

Food Justice: Eating our way towards equity

1. Course Content and Rationale

The intrinsic role food plays in our daily lives provides a strong foundation for discussing complex issues. In our SDS, *Food Justice: Eating our way towards equity*, we will explore food as a platform for engaging in social justice. We explore how inequities are reproduced and contested within food systems, unpack ideas relating to power and privilege, and work alongside peers to develop skill-sets such as active learning and reflexivity.

As a multidisciplinary concept, food justice framework will be used to investigate concepts from sociology, geography, anthropology, planning, social justice, agriculture and Indigenous studies. We employ feminist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial theory as a lens for unpacking the concepts within food justice; of trauma, land, labour and exchange¹. We commit to learning with and from marginalized people and non-academics and respecting different ways of knowing.

Offering this course at UBC is essential. We experience a gap in our knowledge and skills within the Faculty of Land and Food Systems (LFS) based courses. While courses such as LFS 350 introduce food justice at an introductory level, we currently see the need to enhance teaching on understanding and applying equity within the sciences to prepare students for holistic work as future food systems professionals.

The SDS is embedded within a larger TLEF project which will create a set of equity competency tools (ECTs) relating to food systems pedagogy. As part of the TLEF project, we are in the process of surveying the syllabi of 15 existing food justice courses in North America to inform the content and activities we will include in our SDS. For more information on the TLEF, visit www.ubcfarm.ca/just-food , and use the password: *justfood* . Our course objectives include:

- A. Explore and make connections to food justice with one's own experiences, academic knowledge and ways of engaging in society.
- B. Explore one's positionality and how that influences how one engages with food justice.
- C. Identify structural inequities in the food system and the repercussions of how these power relations disadvantage and advantage different groups unequally.
- D. Understand different scales of engagement with food justice, and identify avenues of action that fit in with one's values, beliefs and capacities.

2. Course Structure and Plans

The course will meet once a week for 3 hours. This allows in-depth activities providing students with time to process and reflect. We will act as co-coordinators in the course. Our fellow students will act as active students and co-educators, contributing knowledge and experiences for the growth of the group. This will be clearly communicated at the onset of the SDS where students will be informed of their role as active facilitators.

We will help shape a democratic learning environment by centralizing peer to peer decision making and providing a basic framework for the seminar to explore ideas and concepts within. This translates to a system of communication where participants are consistently able to provide ideas and insight into how the classroom can be shaped to support creativity, critical thinking, and challenging pre-existing beliefs. We

¹ Cadieux, K. V., Slocum, R., & Cadieux, K. V. (2015). What does it mean to do food justice? What does it mean to do food justice? *Journal of Political Ecology*, 22, 1–26.

will communicate using Canvas discussion boards to help facilitate additional resource sharing, and also utilize anonymous feedback forms.

Attached is our course plan including weekly themes and relevant reading materials. The first six classes sets a foundation by introducing food justice and highlighting the major structural injustices in the food system. After the first two introductory classes, four classes will go through the themes outlined in Cadieux and Slocum's "What does it mean to do food justice?": Trauma & Equity, Labour, Land, and Exchange. The following six classes will include case studies to contextualize these theoretical concepts, using intersectionality as a lens for unpacking the themes, with examples of collective actions and interventions woven throughout. The final case studies will be co-created by the students. Students will choose 2-3 topics related to food justice and then work together to research and compile case studies, following a similar format to the previously introduced case studies. The last class will focus on attainable actions that students can take to enact food justice in their lives and students will have time to work on their final projects and fill out a course evaluation and reflection activity. Each session will have the following elements: cooking a relevant recipe cooked together to create a personal connection to the topic, a discussion of reading materials and an interactive, peer-led activity or a guest lecture.

The first two weeks of class will proceed as outlined below:

Week 1 Course and Food Systems Introduction?

- **Objective:** Introduce syllabus (establishing rubrics, grading, and readings) and seminar structure and the concept of food justice; introduce and [problematize](#) the food system
- **Activities:** Discussion: Tea time - Labrador tea & sugar (open discussion on student's conceptualization and familiarity with the food system and food justice issues); Introductory Activities - activities designed to get students comfortable with one another and to question power in the classroom; mapping [UBC's Food System](#)
- **Assessment:** weekly reflection, participation
- **Resources:** [Sugar as a commodity](#), [Shifting Agrifood Systems: A Comment](#)

Week 2: What is Food Justice? And what do people conceive it to mean?

