

JSIS 478: The Real Cost of Food

Winter 2017 • University of Washington

Instructor: Taso Lagos

Overview

The purpose of the class is to find out how our local food system works and what can be done to improve it.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Why is healthy, nutritional food more expensive and difficult to find?
2. Why is it that an apple from New Zealand can be more cost effective and affordable than one grown in our own state of Washington?
3. What are the environmental, social and political costs of cheap food?
4. Can we realistically design a food system that delivers quality food at reasonable prices?

The class will start by regarding our eating habits and understand the relationship between food system and the kind of foods we eat.

Role of Service-Learning in the Course

The purpose of service learning in this class is to give students first-hand knowledge about food, how it is produced, distributed or provided to human beings.

Students will use their service-learning experiences to gather data on local food systems through their:

1. Firsthand experience at a service-learning organization
2. Participant observation during their time at the service learning organization
3. Conducting a few interviews with individuals connected to their service-learning organization that can provide further information about food systems

Assignments Related to Service-Learning

The Assignments:

1. Regular assigned readings
2. Group discussions of readings
3. Defining terms from readings as well as answering questions
4. Regular pop quizzes
5. Design diagrams that can summarize readings
6. Class debates
7. Class panels
8. Conduct 5 interviews with practitioners in the field of food systems
9. End of quarter presentations
10. Class thought papers

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