



# Early College Folio

Unconventional Paths to College Education

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## Teaching Food Studies in Early College Experiments in Collaboration

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In Fall 2022, a new course called Sustainable Local Food in Global Context was launched as part of the Center for Food Studies at Bard College at Simon's Rock under the auspices of the Open Society University Network's (OSUN) Collaborative Courses. Network Collaborative Courses (NCCs) bring together multiple OSUN campus partners for a shared classroom experience in a hybrid format. Each campus has a local section of the course with a common syllabus, and partner campuses meet online on a regular basis for structured collaboration. For the first time among OSUN courses, this NCC featured participation from early college faculty and students—Dr. Cynthia Brown at Bard Early College New Orleans (BECNO) and Dr. Maryann Tebben at Bard College at Simon's Rock. We were joined by Dr. Chii Lin at National Sun-Yat Sen University (NSYSU) in Taiwan and Dr. Guntra Aistara at Central European University (CEU) in Austria.

During the launch of this new course, we learned valuable lessons about collaboration across early colleges and in a hybrid setting, particularly in the area of food studies. The goal of this article is to share the pedagogical challenges we encountered and the best practices we learned in our experience teaching a common course to two different sets of early college students, each with distinct differences in the living and learning environment. Although the full NCC included participation from students in Taiwan and Austria, time zone challenges led to the decision to run two separate sections of this course: one that paired BECNO and Simon's Rock students, and another with students from Simon's Rock, CEU, and NSYSU. This article will focus on the collaboration between BECNO and Simon's Rock students.

Established in 2011, BECNO is a stand-alone early college program without an integrated high school component. BECNO students earn an associate degree from Bard College while co-enrolled in area high schools. Simon's Rock, which opened in 1966, is a residential, four-year early college offering associate and bachelor's degrees for younger scholars. Our thorough reflection of the

planning and execution of the NCC taps into the commonalities among and differences between our respective early college classes. We will present our methods for designing the course with these unique structures and students in mind, and share what worked in practice and what we would change. Major takeaways include our perspectives on structuring a collaborative learning environment across time zones, academic calendars, and unique course requirements; strategies for maintaining student engagement through topic selection and instructor-modeled co-learning; and approaches for juggling multiple learning management systems and differences in access to technology and other learning resources. We hope that our findings will be useful for faculty in early college programs who seek to collaborate with their colleagues to design a similar course.

## COURSE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

Initially, the course was designed as an expansion of a summer course called Sustainable Local Food in the Berkshires taught by Dr. Tebben at Simon's Rock in the Summer of 2021. The BECNO section of the course was modeled on an existing environmental studies course taught by Dr. Brown. When creating this course, we considered the age group (ages 16-18) and previous experience of each set of students; we selected discussion topics carefully with an eye toward inclusion. Namely, we wanted to avoid assumptions about issues of food insecurity in New Orleans as compared to rural Massachusetts, where Simon's Rock is located. Instead, we sought to broaden examinations of these issues and normalize them to every community, inviting BECNO and Simon's Rock students to weigh in equally from their own experiences. We did not avoid discussions of food and privilege or natural disasters (such as Hurricane Katrina), but presented them without making them campus-specific.

The key differences between this course and standard courses taught at our institutions included joint virtual course meetings once every other week and field trips to local farms, funded by a grant from OSUN. As faculty leaders, we designed common lessons for the BECNO/Simon's Rock virtual meetings, and each campus alternated leading the shared classes. Faculty from all four campuses individually arranged visits to three local farms or food organizations, and students in each section were asked to record their experiences with photos, videos, or written summaries and post them to Brightspace (the course management platform hosted by Bard College in Annandale for OSUN courses) so that the farm visits were "visible" to all students. The virtual gallery of farms from two states and three countries allowed students to make comparisons across regions and climates and to make direct observations about the state of local food in three other global settings.

Five shared unit themes guided the lessons we created for our individual courses (see Appendix A and Appendix B) and the common virtual sessions. The themes were open-ended enough to allow for flexibility on either campus.

The themes across all NCC sections were sustainability/ecology, the economics of food, social justice, culinary heritage, and food sovereignty. An additional theme, local food and food security, was added for BECNO and Simon's Rock since the start date of our common semesters gave us several extra weeks of class meetings. In addition, Dr. Brown was required to include a weekly lab section in her course, and Dr. Tebben required weekly written responses of her students on a course Moodle page.

