



Agricultural and Food Systems / Community and Rural
Sociology 445 / Soils 545 / Ag 445

Field Analysis of Sustainable Food Systems

3 semester credit hours

Catalog Description: Experiential course visiting farms, food processing and marketing facilities to develop understanding of issues and relationships of sustainable food systems. Cooperative course taught jointly by WSU and UI (AG 445).

Course Developer: Cathy Perillo and Cinda Williams

Instructor

Information:

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Course Materials: For catalog description, textbook information or course materials please click the link corresponding to the section in which you are currently enrolled.

- [AFS 445 Section 1](#)

Required Readings:

Assorted articles contained in a [Reading List](#) will be provided in electronic format and must be *read prior* to the start of the field experience. There will be several brief online discussions and a formal written essay assignment regarding the readings prior to the field experience. See details below (under *Assignments*.) Graduate students will have further readings and discussions in addition to the field component.

Note: Students enrolled in **Soils 545** will also have the following required reading:

The Paradox of Plenty: Hunger in a Bountiful World, by Douglas M. Boucher. 1999. ISBN-10: 0935028714; ISBN-13: 9780935028713

(this book is available from a number of retailers, including Amazon.com)

Course Overview

This is an intensive, experiential course with field visits to farms, food processing and marketing facilities to investigate and develop an understanding and analysis of issues and relationships for sustainable food systems. The course is offered as a hybrid of online and in-person experiences.

This course is open to academic students, as well as community members and agricultural professionals for continuing education credit. A key component of the course for all participants is a required, *week-long, in-person immersion field experience* outside of standard class meeting times. The remainder of the course activities and requirements are completed online. This is a multidisciplinary course taught by a multi-disciplinary team of faculty, who act as co-learners.

- **Undergraduate students** “begin” the course with a series of readings to be completed before the field component, followed by two group and one individual assignment due afterwards.
- **Graduate students** spend an additional portion of the term discussing scholarly work on the topic, in addition to the activities of the undergraduates.
- **Community members and agricultural professionals (“CEU students”)** attend only the field component, are not responsible for the written assignments, but are encouraged to complete the readings before the field component.

In-Field Component

This course contains a required week-long immersion field component. Dates of in-field component this year are: **March 14-21, 2009**. There are readings and a pre-field written reflection that need to be completed **prior** to the field component (see below). Upon registration you should receive information about how to acquire the readings. If this doesn't happen, make sure to contact one of the instructors listed above ☺

This year field visits will take place in **central Washington**, with a base camp in the Leavenworth area. (Final lodging facilities will be confirmed in late January.) We will meet there at 1:30pm, with formal class meeting beginning at 2:00pm. Additional logistics for the field component are listed further below.

Online Components

All other course activities are accessed and completed in an online course space hosted by WSU's Distance Degree Program (DDP) at www.blackboard.wsu.edu, regardless of how the student is registered. These activities apply to academic students only – though continuing education students can gain access with permission of the instructor for purposes of participating in post-field group assignments.

Prerequisites

Students taking this course for academic credit must be of Junior, Senior or Graduate standing, and have completed all science and social science GERs. Courses in environmental or agricultural sciences, economics, and/or sociology would be helpful but not required. CEU students do not need

to meet these pre-requisites, but should have an active interest in the topic and are advised to consult with the instructor to make sure the class is a good fit.

Course Goals

Develop and enhance our understanding of the components, connections, and changes occurring in our food systems, especially with respect to the environmental, economic, and social aspects of sustainability and community well-being.

Objectives:

We will address the above goal through careful observation, interaction, and discussion with farmers, food site managers, agricultural professionals, faculty and other students who share expertise and interest in food systems and sustainability. Upon completion of this course we will have:

- Worked with an investigative framework for analyzing the origin, impact and sustainability of agricultural, processing and marketing practices used on farms and in the food systems of the region.
- Explored ways to define, assess and interpret factors that contribute to greater sustainability of agricultural and food systems.
- Developed an understanding of the factors that go into decision-making at multiple scales.

