

**POLI 359**  
**Special Topics in Comparative Politics: The Politics of Food in the US  
and Spain**

Fall 2019

Monday 11:15am-1:45pm

Trujillo, Spain

Instructor: Kendra Stewart, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

Why is it that everyday US schools battle with both childhood obesity and childhood hunger? How have government policies shaped the growing, distribution and processing of food in the US and Spain and how does that affect the health and wealth of citizens and local communities? This course will delve into these and other questions surrounding issues of nutrition policy, hunger, farming practices, food waste and community activism. From the global to the national to the local level, food policy will be examined along with the important social problems stemming from policies and potential solutions developed to deal with these problems with a focus on the US, Spain and the EU.

This study abroad experience provides students with the unique opportunity to observe first-hand how food systems are similar and different between the US and Spain. You will use the perspectives developed over time as CofC students and US residents along the academic readings from class to make observations about how the Spanish deal with some of the same challenges we do in the US. A variety of experiential learning opportunities will take place over the semester in order to develop a deeper understanding of the culture and role of food in Spain.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the evolution and basic issues and challenges surrounding food creation and distribution;
- Critically evaluate food policy in the United States and Spain;
- Demonstrate an understanding of how communities in the US and abroad deal with issues of food insecurity;
- Display skills in critical analysis and effective communication.

Required Course Materials

- 1) Paarlberg, Robert, *Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. 2010 Oxford Press.
- 2) Pollan, Michael, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. 2007 Penguin Books.

- 3) Trimlett, Giles, *Ghosts of Spain: Travels through Spain and its Silent Past* 2008 Walker & Company.

Other readings can be found electronically on OAKS.

Attendance and Participation: **Regular class attendance is absolutely necessary** in any course, but is critical in this class. You must keep up with the readings, in-class assignments, and course projects. Please feel free to ask questions in class – I will do everything I can to help you succeed so do not hesitate to come see me if you are struggling or falling behind.

#### Assignments and Grading

Students are expected to read all assignments prior to class and participate in discussions. Your final grade will be based on the following components of the course:

#### **Participation:**

Each student will be expected to come to class prepared and participate. This course will be taught as a seminar, not a lecture, with the intent that students will be active in the course discussions. This course is an opportunity for us to learn together and from each other, rather than in the more traditional model. In order to develop and ensure this type of environment, participation will be encouraged and graded through two means.

First, throughout the semester there will be six reading reflections worth a total of 90 points (15 points each). The purpose of these 1-2 page reflections is to encourage you both to read the material for class and to provide analysis based on your experiences in Spain. **You can pick which reading assignments you would like to do but they must be turned in through dropbox prior to the class of the discussions.**

Second, each student will be expected to lead class discussion one time over the course of the semester. This will mean that you come to class with a series of questions/reflections stemming from the day's reading to steer the conversation for that class period. You should have 3-5 questions/reflections that showcase your reading and comprehension of the material under review and highlight that you have been thinking about the reading and its application to your experience in Spain. There are no perfect questions, only questions that suggest you are engaged and challenging yourself to think through the political, economic, historical, geographic and other facets of food policy. In that sense, questions like "what was the central argument in Nestle's chapter 5?" will not be acceptable. While questions that help the class to understand the industrialization of farming such as "how does Nestle draw an analogy between industrial processing of corn and our digestive system, and how is this process advantageous?" would show that you are really thinking. There are no right or wrong answers and it is possible to err in your interpretation of the readings, and you will not be penalized for that. In order to help me understand where I may need to assist you in leading class discussion I need you to email me your questions by 8:00 am the morning you are presenting. Do not expect to hear back from me unless there is a major problem with your discussion questions/reflections. Your class session will be worth 10 points.