David Blodgett and Marjorie Feld from Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts describe the creation of a collaborative course on sustainable food that consisted of two independently taught courses (Food Systems and Labor History) linked by a co-taught module of three consecutive course sessions in the middle of the term.<sup>1</sup> The module proposed to “integrate sustainability, ecology, and labor history into an exploration of current food and health insecurity among agricultural workers in the USA.”<sup>2</sup> Students from the two independent courses met only once as a group. During the remaining course sessions, students *considered* topics from both courses but did not meet again. Essentially, the Babson course focused on shared content rather than collaboration among students while our OSUN Network Collaborative Course focused on giving all enrolled students the same content and empowering them to find new perspectives by working together in a virtual classroom.

We sought to build upon additional recommendations from other educators when it came to developing a final project. The goal of the final project—and many of the unit themes—was to examine real-world food issues, particularly those with local impacts on the respective campuses (New Orleans and the Berkshires). As such, we were in line with the recommendation made by the George Washington Graduate School of Education and Human Development on collaborative projects: to choose real-world issues and “even better, select a problem from the students’ own community and challenge them to solve it.”<sup>3</sup>

Final projects were originally planned to be group projects with collaboration across the sections. In the end, the BECNO students worked together on a group final project on hydroponics, growing lettuce and tomato plants in their classroom, and Simon's Rock students worked individually on final projects but invited BECNO students to collaborate. One Simon's Rock student interviewed two BECNO students for her project on food access, and another student interviewed Dr. Brown as an expert on urban gardening.

## EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

Our approaches to the course design and structure, as well as the more overt pedagogical choices and techniques we employed, have been inevitably informed by our experiences as educators of early college students. Valuable partnerships and opportunities in these spaces contributed to our success with the NCC. As early college faculty within Bard, we were already experienced in

designing a course from scratch. We are lucky to have supportive administrators who allowed us to create a course that included elements of environmental studies and social studies courses but was entirely new to the BECNO and Simon's Rock curriculum. OSUN provided a grant for travel and housing for all four NCC faculty members to meet at Simon's Rock for three days to design a common syllabus. We highly recommend an in-person design session for those creating a new collaborative course to take advantage of the creative energy of the collaborating partners and to set up a successful semester. But where this is not possible, a series of focused virtual sessions could accomplish many of the same goals.

During the partner meeting, Dr. Brown and Dr. Tebben spent a half-day creating lesson plans for the BECNO/Simon's Rock weekly meetings, including specific course readings and activities. This session allowed us to see the whole course from beginning to end and to determine course content for the entire semester at one time. By the time the course started, we were able to focus our energies on troubleshooting and managing the virtual, collaborative classroom dynamic. We adapted content and design in real time as we learned which activities worked in the collaborative digital space and which did not, and adjusted to the students' needs and interests. Our standing weekly meeting, which occurred whether or not our classes met that week, gave us time to fine-tune the lesson plan.

At the start of the course, we noticed that the students were already familiar with and, in some cases, personally invested in some of the topics we had selected for the course, including food access and community-based food movements. They were aware of current food issues in their communities from current events, personal experience, and past classes. We encouraged students to share and build on their previous knowledge in the class and adapted our activities to bring these issues into focus. This approach, with an emphasis on flexibility and openness to student initiative, was a feature of the early college section of the course but not in the traditional-age college sections. Our partners at NSYSU and CEU preferred to keep the focus on predetermined readings and presentations, as they had a defined curriculum in mind.

Because our students were younger and accustomed to a less rigid classroom dynamic, they engaged productively with the same topics and with a high level of energy. The student-centered classroom structure allowed students to try out a new idea in discussion or attempt a shared activity (such as calculating the carbon footprint of their diet) and then apply this informal work to an evaluative writing assignment or a larger project of their own. In adapting this course to an early college environment, we created scaffolds for each assignment and devoted class time to draft work for the longer, written assignments. We also limited the number of readings we asked students to complete outside of class, preferring to use class time to examine these texts together. We chose shorter readings or excerpts, and opted for videos when possible. This worked

to introduce variety and maintain student interest. In this way, we aligned the work of the course with students' developmental abilities.

In the shared BECNO/Simon's Rock sessions, we observed that students were more engaged when our readings and activities addressed current events and locally based food topics or systems. Consequently, we asked students to research and share insights into their own communities as related to the larger topics we discussed. This approach—giving the students the status of local experts and putting current events front and center—created more engaging and dynamic discussions between the two classes. Brekken et al. call this approach “instructor-modeled co-learning” and suggest that it is especially appropriate in food studies courses that ask students to “approach complex problems for analysis, propose solutions, and work collaboratively in groups.”<sup>4</sup> The approach we took in our course supports the authors' idea that “co-learning allows instructors to behave as ‘facilitators of knowledge rather than holders of knowledge’, empowering students to be co-creators of knowledge.”<sup>5</sup> The co-learning model can be particularly successful in an early college environment that attempts to break down hierarchies and make students agents of their own learning, as we did in this course and as we do in our daily teaching at BECNO and Simon's Rock.

## CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Our shared virtual meetings were sometimes chaotic. They worked best when students led the discussion, as the BECNO students did when giving shared presentations or when Simon's Rock students shared videos and led breakout room discussions. We did encounter some technical difficulties, namely multiple students sharing screens in one classroom. Not all students had access to an individual laptop in class, which prevented students from seeing and hearing each other. We recommend procuring dedicated laptops or Chromebooks for the class to ensure accessibility, something we will do in the future.

The topics that worked best for our course, as mentioned in earlier sections, were those relevant to students' local food environments. In the future we will devote more time to the foodways of New Orleans and the Berkshires in a targeted way. For example, we might ask students to edit their “home page” on Brightspace to feature their city or region as a showcase for collected ideas and information.

The topic of food access worked well when we presented it as a global issue; however, students did not have much to contribute when they were asked about their own communities. Perhaps this question was too personal or perhaps students did not have direct knowledge of the issue. We would do more background preparation for this topic in the future, possibly pairing the theme with a visit to a local nonprofit that addresses food access or a guest speaker with relevant knowledge on this topic.

To illustrate global food insecurity, we used a set of videos from the Pulitzer Center with case studies in Guatemala, India, and Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Students watched the videos together in class in breakout groups (one video per group) and then brainstormed possible solutions to the problems presented in the videos. Simon's Rock students hosted the videos on their own laptops and led the breakout groups, which allowed the BECNO students to share a screen if needed and talk to each other about possible solutions. The smaller groups then presented the issues to the larger group, along with any solutions they had proposed during the breakout session.

Research done "live" rarely worked in class; students did not have enough time nor could they narrow down their searches quickly enough. In order to make a research activity more successful, we recommend pre-selecting a set of resources to guide students in their research or asking students to complete a question set before class. In our session on the economics of family farms, students seemed to have trouble relating to the issue and did not engage with the discussion. We might have had more success if we had previewed the topic with more information about the economics of farming and the cost of food or selected an article that addressed the issue from the point of view of the consumer rather than the farmer.

While our initial attempts at engaging students in research didn't work as planned, we were still able to find ways to introduce them to useful resources. For example, in a class discussion about holiday foods, we not only asked students to share their personal favorite dishes at the holiday table, we also used *AtoZ World Food*, a database of global food formatted as an encyclopedia, to add more context and depth to the discussion. This sort of directed research during class time was successful; sharing ideas about holiday foods prompted robust discussion at the end of the semester when the December holidays were around the corner.

A common learning management system for sharing across campuses is helpful but not foolproof. Brightspace was the common platform for content sharing across all NCC partner campuses, but in practice, sharing was limited to postings by individual students from the aforementioned field trip visits and reactions to these posts by some students. Dr. Tebben required her students to respond to field trip posts from all of the member campuses, but there was little direct interaction between Simon's Rock and BECNO students on Brightspace. Dr. Brown posted the results of her students' field trips at the end of the term since these visits occurred later in the semester than the other campuses' field trips due to scheduling difficulties. Ultimately, BECNO students were not as present on the Brightspace page as we would have liked.

Each group of students answered discussion questions on their campus-specific learning management systems (Canvas for BECNO, Moodle for Simon's Rock); therefore, these responses were not shared across the two classes. In the future we will find a way to tap into the separate discussion boards to learn



from each other and to seed class discussion. The Brightspace page might have been used in this way, perhaps with a discussion board reserved exclusively for BECNO and Simon's Rock students, but this method would require students to more frequently access two different LMS platforms for a single class.

Going forward, we will build in more participation with Brightspace from the BECNO students and use this resource for more meaningful collaboration. To support the use of Brightspace by BECNO students, the first lab session will include introductory training on Brightspace, and students will be required to load some of their lab projects and reports onto the course site. Additionally, during the first joint virtual meeting of BECNO and Simon's Rock students, we intend to include a warm-up activity using Brightspace to create a shared familiarity with this platform.

