Day/Time: Mondays, 3:00-5:40 PM  
Location: 205 Diefendorf  
Instructor: Samina Raja, Ph.D.; sraja@buffalo.edu; 716-829-5881  
Office Hours: TBD

Course objective  
Food nourishes us, enriches our celebrations, and sustains life itself. Yet not everyone in the U.S. has access to healthful, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods. Some people live in neighborhoods where grocery stores carry a greater variety of potato chips than vegetables, while other people cannot afford vegetables even when they are available. The quality of a community’s food system has significant social, economic, environmental, and health implications. Planners and policy makers can play an important role in planning and building community food systems that are economically and socially just, healthy, and environmentally sustainable. Despite this important role, planners have only recently begun to pay attention to the food system as a critical component of a community’s infrastructure. In this seminar, students will learn to deploy traditional and innovative planning skills to facilitate and strengthen community food systems. Students will critically assess a community’s food system and examine the ways in which a community’s food system can be transformed – through programs, policy, and planning tools – to ensure access to affordable, culturally appropriate, and good quality food for all.

Course requirements and grading  
This is a graduate-level seminar course that requires students to think critically, and read and write extensively. Students will discuss weekly readings during class (facilitated by peer discussants as well as the instructor) and prepare a planning/policy report on a food planning topic approved by the instructor. From time to time, the class will go on site visits, watch films, and hear from guest presenters. The schedule for site visits, guest presentations, and films will not alter the reading schedule for the semester.

Requirements  
1. Assignments  
   a. Life-cycle policy/planning audit of a food item (20% of final grade) | Trace the geography of a food of your choice from your kitchen-table to its origin (farm/ranch). Then, conduct a ‘life-cycle policy audit’ of the food to trace the policy regulations (including zoning) the food item must comply with before arriving on your plate. Submit your written analysis in a 5-page report, not including appendices (use 1.5 spacing; 1 inch margins; 12 font size). Be creative in your presentation; flow charts and diagrams are encouraged.  
      Due date: Monday, Week 4, 3:30 PM (you will also present your audit during class on the same day)
b. **Planning report** (35% of final grade) l Identify a specific problem in a local food system, and develop a planning approach to alleviate the problem. Submit a written policy/planning report that includes, at a minimum, the following plan elements:
   a) description of a problem in the food system,
   b) evidence to understand the baseline conditions, challenges, and opportunities in the food system, and
   d) planning recommendations for alleviating or resolving the problem.

The report should be no more than 15 pages in length, not including appendices (use 1.5 spacing; 1 inch margins; 12 font size).

**Due date:** Monday, Week 15, 3:30 PM; (you will present your mini-plan during exam week; date and time TBD)

2. Review readings as discussants (20%); selected weeks only
3. Participation in seminar as non-discussant (i.e. responding to discussants) (15%); selected weeks only
4. Final presentation (10%); Monday of exam week (Time TBD)

---

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95% and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85%-89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-84.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>75-79.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>70-74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>65-69.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55-59.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Course readings and books**

Students are required to complete reading assignments before each seminar session. Most course readings are available through UB Learns, on websites indicated on the reading schedule, or through the UB Libraries course reserve system.

Some readings are extracts from books. I encourage you to borrow these books from the UB Libraries (they are available on 3-day reserve at the Health Sciences Library on UB South). You may also choose to purchase them if you wish. If you decide to purchase them, be sure to order them early.

You will be reading between 50 to 75 pages each week. Please ensure that you acquire assigned materials well in advance of each seminar so that you have ample time to finish reading.

---

**Guidelines for seminar discussants and participants**

**Discussants**

Except in the first week, each week two (or, more) students will lead the seminar as discussants. In your role of a discussant, you will present a critical review of the assigned reading material in the seminar for about an hour. Keep in mind that other seminar participants will also have read the articles – therefore do not simply reiterate what the articles says. Instead, provide an analysis of the
readings. The following questions may help you prepare your review. Feel free to discuss your review with the instructor in advance.

