farming as Rocket Science.” *The Economist*. Retrieved from

<http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21584994-why-american-agriculture-different-european-variety-farming-rocket-science>.

**Thurs., Mar. 6** – **ESSAY #1 DUE**

## **PART TWO: CONSIDERING THE ALTERNATIVES**

**Tues., Mar. 11** – **Historical Context: Alternative Agrifood Movements**

**MAP PROPOSAL DUE**

Allen, Patricia. 2004. “Perspectives of alternative agrifood movements.” Pp. 21-49 in *Together at the Table: Sustainability and Sustenance in the American Agrifood System*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

**Thurs., Mar. 13** – **Ecological and Organic Agriculture**

Magdoff, Fred. 2007. “Ecological agriculture: Principles, practices, and constraints.” *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 22(2): 109-117.

Masumoto, David Mas. 1999. “Learning to fail.” Pp. 191-200 in *At Home on the Earth: Becoming Native to Our Place, A Multicultural Reader*, edited by David Landis Barnhill. Berkeley: UC Press.

Greene, Catherine, Edward Slattery, and William D. McBride. 2010. “America’s organic farmers face issues and opportunities.” *Amber Waves* 8(2): 34-40.

**Tues., Mar. 18** – **TERM PAPER OUTLINES AND BIBLIO’S DUE.**

**Thurs., Mar. 20** – **People, Food, and Place**

Kloppenborg, Jack R., Jr., John Hendrickson, and G.W. Stevenson. 1996. “Coming in to the foodshed.” *Agriculture and Human Values* 13(3):33-41.

LaDuke, Winona. 2007. “Ricekeepers: A struggle to protect biodiversity and a Native American way of life.” *Orion Magazine*. July/August. Retrieved online at:

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/305/>

**Tues., Mar. 25** – **Future of Seeds**

Painter, Ben. 2014. "Monsanto is Going Organic in a Quest for the Perfect Veggie." *Wired*. Retrieved from <http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2014/01/new-monsanto-vegetables/>.

Ray, Janisse. 2012. *The Seed Underground: A Growing Revolution to Save Food*. VT: Chelsea Green Publishing. Excerpts (pages TBA)

**Thurs., Mar. 27 – Montana Innovators**

Western, Sam. 2005. "A new green revolution: In Montana's dying farm country, 'vanguard agriculture' puts people back on the land." *High Country News* 37(24): 8- 13, 19

Haynes, George. 2011. "More Montana farmers are venturing toward the organic marketplace." *Montana Business Quarterly* 49(2):10-14.

Cohen, Betsy. 2009. "Raised on grass: Adapting to cattle markets, caring for Blackfoot Valley sustains generations of Mannix family." *Missoulian*. September 13.

Reading on Prarie Heritage Farm (posted to Moodle)

Supplemental

Meter, Ken. 2011. "Western Montana Local Farm and Food Economy." (Posted on Moodle)

**SPRING BREAK: Week of March 31**

**Tues., Apr. 8 – MAPS DUE**

*Rebuilding the Foodshed* Pp. TBA

**Thurs., Apr. 10 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed* Pp. TBA**

**Tues., Apr. 15 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed* Pp. TBA**

**Thurs., Apr. 17 – *Rebuilding the Foodshed* Pp. TBA**

**Tues., Apr. 22 – ESSAY #2 DUE**

**Thurs., Apr. 24 – PRESENTATIONS**

**Tues., Apr. 29 – PRESENTATIONS**

**Thurs., May 1 – PRESENTATIONS**

**Tues., May 6 – PRESENTATIONS**

**Thurs., May 8 – PRESENTATIONS**

**Monday, May 12, 8:00-10:00am – Final Exam period. FINAL TERM PAPERS DUE.**

**Note:** If it works for everyone, we will probably select another time to meet and have a final gathering and reflection on the course.