## BEST PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED

In the first virtual meeting, we asked students in breakout rooms to "Tell your breakout group something they wouldn't know about local food in your area." This sharing activity created common ground on each side of the Zoom meeting and gave us a starting point for defining the food system in each locale. Students were immediately encouraged to act as experts in the class for the students on the other campus.

Small group discussions in breakout groups were generally successful as long as students had access to laptops (even a shared laptop). This allowed the students to interact with each other on a peer-to-peer basis, without faculty input, to learn directly from each other and pursue the topics that came out of the discussion organically. These activities also gave insight into the different classroom dynamics on each campus.

In general, students seemed more comfortable discussing or presenting theoretical ideas about food than offering their own personal stories or examples from their own schools or neighborhoods (other than holiday foods). This may have been because the two groups did not know each other well enough, since the opportunities for true connection are limited in a virtual space. We might have asked students in each class grouping to analyze their local food spaces with each other and then present these findings as a collective group so as not to single out any specific personal experience.

Formal presentations with slides worked well to encourage student participation, particularly in the initial sessions before they became more comfortable in the shared learning space. BECNO students confidently offered slide presentations to give background information on specific topics. We used this approach early in the semester to allow BECNO students to summarize the work they had done in the four weeks of instruction before the Simon's Rock semester began. Each group of students prepared a presentation on their local agricultural or



food system as well; Simon's Rock students worked from a recent report on the Great Barrington food system, and BECNO students gave information from their own experiences and guest speakers/field trips. Alternating the responsibility of presenting material and hosting the discussions between the two campuses worked well because students took ownership of the course material and saw each other as equals in the classroom space. We observed this change during shared classes and outside of the shared space. During common sessions, students addressed each other directly and were comfortable asking questions of each other without mediation by the instructors. Students in each classroom took notes on the presentations given by the other group, just as they would if an instructor presented course material. Before shared class sessions, students on each campus contributed ideas for activities that they thought would be most successful in the shared space. They also expressed appreciation for the insights offered by students on the partner campus, noting that they would not have otherwise gained this information. One of our early goals for the course was to have students "take the podium" in class; in these shared sessions we noted that the students achieved this goal.

We endorse the practice outlined by Jennifer Browdy in her article describing teaching in OSUN Online Courses (OOCs): "Carefully scaffolding the assignments led to in-depth small group and full-group discussions, while building steadily towards the final research project and presentations."<sup>7</sup> When we teach this course again, we will scaffold final projects earlier in the semester and give students more freedom to collaborate with each other inside the classroom space (in our case, the Zoom breakout rooms). In future iterations of this course, we will scaffold and require a truly collaborative project or activity that requires full participation by all students on each campus. In their course, Blodgett and Feld asked students to work together to create a food label that "made clear the product was produced and grown responsibly, integrating all the factors discussed in [the] module."<sup>8</sup> We will consider a project-based final assignment with these parameters and align it with the goals of our course.

We also recommend taking a "problem-solving" approach to discussion topics and, in particular, final projects. In our course, we asked students to propose solutions to food insecurity in each locale by following our discussion with these prompts: *What issue deserves more attention? What community program could be useful elsewhere? How/what should we let the public know about the New Orleans or Berkshire food community?* These questions required students to educate themselves on what works and what doesn't work about food systems in their communities and to identify the obstacles to sustainability and food security in their local area. Students were then able to confront those obstacles in class and, ultimately, as educated citizens as they step into the world.

## OVERALL PERSPECTIVE

As peers from different early college institutions, we were thrilled to collaborate on this new course. As faculty leads, we found that working together to start a course from scratch was a deeply gratifying experience, and it was amazing to see it come together in a short window of time. Because we frontloaded course preparation and had the course well in hand before the semester began, we were more available to our students as faculty co-learners, and our students were able to engage more and experience more in this somewhat experimental format. We believe that our students gained a new perspective on teaching and learning from this course, inside and across their own campus cohort. Our collected effort created a valuable collaborative, shared adventure, one we hope to revisit as we teach the course again in Fall 2023.

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DR. CYNTHIA BROWN received her doctorate in Urban Forestry from Southern University A&M College in Baton Rouge. She also received her Master of Science in Urban Forestry, Master of Science in Criminal Justice, and Bachelor of Science in Sociology from Southern University A&M College. She enjoys research and believes that we are all lifelong learners.

DR. MARYANN TEBBEN is Professor of French and director of the Center for Food & Resilience at Bard College at Simon's Rock. She received her PhD in French Literature from the University of Southern California. Her research examines the relationship of food culture to national identity and her publications include three books on food history. She teaches courses on French language and literature and Food Studies.