1. What is the key research question/assertion/hypothesis/argument/policy idea presented?
2. Does the evidence in the reading support the key argument or policy idea?
3. Are you convinced by the argument/proposal/policy solutions?
4. What are the potential positive and negative implications of the argument/proposal/solution for different population sub-groups?
5. Reflect on the implications of the article for the following:
   - Land use conditions and decisions
   - Economic development conditions and decisions
   - Transportation conditions and decisions
   - Environmental conditions and decisions
   - Fiscal conditions of local governments (revenues and expenditures)
   - Social justice
   - Health conditions
6. What are the implications of this article for the practice of planning? ¹
7. What questions were raised or left unanswered by the authors?

Discussants are encouraged to prepared handouts, outlines, or other materials to share with the class.

Seminar participants
Seminar participants are expected to have completed the readings, and be fully prepared to respond to discussants’ questions, as well as engage them in discussion. A spirited, but respectful, discussion is expected and encouraged.

¹ Students from other departments may reflect on the relevance of the assigned reading for their own discipline.
Reading schedule
(Subject to modification)

PART I | INTRODUCTION

Week 1

Screening of documentary film: FRESH (2009)

PART II | THE BASICS

Week 2 | Food Production, Processing, Retail, and Service

Week 3 | Regulatory environments

PROBLEMS IN THE FOOD SYSTEM
Week 4 | Hunger, Food Insecurity and Safety Nets


Presentations of Assignment 1

Week 5 | Food disparities and food injustice


Week 6 | Environmental impacts and climate change


[Due: Policy/Planning Problem; Literature Review/Best Practices]

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH: COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS
Week 7 | Efforts to Restore Community Food Systems


Week 8 | Field Trip: Massachusetts Avenue Project [TBC]

PLANNING STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

Week 9 | Theoretical approaches to planning for community food systems


Feagan, Robert. The place of food: mapping out the ‘local’ in local food systems. Progress in Human Geography.


Week 10 | Methods for analyzing community food systems

Thomson, Joan et al. (2007). Community-Initiated Dialogue: Strengthening the Community through the Local Food System in Hinrichs and Lyson (eds.) Remaking the North American Food System. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.


Review the methods used in the following assessments and plans:

Week 11 | Plans for Strengthening Community Food Systems

Comprehensive Plans [Pick one that you are unfamiliar with]
Madison, WI
Seattle, WA
Harrison County, MS
Toronto, ON - Metropolitan
Boston Metro Region, MA - Regional

Food System Plans [Pick one]
Regional Food Plan | Eating Here: The Greater Philadelphia Food System Plan
County Food Plan | Room at the Table
Municipal Food Plan | Foodworks: A vision to Improve NYC’s Food System
Neighborhood Food Plan | Food for Growth
http://foodsystemsplanning.ap.buffalo.edu/index.php/896/

[Due: Policy/Planning Problem; Literature Review; Methods and Data, Preliminary Policy Proposal]

Week 12 | Public Institutions for Rebuilding Food Systems
Clancey, Kate, Janet Hammer, and Debra Lippoldt. (2007). “Food Policy Councils” In Hinrichs and Lyson (eds.) Remaking the North American Food System. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.


**Week 13 | Regulatory and Economic Development Incentives**


**Week 14 | TBD**

**Week 15 | Where do we go from here? Food security, food justice, food sovereignty**


[Due: Policy/Planning Problem; Literature Review/Best Practices; Methods and Data, Findings, and Planning/Policy Recommendations]

**Final Presentation – Date to be announced**
Important notes

Assistance
If you have a physical, learning or psychological disability that makes it difficult for you to carry out the coursework as outlined and requires accommodations, such as recruiting note-takers, readers, or extended time on assignments, please contact the Office of Disability Services within the first two weeks of the semester. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is located in 25 Capen Hall and may be reached at 645-2608. ODS will provide you with information and review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodation.

Integrity
Students are expected to uphold UB’s policies on academic integrity. According to UB guidelines "plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials" (Office of Judicial Affairs & Student Advocacy: Article 1: Definitions, No.15). **Failure to demonstrate academic integrity (through plagiarism or cheating of any kind) will result in a failing grade of ‘F’ for the entire course.**

Communication
I will rely on UB Learns (including its e-mail function) as a primary means of communication with students outside the classroom. You are responsible for checking the UB Learns course page and your UB e-mail account on a regular basis.