- **Objective:** establish a democratic learning environment and 'brave space' agreement; introduce the course framework from Cadieux and Slocum's paper; begin to unpack issues of justice and equity relating to the food system
- **Activities:** Co-formulate a community agreement; privilege walk, can-opener activity or embodiment of equity, equality and empowerment activity; discussion: unpacking different ideas of justice (spectrum of criminal to social)
- **Assessment:** weekly reflection, participation
- **Resources:** [What does it mean to do food justice?](#)

3. Grading and Evaluations

- **Participation (10%), graded by peers**
 - Weekly attendance will be recorded as well as contributions in seminar discussions
 - Graded on students' thoughtfulness of contributions, ability to engage with peers in critical thinking, and respecting community guidelines
- **Reflections (10%), graded by peers, completion mark**
 - Weekly reflections will encourage peers to practice reflexivity and positionality, with allotted times during the seminar to share in small groups. They will be structured in the format of What?, So What?, and Now What? in order to engage critically with the content.
- **Collaborative Case Studies (20%), graded by peers**
 - Students in small groups of 4-5 will develop a case study to contribute during the 12th week of class. This will involve a selection of readings, discussion facilitation and contribution. Potential topics include Urban Agriculture, Global Food Politics, Northern Food Security, Sustainable Diets, Climate Smart Agriculture, Nutrition Equity.
 - Graded on the ability of students to meet outlined learning objectives, evaluation of case study facilitation
- **Group Project (25%), graded by peers**
 - To be determined with peers, but an example is given:
 - Recipe Analysis: Students will work in groups to unpack the history of a recipe or ingredient, investigating the processes involved from farm to plate. This will be investigated through the core concepts of food justice: trauma, land, labour, & exchange.
 - Graded on the depth of research, application of an intersectional and interdisciplinary framework, and creativity of presentation
- **Final Project (35%), graded by the Faculty Sponsor**
 - To be determined with peers, but an example is given:
 - Policy Letter: Students will work in groups to formulate a policy letter addressed to a governing institution regarding a policy failure related to food justice. Research will be embedded within the letter, outlining the challenges of the policy and case studies that provide alternative solutions. Students will determine and initiate an appropriate dissemination approach as a means of exploring civic engagement in a place-based setting (e.g. municipal government).
 - Graded on the thoroughness of research, application of an intersectional and interdisciplinary framework, and creativity of policy solutions

Rubrics for the case studies, group project, and the final project will be agreed upon with peers.

We will ensure that the seminar is academically rigorous through communication with our Faculty Sponsor and TLEF project team. As the SDS is part of a larger project to trial learning tools, many of the SDS activities will have been previously consulted on with UBC staff, professors and CTLT partners.

4. Student Recruitment and Selection

Students from the Faculties of LFS, and programs such as GRSJ, FNIS, CONS, ANTH, SOCI, GEOG, FRST and PLAN may be interested in the course as a means to expand on their knowledge with a food lens. We anticipate that the demand will be high for this course because it fills a gap in course offerings currently not easily accessible to students. We believe that the systems approach, hands-on environment, and small class size will attract students to engage with food systems learning.

There will not be any prerequisites required for this course, but the interested participants will be asked to fill out an application survey. This will be used to gauge potential participants' level of engagement with the topic, which will be used to shape the SDS. We are hoping to list the course as an ASTU course, and cross-list it as an LFS course.

Course Plan

Week	Topic	Readings/Resources	Topics and Potential Activities
1	Course Introduction and Food Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shifting Agrifood Systems: A Comment ● Food Systems Graphic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food Systems, syllabus intro ● Introduction activities, opening discussion
2	What is Food Justice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does it mean to do food justice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Justice and Equity introduction ● Community agreement formation ● Conceptions of Justice
3	Trauma & Anti Oppression Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dismantling Racism in the Food System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race & Food, Gender ● Anti-Oppression Training

4	Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race and Regulation ● Shining a light in dark places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intersection of race and gender with migrant labour
5	Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farming and Urban Life; Plants in Technology ● Responsibilities and Relationships: Decolonizing the BC Food Systems Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Field trip to xʷəičəəsəm: Indigenous Health Research & Education Garden ● Indigenous Foodways/ Decolonizing Food System Movements
6	Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food security, food justice, or food sovereignty: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Commodification of Food and Future Food Justice
7	Case Study (CS): Agriculture as a Colonial Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agriculture and Indigeneity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce group project ● Indigenous Foodways
8	CS: Migrant Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● United Farm Workers ● Envisioning Justice for Migrant Workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farm Workers' Movements ● Food retail workers, racialization of precarious work
9	CS: Salmon Farming along the Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wild Salmon Caravan ● Just Sustainabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environmental Justice ● Different ways of knowing
10	CS: Vancouver Chinatown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vancouver Chinatown Food Security Report ● Parallel Alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Institutional racism ● Equity in the food system
11	CS: International Food System Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governance in the Global Agro-food System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embedding food justice into policy ● Influence of global control on local markets and movements
12	Student Collaborated Case Studies (TBD by students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential topics: Global Food Politics, Northern Food Security, Sustainable Diets, Climate Smart Agriculture, Nutrition Equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embed student interests within the seminar ● Divide up 2-3 case studies and have students facilitate the class
13	Food Justice Action, Final Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time to work on project; course reflection