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## NOTES

- 1 David M. Blodgett and Marjorie N. Feld, "Teaching an Interdisciplinary Course in Sustainable Food Systems: Science and History Meet in 'a World that Works,'" *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* (February 1, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-02-2020-0044>.
- 2 Blodgett and Feld, "Teaching an Interdisciplinary Course."
- 3 George Washington Graduate School of Education and Human Development, "10 Strategies to Build on Student Collaboration in the Classroom," (September 8, 2017), <https://gsehd.gwu.edu/articles/10-strategies-build-student-collaboration-classroom>.
- 4 Christy Anderson Brekken et al., "Writing a Recipe for Teaching Sustainable Food Systems: Lessons from Three University Courses," *Sustainability* 10, no. 6: (June 6, 2018): 1898, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10061898>.
- 5 Brekken et al., "Writing a Recipe."
- 6 Fred de Sam Lazaro, Pulitzer Center, "The Intersections of Insecurity in Nigeria, India, and Malawi," (2009), [pulitzercenter.org/projects/intersections-insecurity-nigeria-india-and-malawi](http://pulitzercenter.org/projects/intersections-insecurity-nigeria-india-and-malawi) and "World Focus: Guatemala's Children Languish from Malnutrition," (2009), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uKL-5BusGcM>.
- 7 Jennifer Browdy, "Scaffolding a Collaborative Humanities Classroom Online: Pedagogical Tools and Techniques," *Early College Folio* Vol. 1(2): 7, [digitalcommons.bard.edu/earlycollegefolio/vol1/iss2/5](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/earlycollegefolio/vol1/iss2/5).
- 8 Blodgett and Feld, "Teaching an Interdisciplinary Course."

## APPENDIX A: BECNO SYLLABUS

**SUSTAINABLE FOODWAYS LECTURE AND LAB | FALL 2022 | 4 CREDITS**

Instructor: Dr. Cynthia Brown  
 Office Hours: Tuesday and Friday, 11am to 1pm  
 Lecture Meeting: Room #306  
 Lab Meeting: Room #306  
 Email: cbrown@bec.bard.edu

**Course Description:** This course explores the theory and practice of sustainable eating in a local food system and around the world. Students will learn about sustainable agriculture and food in their local area and will meet virtually with students at partner campuses in Massachusetts (USA), Taiwan, Vienna (Austria), and New Orleans (USA). Collaborative sessions will give students access to a global perspective on food practices, local food, and farming, including agriculture. The course features field trips to local farms for interactive workshops with farmers and guest speakers. We will examine sustainable food from multiple perspectives: consumers, policymakers, and farmers/producers. The course will include oral presentations, short papers, and a collaborative final project. No prerequisites.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Teamwork, different cultural understandings of teamwork, how to assess teamwork
- Cultural competency
- Global learning and consciousness
- Project work and collaboration with OSUN partners, both cross-cultural and cross-institutional; understand the value of shared learning and collaborative work
- Develop an understanding of how sustainable local food varies across cultural contexts
- Develop an understanding of the value of local food
- Create a definition of “local” food for different global contexts
- Understand the complexities and contradictions of local foods and their ecological, social, and economic impacts
- Enjoy everyday experiences and share in related creative activities

**Learning Outcomes:** At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and appreciate the role of local food and agriculture in a global food system
- “Take the podium” by taking charge of presenting new information, take a role in leading the discussion in the assigned unit(s) for your campus
- Teach and learn from each other about the particularities and conditions of each global location in terms of local and sustainable food

- Assess and evaluate your own biases regarding local food and ways of eating
- Apply course content and integrated knowledge in a final project, e.g. propose a novel solution to a problem
- Integrate classmates' input to understand both the local and the global perspectives on food
- Evaluate the effect of a carbon footprint on agriculture and food consumption
- Identify cost-effective, ecological, socially just, and culturally competent food choices
- Build upon and synthesize the contributions of others on a team assignment or project
- Respond in writing in the forum to other students' comments and presentations

### **Units/Themes**

#### **Unit 0: Local Food and Food Security**

New Orleans, Louisiana  
Berkshire County, Massachusetts

#### **Unit 1: Sustainability**

Ecology  
Carbon Footprint/Organic

#### **Unit 2: Economics**

Food Waste  
Upcycling  
Circular Economy

#### **Unit 3: Social Justice**

Urban Agriculture  
Social Movements  
Farm Labor/Migration and Displacement

#### **Unit 4: Cultural Competence**

Nutrition and Local Food  
Fish Farming  
Culinary Heritage

#### **Synthesis**

Food Sovereignty

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

#### *Participation 10%*

- Class charter (What are my responsibilities? Zoom etiquette.)
- Participation is as equally valuable as the task
- Includes student self-assessment