**Participation grade total: 100 points**

### **Final Project: Research Paper**

Over the semester you will undertake an independent research project to investigate some aspect of food insecurity, food policy or community response to it. As part of your grade you will do a brief presentation on your research paper findings. A separate handout will have the specific requirements for your project and presentation. The final paper is due the last day of class. **Research project total: 100 points**

**Exams:** Knowledge of the course readings and discussions will be tested on midterm and final exams (100 points each). Make-up exams will not be given unless permission is received prior to the exam, or there is a documented medical emergency. **Exam grade total: 200 points**

Because this is a discussion-based course out of respect for each other **no electronics are allowed** during class. This will also help you learn and absorb more in class. If you have a documented disability or extenuating circumstance and need an exception to this, please let me know.

***All late assignments will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are late. Assignments that are more than 5 days past due will not be accepted.***

The course grade will break down as follows:

Participation	100
Midterm exam	100
Final exam	100
<u>Research Project</u>	<u>100</u>
 TOTAL	 400

The following grading scale will be used:

A 372-400	A- 360-371	B+ 352-359
B 332-351	B- 320-331	C+ 312-319
C 292-311	C- 280-291	D+ 272-279
D 252-271	D- 240-251	F 239 and below

### Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, or presenting another's works or ideas as one's own, is a form of stealing. The instructor reserves the right to examine any source used by the student before giving a grade on an assignment, and to give an "incomplete" in the course if necessary, to allow time to obtain sources. Students should be prepared to show source material to the instructor for the purpose of verifying information. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and students will receive an F on any assignment or exam the instructor determines is in violation of the academic honesty policy. Academic dishonesty includes the following offenses:

- 1) Claiming as your own work a paper written by another student.
- 2) Turning in a paper that contains paraphrases of someone else's ideas but does not give proper credit to that person for those ideas.
- 3) Turning in a paper that is largely a restatement in your own words of a paper written by someone else, even if you give credit to that person for those ideas. The thesis and organizing principles of a paper must be your own.
- 4) Turning in a paper that uses the exact words of another author without using quotation marks, even if proper credit is given in a citation, or that changes the words only slightly and claims them to be paraphrases.
- 5) Turning in the same paper, even in a different version, for two different courses without the permission of both professors involved.
- 6) Using any external source (notes, books, other students, etc.) for assistance during an in-class exam, unless given permission to do so by the professor.

*College of Charleston Honor Code and Academic Integrity*

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>

### Disability Statement

If there is a student in this class who has a documented disability and has been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP Services, please feel free to come and discuss this with me during my office hours. If you are in need of accommodations for this course due to a disability, please contact the Center for Disability Services at [SNAP@cofc.edu](mailto:SNAP@cofc.edu) or (843) 953-1431.

### Course Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary adjustments to this schedule. Required texts are listed by the last name of the first author. E-reserve readings can be found in OAKS under “Content.”

<b>Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<i>September 9</i>	<i>Introduction &amp; Syllabus Review</i> In class discussion Paarlberg Chapter 1 OAKS: 1) Nestle Introduction 2) Winne Chapter 2 “How a National Food Policy Could Save Millions of American Lives” <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-a-national-food-policy-could-save-millions-of-american-lives/2014/11/07/89c55e16-637f-11e4-836c-83bc4f26eb67_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-a-national-food-policy-could-save-millions-of-american-lives/2014/11/07/89c55e16-637f-11e4-836c-83bc4f26eb67_story.html</a>
<i>September 16</i>	<i>Introduction to Food Politics</i> Paarlberg Chapters 2, 5 & 8 OAKS: 1) Nestle Chapters 1, 2, & 3 2) Lang, etc. Chapter 7 “Dems Prep for Major Fight” <a href="https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/348931-dems-prep-for-major-fight-over-trump-usda-science-pick">https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/348931-dems-prep-for-major-fight-over-trump-usda-science-pick</a> Food based dietary guidelines in Spain <a href="http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/spain/en/">http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/spain/en/</a>
<i>September 23</i>	<i>Culture, Politics &amp; Food</i> Pollan Introduction through Chapter 7 Trimlett Introduction through Chapter 3 Paarlberg Chapter 10
<i>September 30</i>	<i>Food and the Land</i> Pollan Part II Paarlberg Chapters 9 & 12 “Five Myths About Corn”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-corn/2019/08/09/14242b1c-b9ea-11e9-a091-6a96e67d9cce\\_story.html?wpisrc=nl\\_rainbow&wpmm=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-corn/2019/08/09/14242b1c-b9ea-11e9-a091-6a96e67d9cce_story.html?wpisrc=nl_rainbow&wpmm=1)