Course Work

1. **Participation:** it is expected that students will be fully engaged with the course, most particularly during the week-long field study. The field component is an *immersion* experience and requires both extensive and intensive effort involving long days and sometimes short nights. We believe this investment of time is worth every minute and we trust that you will agree at the end of the week. Communication with other members of the filter and multi-disciplinary groups will be necessary to complete the final projects and written reports, which will require contact and collaboration after returning home. Discussion of the readings with your classmates is also an important preparatory piece in which you are expected to contribute. Additionally, an end-of-course project participation evaluation will be conducted by the peers in your group.
2. **Two Student “Reflection” Documents:** We think it is valuable not only to reflect on the observations and activities involved in this type of experiential course, but also to consider the learning process itself prior to, during the field study, and immediately following the course. In our fast-paced society we want to ensure that we each sit down and reflect on our knowledge, learning styles, etc. Each *learner document* should be a maximum of three pages, and should provide a window into the learning activities of this experience and your own role in the process.
 - A. **Pre-field Impressions:** (electronic document - due one week before field experience)
 - What do you already know about food systems and sustainability, and how did you learn this?

- Considering that in this class we are a group of co-learners, what do you see as **your** own strengths and expertise that you bring to the group? What do you most hope to learn from it?
- What were to you the three or four most important concepts or pieces of information you take away from the pre-field readings? (Might be specific info/concepts, reactions that you had to one or more of the readings, meeting a new author, etc.)

B. **Post-field Learner Document** (electronic document – due two weeks after field experience)

- What were your impressions and reactions to the lectures, to the large group discussions, and to the field trips and conversations with farmers and other professionals?
- How were the group dynamics? For example: when your filter and multi-disciplinary groups discussed choosing key questions for the site visits, when you summarized results after the visits, when you discussed what had been learned, and when you may have searched for consensus on conclusions about the different sites and their roles in sustainable food systems?
- What did you learn about your own role in a group activity?
- What did you learn about your own learning style?

Please ask the instructors if you have further questions about the format, content or intent of these documents.

3. **Filter Group Written Report:** Each *Filter Group* will be responsible for a collaborative written report **from their assigned filter (viewpoint)**. This document should provide a summary and intermediate analysis of the observations made during the field experience, and should be suitably constructed and referenced to serve as a resource document for your classmates who are in other Filter Groups. It may well be appropriate for you to bring in outside information (e.g., number of farms of a certain type found in the state, etc.) It will be important for you to make it clear which points are facts and observations, and which are analysis you (or others) have done.

Since you will not likely have an opportunity to be together in person after the field study concludes, you are encouraged to sketch out as much of your final report as possible during the field experiences, with subsequent work done via email drafts. **The final report should be completed by the group and submitted electronically to the instructors** no later than the due date specified below.

4. **Multi-Disciplinary Group Presentation and Written Report:** On the final full day of the field component, you will be responsible, along with your multi-disciplinary group, for leading a **45-minute oral presentation/discussion/activity** based on the observations, analyses and interpretations that your group made during the week. Although some of the time can certainly be spent in "presentation mode" (Power Point or other such presentations are permitted) it is understood that you will also plan a significant amount of your time to **engage** the rest of the students and faculty in discussion and possibly other forms of constructive learning activities so that we all come to learn more. A faculty member will be appointed to serve as a "coach" in this process. Originality, creativity and innovation are

particularly encouraged!!

Following completion of the field component of the course, the multi-disciplinary teams will be responsible for further developing their ideas (presented above) in the form of a final Multidisciplinary Group **written report**. Your team will continue to work together (likely electronically via email or online discussion forum) for the creation of this report. You should include the ideas and concepts put forth during the presentation, as well as any additional insights developed from interactivity with the audience. The completed filter reports, course readings, and other outside materials are important additional sources of information that should be included as relevant. Your faculty coach will continue to be available for consultation during this process.

The final report should be no more than 15 pages, double-spaced, not counting supplemental tables or figures. You should cite references in an appropriate fashion and a reference list should be included with each report. The report will be due **4 weeks after completion of the field component** (see exact date below).

5. ***Additional Academic Analysis (Graduate Students only)***

Students taking the course for graduate credit have the following additional requirements. Evaluation criteria for these written and oral presentations will follow the criteria given above. The details of this work will be given at the start of class.