*Discussion Leader 5%*

- Write initial questions/topics for discussion posts
- Lead in-class discussion in common sessions

*Discussion Posts 10%*

- Respond to readings/field trips and other collaborative work
- Reply to the initial post and someone else's post

*Collaborative Assignments 15%*

- Image Assignments: On Padlet, post an image that represents a course theme and write a one-sentence caption
  - Local food image: between joint sessions 1 and 2
  - Field trip images: ongoing, by section
- Respond to others' captions and comments (two posts minimum)
- Interview: Conduct your interview during Unit 2, 3, or 4; contact other students via Zoom or email
  - Rubric: 5-minutes, recording optional, 200-word written summary required with questions
  - Unit 2:
  - Unit 3:
  - Unit 4: What local food would you like to introduce to your international peers?

*Field Trips 20%*

- Assigned roles: Note-taking, 2-minute videos, annotated photos for Image Assignment, Farmer Questions
- Group posts a "Student Question" for responses
- Written reflection after each visit for the in-person group, comment board for others
- Farm visits: Conventional farm, organic farm, a seed-saving demonstration garden, fish farm, egg farm, food hub, urban farm

*Food Map 15%*

- Choose one item of produce or meat and map it. Where is it grown, shipped, or consumed?
- How can we "read" it through all four unit themes? [Synthesis week]

*Labs TBA*

- Create City-Lab In-Class Assignment
- Carbon Footprint Organic Food Worksheet Exercise
- Food Waste (How do you classify types of food waste?)
- In-Class Potting Planting (seasoning food)
- Social Movements In-Class Exercise
- Cultural Competency Group Class Discussion (survey exercise)
- Group In-Class Activity: Food Sovereignty Discussion PowerPoint

*Final Project 25%*

- Solve a problem: “How-to”; make a public presentation (podcast, video, infographic or story, image collage) and teach the broader public about this issue; popular science
- Option: Choose one unit theme (e.g. Ecology) to apply across both Bard Early College (New Orleans) and Simon's Rock (Massachusetts) and make conclusions for one campus/region
- The project must have a collaborative aspect, but may be completed with partners from your campus; use interviews and other collaborative assignments to build this element
- Groups may be divided into subgroups with specific assignments to support the group (different forms of participation); different roles in different weeks
- Brightspace or Padlet sign-up space with project ideas—volunteer to join a group
- Group assessment (how effectively did the group work: 1-5)



## APPENDIX B: SIMON'S ROCK SYLLABUS

**FOOD 205: SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD IN GLOBAL CONTEXT | FALL 2022**

Time/Room: M 8:30-10am Liebowitz 01; Th 2:40-4:05pm Classroom 11

Instructor: Maryann Tebben

Email/Phone mtebben@simons-rock.edu (413) 528-7219

Office Hours: MTW 12-1pm and by appointment

This course explores the theory and practice of sustainable eating in a local food system and around the world. Students will learn about sustainable agriculture and food in their local area and will meet virtually with students at partner campuses in Massachusetts (USA), Taiwan, Vienna (Austria), and New Orleans (USA). Collaborative sessions will give students access to a global perspective on food practices, local food, and farming, including aquaculture. The course features field trips to local farms for interactive workshops with farmers and guest speakers. We will examine sustainable food from multiple perspectives: consumers, policy-makers, and farmers/producers. The course will include oral presentations, short papers, and a collaborative final project. No prerequisites.

**Learning Goals:** During the course, students will:

- Undertake project work and collaboration with OSUN partners, both cross-cultural and cross-institutional; experience shared learning and collaborative work
- “Take the podium”; take charge of presenting new information; take a role in leading the discussion in the assigned unit(s) for your campus
- Develop an understanding of how sustainable local food varies across cultural contexts
- Develop an understanding of the value of local food
- Create a definition of “local” food in different global contexts; understand the complexities and contradictions of local foods and their ecological, social, and economic impacts
- Enjoy common experiences and share in related creative activities
- Work toward cultural competency with students outside their own campus

**Learning Outcomes:** At the completion of this course, students should expect to:

- Understand and appreciate the role of local food and agriculture in a global food system
- Identify cost-effective, ecological, socially just, and culturally competent food choices
- Teach and learn from each other about the particularities and conditions of each global location in terms of local and sustainable food
- Integrate classmates’ input to understand both the local and the

