

PHE 268 : SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND NUTRITION

Transcript title

Sustainable Food and Nutrition

Credits

4

Grading mode

Standard letter grades

Total contact hours

40

Lecture hours

40

Recommended preparation

WR 065 or higher or minimum placement Wr/Comm Level 7.

Course Description

Farmer and author Wendell Berry once wrote that eating is an "agricultural act". It is also an ethical, social, political, and environmental act. In order to more fully understand the impact of our food choices, this course explores American food production from start to finish, past to present, and field to fork. Along the way we answer questions like: How does a plant grow? What is the difference between conventional vs. organic agriculture? How and why did our current food system develop? How much does a cheeseburger really cost? What and why is food biotechnology? Where can I buy a local head of lettuce or leg of lamb? And, ultimately, what should I eat?

Course learning outcomes

1. Sustainability outcome: Explain the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic systems in the context of agriculture and food production systems.
2. Sustainability outcome: Analyze the major environmental, social, and economic challenges and potential solutions of our time using a systems thinking approach.
3. Sustainability outcome: Apply principles of sustainability to the development of personal values and professional goals.
4. Debate controversial aspects of food production, including small versus large-scale agriculture, organic versus conventional farming practices, genetically-modified organisms, farm subsidies, and labeling laws; articulate and rationalize your thoughts using current scientific evidence.
5. Calculate the "true cost" of food, including direct and indirect costs (externalities).
6. Explore and reflect on the feasibility of local food production and gain an appreciation for issues facing Central Oregon farmers and producers.

Content outline

1. Foundations of sustainability: defining and measuring sustainability
2. Foundations of agriculture: overview of soil, fertilizer, plants, and water issues

3. U.S. food system: history, business principles, rationale, and externalities
4. Government policies: history and components of the U.S. Farm Bill, pros and cons
5. Organic agriculture: history, standards, pros and cons
6. Food biotechnology: history, labeling laws, pros and cons
7. Sustainable food systems: food-sheds, food sovereignty, permaculture, and economic benefits
8. Central Oregon food system: regional issues, farms, ranches, markets, CSAs, and retail outlets

Required materials

A textbook is required.

General education/Related instruction lists

- Social Science
- Health