“Why Your Organic Milk May Not be Organic”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/why-your-organic-milk-may-not-be-organic/2017/05/01/708ce5bc-ed76-11e6-9662-6eedf1627882\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/why-your-organic-milk-may-not-be-organic/2017/05/01/708ce5bc-ed76-11e6-9662-6eedf1627882_story.html)

*October 7*

*The Ethics of Food*

Pollan Part III

Trimlett Chapters 5-7

“Deaths of Farmworkers in Cow Manure Ponds...”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/deaths-of-farmworkers-in-cow-manure-ponds-put-oversight-of-dairy-farms-into-question/2017/09/24/da4f1bae-8813-11e7-961d-2f373b3977ee\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/deaths-of-farmworkers-in-cow-manure-ponds-put-oversight-of-dairy-farms-into-question/2017/09/24/da4f1bae-8813-11e7-961d-2f373b3977ee_story.html)

*October 14*

*Please note this class will meet 9:30-10:45 am*

***Midterm Exam due***

***Guest Speaker – Bob Seidler***

*October 21*

*Agribusiness*

Paarlberg Chapters 11 & 14

OAKS: 1) Nestle Chapter 4 2) Schlosser Chapter 7

USDA Inc.: How Agribusiness has Hijacked Regulatory Policy at the US Dept. of Agriculture:

<http://www.nffc.net/Issues/Corporate%20Control/USDA%20INC.pdf>

*October 28*

***No Class – Fall Break October 25-November 3***

*November 4*

*Food Safety & Food Loss*

*Film*

Paarlberg Chapter 13

OAKS: 1) Corner on Food Loss 2) Food Loss on the Farm

3) Hallmark of a Sustainable Farming Industry

4) Analyzing Retail Food Loss 5) Food Loss and the

American Household, 6) What to do about Food Loss

“The Staggering Environmental Footprint of all the Food that we Just Throw in the Trash”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2018/04/18/americans-waste-about-a-quarter-of-the-food-they-buy-and-the-environmental-consequences-are-staggering/>

“USDA Pilot Program Fails to Stop Contaminated Meat”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/usda-pilot-program-fails-to-stop-contaminated-meat/2013/09/08/60f8bb94-0f58-11e3-85b6-d27422650fd5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/usda-pilot-program-fails-to-stop-contaminated-meat/2013/09/08/60f8bb94-0f58-11e3-85b6-d27422650fd5_story.html)

*November 11*

*Issues of Food Justice*

Paarlberg Chapters 3 & 6

OAKS: 1) Poppendick 2) Winne Chapter 8 3) Schlosser Chapter 8 4) Lang, etc. Chapter 8 5) Nestle Chapter 8

*November 18*

*Obesity & Hunger*

Paarlberg Chapters 4 & 7

OAKS: 1) Schlosser Chapter 5 2) Salt, Sugar, Fat 3) Nestle Chapter 9

“Reducing Childhood Obesity”

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/29/3/357.full.pdf+html>

“Latin America’s War on Obesity...”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/07/16/latin-americas-war-obesity-could-be-model-us/?utm\\_term=.37e855819607&wpisrc=nl\\_rainbow&wpmmm=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/07/16/latin-americas-war-obesity-could-be-model-us/?utm_term=.37e855819607&wpisrc=nl_rainbow&wpmmm=1)

*November 25*

*The Future of Food Politics*

Paarlberg Chapter 15

OAKS: Winne Chapter 10

“Walmart’s Answer to Aldi and Amazon...”

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-wal-mart-competition-aldi-amazon-20170619-story.html>

***Final Papers due***

***Research Presentations***

*December 2*

***Final Exam***