- global perspective on food
- Respond in writing in the forum to other students' comments and presentations
- Assess and evaluate own biases regarding local food and ways of eating
- Build upon and synthesize the contributions of others on a team assignment or project
- Apply course content and integrated knowledge in a final project; e.g. propose a novel solution to a problem

**Texts and resources:** See calendar

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

#### *Class Participation 10%*

- This is a collaborative course. Be prepared to share your thoughts on the readings and activities with others in class. All ideas are welcome.
- Classes will meet in person and on Zoom with OSUN partner institutions. On Zoom days, students may meet in the physical classroom or join from elsewhere; cameras must be turned on.
- Field trips will replace four class meetings. Times and dates will be announced in advance.
- Absences: Students are allowed two absences during the semester. Further absences will result in a written notice and significantly lower participation grade; after four unexcused absences, the student is at risk of failing and should consider dropping the course.

#### *Discussion Posts 15%*

- Responses: before class on Mondays, students submit a brief (150 word) response to assigned readings.
- Reactions: after class on Thursdays, students submit a brief (150 word) reaction to discussions.
- For OSUN collaborative Zoom sessions, students will respond after class to activities or discussions from class. Prompts will be posted on the discussion forum. Details on Brightspace page.
- Late policy: No late responses are accepted; responses must be received by the due date for credit, even if a student is absent from class.
- The two lowest grades on responses will be dropped.

#### *Collaborative Assignments 10%*

- Image assignments: students will post an image on Padlet and create a caption related to the Unit 1 theme or a Field Trip. Students will also write comments or responses to others' images.
- Interview: conduct an interview of a student in another OSUN group (Units 2, 3, 4) on the topics covered in this unit, to gain a new perspective on global sustainable food. Submit on Brightspace.

*Field Trips 20%*

- Students will prepare Farm Questions before each visit; participate in Q&A at the farm visit; and post a written reflection (usually answers to the FQs) using information gathered on the visit.
- Each student will also have an assigned role: note-taking, videographer, or photographer. Students will post the results of their assignment on Brightspace to share with other OSUN students.

*Reflections 2 @ 10%*

- Written reflections (500 words) on the course at midterm and end of the semester. Reflections should discuss the course themes (content) and your experience of the course activities (process).
- Reflect on the Learning Goals and Outcomes of the course. Which goals have you achieved? How has your knowledge of global sustainable food changed?

*Food Map 10%*

- Create a food map for one item of produce or meat—where is it grown, shipped, consumed? Maps may be written or visual with captions.
- Food maps should demonstrate how the food you chose relates to each unit theme.

*Final Project 25%*

- Students will work individually or in groups to create a project expanding on one of the topics discussed in class. Solve a problem or propose a solution: create a “how-to”; make a public presentation (podcast, video, infographic or story, image collage) to teach the broader public about this issue, etc.
- Each project must feature some collaboration with students from another OSUN campus; use interviews and other collaborative assignments, or consult with students directly.
- Projects may have visual components but must also include a narrative (500 words minimum), written process notes (250 words), and a full bibliography. Students are graded individually.

**Other Policies:**

- Academic honesty is valued at Simon’s Rock. All students are expected to know and uphold the College’s policies on academic dishonesty as described in the Catalog.
- Students with special needs are invited to access the resources offered by Win Commons and/or discuss any accommodations with the professor.
- The professor will notify students of any changes to the syllabus in class or via Moodle/Brightspace.

<b>WEEKLY FORMAT</b>	
<p>Monday 8:30-10am: Regular class meetings in LIE 01</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before class: read assigned text and write a response</li> </ul> <p><b>Zoom sessions</b> with OSUN students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During class: take notes; compile ideas for a final project.</li> </ul>	<p>Thursday 2:40-4:05pm: Regular class meetings in CLR 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before class: read assignment and take notes</li> <li>• After class: post Reaction to class discussion</li> </ul> <p><b>Zoom sessions</b> with OSUN students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After class: post Reaction to class discussion</li> </ul>

