This class reviews the array of food and production systems, systems of distribution and systems of consumption to address what are among the most widespread human impacts on planetary biodiversity, landscapes, climates and social systems. Everyone eats, food is as full as meaning as calories, so the questions of how these food production systems unfold, why they unfold the way they do and the array of alternatives of many kinds require more in terms of analytics than food and identity, the existence of food deserts or the realities of exploitation in Arkansas chicken abattoirs. These are of course part of the story, but hardly capture the longer term questions. Food systems are also the gateway into understanding our current environmental dynamics, which cannot be solved without addressing Ag. Further, the domains of urban planning increasingly have to take urban production systems of many kinds into account, and we are not just talking about farmers markets here. While providing a general overview, the class requires research teams to analyse and assess some of the impacts and debates of particular topic weeks. The class is more about the debates and politics than normative directives (“Eat organic”), but there is a great deal of policy that comes out of the discussion. There is a lot of reading. This class looks at the questions in terms of larger systems, local consequences and environmental implications. We start from the wild and least known, to the realm we think we know, that is, the city as production arenas for producing domesticated and wild stuff.

Requirements:
An analytic book review on a non required book;
Research Project paper
Class presentation of research project materials. We do this the last hour of class
Class participation.
A SHORT!! social history and commodity food chain analysis on a commodity (1-3 pages)

Required Books
Hal Herzog 2010. *Some we love, some we hate, some we eat: why its so hard to think straight about animals*. New York, Harper Perrennial
Perfecto Y and J.Vandermeer 2010. *Natures Matrix* Earthscan
UC Press
Eastabrook, B 2011. *Tomatoland*

Recommended Books (Chose one to review or decide on something else but check with me)
BUT THERE is a NEW SLEW of food stuff all the time, although most of it hews to pretty well known terrain.

Charles Mann 2011. 1493.
Howard, E. 1920 *Garden cities of the Future*. (Optional
Sinclair Lewis *The Jungle*
Emil Zola *La Terre*
Carey McWilliams: *Factories in the Field* (The Classic of California Ag)
Michael Pollin 2006 *Omnivores Dilemma*
Miguel Altieri *Agroecology*
Sophie Coe. *Americas First Cuisines*

*Monthly Review* July-August 2009 is quite interesting and devoted to food politics
Volume 61, Number 3 Really worth a a look.

ALSO: *Journal of Peasant Studies* Biofuel special issue Vol 37(4) (and actually ist
worth looking at all the time.) but the food-fuel trade off is a serious issue and this
is a really good round up by very serious scholars.

Also; check out: *Journal of Peasant Studies* and *Journal of Agrarian Change*

**Course requirements:**
1. Do the reading.
2. Depending on enrollment a research “team” will take a particular topic and present it. This
doesn’t have to be a power point: might be better if it weren’t, but it has to be a researched thing,
organized logically and with a biblio, and not just from the internet. This must get to me by the
end of the quarter.
3. You have produce an analytic book review.
4. Each class begins with the “News of the Food week” in review. So you should be reading NYT
or LAT and combing it for food related news to contribute at the beginning of each class
5. History of a particular food: From domestication through its social history to your plate or cup.
Whats the deal then, how is it that we know it now. Again: a quick presentation in class

**Week 1.**
Hi. Format of the class, where we are going with all this and what it means. Organization of
teams and class logistics. Introduction to each other.

**Part 1: Where the Wild things aren’t, or maybe are…** Harvesting natural ecosystems and
their implications

**Week 2.** 1. The end of the fish, perhaps. The story of shifting baselines, socio-natures of the
wilde

**Read  Paul Greenberg, *Four Fish***

Belton, B., D. Little, and K. Grady. "Is Responsible Aquaculture Sustainable Aquaculture? Wwf

Quest for Sustainable Development in Contested Sea Space." *Natural Resources Forum* 34, no. 2
(2010): 106-23
WeekThree: "Wild Thang, you make my heart sing…" Wild products are a huge source of calories, proteins, perfumes, resins, livelihood and monies and people consume A LOT of this stuff all over the world, and you do too, probably. For the two billion people in the world who are “forest dependent” (actually we are all forest dependent but imagine we are not) the question of “wild products” is key to their livelihoods. These linkages function between the rural-urban and the humble and elite at many levels, and these areas are at a complex intersticies because tenurial regimes that underpin them are really complicated and changing, and because the institutionalities of forests are changing they relate to questions of conservation and transitions into domestication. This a broad selection of readings. Browse them but do read Perfecto and Vandemeer chapter 1-2. Also Neuman for a background on ideologies. I think the mushroom articles are all pretty great. Read the Acai article. Here’s the big point: “Wild” landscapes are really manipulated and highly globalized. And we don’t even broach the “essences” and floral markets.

Read “Natures’s matrix” 1-2


These systems are really dense in terms of indigenous knowledge systems both in the biotics and the uses. And services.

**Relevant extra readings** for your general interest: Emphasis here is on knowledge systems and the ambiguity between the wild and the tame. This is more a FYI: the central point though is there are very different epistemes about constructing production systems: such as domesticated landscapes versus the wild. The US system is actually rather odd compared to the rest of the world.


**Part 2 Dr Vavilov I presume: The political ecologies of agriculture (well, in the most brusque way possible)**

**Week Four**: Domestication to industrializations: A mere 12,000 years in an instant—well a couple of hours. Obviously an overview of traditional systems,

What is a Vavilov center why are they important and why questions of agrobiodiversity are not trivial exercises in nostalgia. And what do mean by domestication? Maybe a bigger concept is in order. This particular section could embrace several classes on its own, and actually does elsewhere but, whatever… Most of the class deals with the late 20th century changes in Ag, and the political ecologies of these changes

*Fast Food Nation* section 1;
*Tomatoland* 1-70;
Guthman: Chapters 6 and 7


**WEEK 5 Alternatives, possibly;**

*Tomatoland* 73-191
*Natures Matrix* Chaps 4,5,6


Spielman, D. J. "Pro-Poor Agricultural Biotechnology: Can the International Research System Deliver the Goods?" *Food Policy* 32, no. 2 (2007): 189-204.


**Week 6 The Livestock Sector**

Herzog: some we love...

Also *Fast Food Nation* chaps 6,7,8,9


**Part 3. Agropolis**

**Week 7**

*Fast Food Nation*

Guthman: Chapter 2-5


**Week 8 SBH out of town**

**Week 9 Urban ag**


**Week 10: What’s ag anyway:**

Robbins, *Lawn people*