Additional graduate credit requirements:

- Facilitation of one discussion 10%
- Written analysis presented in discussion area: 10%
- Written responses to classmates' written analyses across all discussions: 5%
- Graduate reflection 5%

Continuing Education Students - Assignments, Evaluation and Credit

Community members and agricultural professionals not taking the course for academic credit are considered *Continuing Education Students*, and will earn CEU credits for participation (formal registration paperwork will be completed during Day 1 of field component). Full participation and engagement in the week-long field study is key to developing an understanding of interconnections in the food system. Therefore, full participation in the site visits, the group discussions (large and small), as well as participation in the filter and multi-disciplinary groups, and **participation in the Multi-disciplinary Group Presentation** are required to obtain the Continuing Education Credits. All of these occur during the week-long field study. Subsequent participation in developing written products is encouraged, but not required. CEU participants must attend all site visits and other course activities during the field study to receive CEU credit.

Grading

Letter grades will be based on completion of all course activities, using the following distribution:

Course Activity	For Undergraduate Credit	For Graduate Credit
Participation: During field component, and in pre-field discussions	15%	15%
Two <i>Student Learner</i> Documents	15%	10%
Filter Group Written Report	30%	20%
Multi-Disciplinary Group Presentation and Written Summary	40%	25%
Additional Academic Analysis (Graduate credit only)	Not Applicable	30%
TOTAL:	100%	100%

Course Grade Scale

Grade	Percent of Final Grade	Grade	Percent of Final Grade
A	93–100%	C	73–76%
A–	90–92%	C–	70–72%
B+	87–89%	D+	67–69%
B	83–86%	D	60–66%
B–	80–82%	F	59% & Below
C+	77–79%		

Incomplete Policy

In order to be considered for an incomplete, a student must complete at least 60% of the assigned course work and must have a mathematical possibility of passing the class. A passing grade is 60 percent or above for the entire course.

If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the professor/ instructor retains the discretion to grant an incomplete even if the minimum conditions outlined in item 3 above are not met.

Late work is accepted. However, a point for each day it is late will be docked. If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the professor/ instructor retains the discretion to waive a portion of this penalty.

Academic Regulations

Students enrolled in distance courses are subject to the same WSU academic regulations as on-campus students. A complete listing of the WSU academic regulations are available online ([Academic Regulations](#); select "Printable" next to "List All Academic Regulations" to view a printable list of all regulations).

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Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university. You assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work you submit. You may collaborate with classmates on assignments, however the guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that your submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be your own work. Any student who violates WSU's standard of conduct relating to academic integrity ([Academic Integrity Standards and Procedures](#)) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and may fail the course.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Pullman campus students can work directly with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), and DDP and the DRC work together to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have documented disabilities and who are registered both with DDP and the DRC. DDP's liaison to the DRC will assist DDP students started. To begin this process, contact DDP (800-222-4978 or distance@wsu.edu). We strongly recommend that you notify us as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center.

If you have questions, please contact Robert Crawley at crawleyr@wsu.edu or 509-335-1566. Additional information is available on the DRC website: <http://www.drc.wsu.edu>.

Online Collaboration

Threaded discussion posts in online course spaces are an integral part of online learning environments. In certain courses, assessment of discussion posts is included as part of the final grade.

WSU is committed to the rights of all community members to freedom of expression and academic freedom. In order to protect the rights of all participants and to preserve the educational tone of online course spaces, the following rules apply:

1. Postings must be germane to the subject matter.
2. Postings must comply with WSU's policy on appropriate use of computing resources: <http://www.wsu.edu/ElectronicPolicy.html>.
3. Illegal postings or postings that violate WSU policies, including those regarding harassment and discrimination or the Standards of Conduct for Students, are not permitted.

4. Postings that are threatening to others are not permitted.

Instructors have the authority to remove posts that violate these rules. Continued postings in violation of these rules may result in removal of access rights, course failure, and, when appropriate, referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Critical Engagement Criteria:

In addition to the netiquette guidelines for online collaboration, you will be expected to participate in the online discussions in a way that engages with the topic and with the other participants. An overview of the criteria used in this course to evaluate your participation through your original and response posts is provided in the online course space, if applicable.