<b>TOPICS AND READINGS</b>	
<b>Week 1: Unit 0: Local Food</b>	
<p>Monday, 8/29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• APA (2010): <a href="#">Principles of a Healthy, Sustainable Food System</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">New England Food Vision</a></li> </ul>	<p>Thursday, 9/1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom session: BECNO</li> <li>• <i>Growing Better Great Barrington</i>, Executive Summary and Ch. 2</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2: Unit 0: Local Food and Food Issues</b>	
<p>Monday, 9/5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trip: Husky Meadows Farm</li> </ul>	<p>Thursday, 9/8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garduño-Díaz, S. (2020), Ch. 5</li> <li>• Food Systems Academy: <a href="#">Tim Lang</a></li> <li>• <i>Growing Better Great Barrington</i>, Ch. 3</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3: Unit 1: Sustainability</b>	
<p>Monday, 9/12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garduño-Díaz, S. (2020), Ch. 6</li> <li>• <a href="#">EAT-Lancet Commission</a> on Food, Planet, Health</li> </ul>	<p>Thursday, 9/15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom session: BECNO</li> </ul>

<b>Week 4: Unit 1: Sustainable Local Food</b>	
Monday, 9/19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> <li>• Searchinger, et al., <i>World Resources Report: Executive Summary and Ch. 1</i></li> </ul>	Thursday, 9/22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edwards-Jones, G. (2010) <a href="#">“Does eating local food...?”</a></li> <li>• Schläpfer-Miller and Dahinden (2017), <i>Climate Garden 2085</i></li> <li>• Guest speaker: Nick Martinelli, Marty’s Local</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5: Unit 1: Ecology</b>	
Monday, 9/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trip: April Hill Farm</li> <li>• Field trip: Dandelion Hill Farm</li> </ul>	Thursday, 9/29 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom session: BECNO</li> </ul>
<b>October Break: October 1-8</b>	
<b>Week 6: Unit 2: Economics of Food</b>	
Monday, 10/10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest speaker: Steve Browning, chef</li> <li>• Berkshire Zero Waste: <a href="#">Composting in the Berkshires</a></li> <li>• Reflection #1 due</li> </ul>	Thursday, 10/13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borlaug, N. E. (2000) <a href="#">“Ending World Hunger”</a> <i>Plant Physiology</i> 124 (2)</li> <li>• NASEM (2021) <a href="#">Building a More Sustainable...Food System</a>, Ch. 5</li> <li>• Saturday, 10/15: Attend Think-FOOD conference</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7: Unit 2: Food Waste</b>	
Monday, 10/17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> </ul>	Thursday, 10/20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom session: BECNO</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8: Unit 3: Food and Social Justice</b>	
Monday, 10/24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trip: Berkshire Organics</li> </ul>	Thursday, 10/27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Insecurity (Pulitzer Center)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Black Food Justice</a> (“About Us”)</li> <li>• Motta, Renata (2021) “Social movements as agents of change” <i>Sociological Review</i> 69 (3): 603-625</li> </ul>

<b>Week 9: Unit 3: Food and Privilege</b>	
Monday, 10/31 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> </ul>	Thursday, 11/3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: BECNO</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10: Unit 4: Culinary Heritage and Nutrition</b>	
Monday, 11/7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peña, “Indigenous Agroecology” in Mihesuah, ed. (2019) 276-299.</li> <li>Johnston et al., (2014) <a href="#">“Understanding Sustainable Diets”</a>, <i>Advances in Nutrition</i>, 5(4): 418-429</li> <li>Final Project proposals due</li> </ul>	Thursday, 11/10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop activities for 11/14 session</li> <li>Podcast: <a href="#">Seeds, Grief, and Memory</a>, Rowan White, from “Finding Our Way”</li> <li>Meneley, A. (2021), “Hope in the ruins: Seeds...regeneration.” <i>EPE: Nature &amp; Space</i> 4 (1): 158-172.</li> <li>Videos: Winona LaDuke, <a href="#">Food Sovereignty for the Ojibwe</a> (4 mins) and <a href="#">Seeds our Creator Gave Us</a> (25 mins)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11: Unit 4: Cultural Competence</b>	
Monday, 11/14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> <li>Oldways <a href="#">“Health Studies”</a> (choose one study)</li> <li>Reflection #2 due</li> </ul>	Thursday, 11/17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: BECNO</li> </ul>
<b>November Break: November 19-26</b>	
<b>Week 12: Final Project Work</b>	
Monday, 11/28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> <li>Food Map due</li> </ul>	Thursday, 12/1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: BECNO</li> <li>Final Project draft due</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13: Synthesis</b>	
Monday, 12/5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> <li>Timmerman (2013), <a href="#">Where Am I Eating?</a></li> </ul>	Thursday, 12/8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoom session: BECNO</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	
Monday, 12/12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project gallery/Q&amp;A</li> <li>Zoom session: CEU/NSYSU</li> </ul>	Thursday, 12/14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final reflections</li> <li>Presentation of projects</li> </ul>