Critical Thinking

The ability to think and write critically are essential skills in many walks of life. Critical thinking skills are developed and refined through practice, self-reflection, and the critique and support of peers and instructors. Throughout this course you will have many opportunities to exercise your analytical thinking, synthesize information, and apply knowledge to real-life situations. To help facilitate your thinking and writing, the "Critical Thinking Rubric" is provided in the online course space, if applicable, to assess your own writing and that of other students. Please review it carefully before completing each activity.

Technical Support

If you need technical assistance with this Blackboard course, please click on "Technical Support" on the menu at left.

Library Support

All students enrolled in Washington State University distance courses can use the WSU Libraries online databases and receive reference and research assistance from the Distance Degree Library Services (DDL). Enrolled students can also borrow books and other circulating material and receive photocopies of journal articles.

Visit the DDL Web page ([DDL](#)) for links to the WSU online database and library support information.

eTutoring

All WSU DDP students now have access to eTutoring.org, a tutoring platform that enables students and tutors to collaborate in an online environment. This is not a course requirement, but simply an available service you may opt to use as needed.

Resources include:

- Tutoring available for Accounting, Math, Statistics, Writing--and more!
- An Online Writing Lab that allows students to submit a draft of a paper to a tutor, ask for specific feedback, and receive a tutor's response within 24-48 hours.
- Live Tutoring via eChat that allows students to meet with a tutor in one-on-one tutoring sessions via a fully interactive, virtual online environment.
- Offline Questions that allow students to leave a specific question for an eTutor, who will respond within 48 hours.

The list of available tutoring subjects can be found on the <http://etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=176> site. For more information on accessing and setting up your eTutoring account, visit http://online.wsu.edu/current_students/as_tutoring_options.aspx.

DDP Student Help Centers

Students enrolling in courses through DDP are responsible for reviewing and following procedures outlined in the online [DDP Help Centers](#). Please pay close attention to the "Tuition and Fees" and "Resources and Tips" sections. Carefully reviewing the information in the Help Centers, especially the two sections mentioned, will give you a good head start in assuring success with your course(s).

DDP Academic Calendar

For detailed information about DDP academic and administrative deadlines, please refer to the DDP Academic Calendar ([Calendar Index](#)).

Course Schedule

For specific course work due dates associated with each week, please refer to the Course Schedule in the Navigation Bar on the left of the screen.

Schedule for Academic Students – Spring 2008
Field Analysis of Sustainable Food Systems
 (WSU Soils 445/545, UI Ag 445)

** Weeks run Monday through Sunday. Hence Sunday of Week 1 in 2009 is January 18*

Week*: date	Activities for ALL Students	Additional Activities for Graduate Credit
1: 1/12-18	Introducing ourselves	Purchase additional text
2: 1/19-25	--	Text Reading & Discussion (online) 1
3: 1/26-2/1	Discussion (online): pre-field readings 1	Text Reading & Discussion (online) 2
4: 2/2 – 8		Text Reading & Discussion (online) 3
5: 2/9 - 15	Discussion (online): pre-field readings 2	Text Reading & Discussion (online) 4
6: 2/16 - 22		Text Reading & Discussion (online) 5
7: 2/23 – 3/1	Discussion (online): pre-field readings 3	Text Reading & Discussion (online) 6
8: 3/2 - 8		Text Reading & Discussion (online) 7
9: 3/9 - 13	Pre-field reflection due Wed 3/11 Prepare for field component	Text Reading & Discussion (online) 8
<i>(WSU/UI Spring Break)</i> 3/14-21	In-field Component, Central Washington (Full week, 3/14-21)	
10: 3/23-29		
11: 3/30 – 4/5	Filter Group Report & Learner Document due 4/5	
12: 4/6 - 12		
13: 4/13 – 19	Multidisciplinary Group Report Due 4/19	
14: 4/20 – 26		Graduate reflection Due 4/26
15: 4/27 – 5/3		