



University
of Victoria

Geography 391: Food and the City

Overview

This course was developed for students concerned with social justice, ecological sustainability, and good food, who are also concerned with finding a livelihood that aligns with their values. The course will be co-lead by entrepreneur Chris Hildreth (of Topsoil Innovative Urban Agriculture) and Cam Owens (UVic Geography). In an intensive two-week period (from May 7th-18th) students will learn about the business of growing food in the city through engaging classroom discussions, local field excursions, and getting their hands dirty at a local urban farm.



Course Details

This course is an intensive 10-days running from May 7-18. Most days, classes will run from 9:00-12:00 with some exceptions (see the schedule below). We will meet in off-campus locations including the City Studio classroom downtown and Topsoil farm site (Dockside Green). The course will involve field trips to other (walkable) locations. On certain days we will meet after class at local restaurants. These events are not mandatory, but we hope you will join us to build community over food.

Assessment

1. Student-lead seminar (May 14th-15th)– 45% - *With a partner you will prepare for and lead a discussion on a pertinent reading (selected by the instructors).*
2. Final Reflective Assignment (May 18th) – 45% - *On the final day, you will complete a written assignment reflecting on your learning through the course.*
3. Active Participation – 10% - *We ask that you make a constructive contribution to the success of the course by bringing a positive attitude and actively and respectfully participating in group discussion and getting your hands dirty on the farm.*

Note on marks: A-level marks (80%+) reflect exceptional (beyond expectations), outstanding, or at least highly competent efforts. B+/B level marks (73-79%) reflect good or at least acceptable efforts (usually above the class average). B-/C+ level marks (65-72%) represent average efforts, showing some understanding but deficient in some way. C/D level marks (50-64%) represent passable but largely insufficient efforts, while F marks (<50%) represent failing the course.

Course readings

A series of pertinent and engaging readings will be made available through the Coursespaces site. Students will lead discussions on these readings as part of the course.

Course learning outcomes

At the end of this course successful students will:

1. be able to articulate the ecological, economic and social rationale for local food production
2. have practical knowledge of the local food system in Victoria and connections to some of the people who operate these local enterprises
3. have first hand, experience of the operational logistics of running an urban farm
4. have experience communicating and leading a discussion on an important element of local food production
5. have an appreciation for best practices from case studies around the world
6. gain strong foundations for starting a food-related social enterprise

Tentative Schedule of Classes

(subject to change)

Mon, May 7 th 9-12 City Studio	Course introductions, Ice-breakers
Tues, May 8 th 9-12 City Studio	Why innovative urban agriculture? Social, Economic, Ecological Rationales Guest presenter: Jeremy Caradonna (UVic Environmental Studies)
Wed, May 9 th 9-2ish Topsoil	The idea of Topsoil Innovative Urban Agriculture + visit Canoe Restaurant – discussion with Chef Sol, lunch and socializing
Thurs, May 10 th 12-3 City Studio	Field Trip to Mason Street Farm, discussion with Jess Blue
Fri, May 11 th 9-2ish City Studio	Field Trip to Downtown Food Eco-District + lunch and socializing Guest presenters: Jayne Bradbury (Fort St Properties), Jill Doucette & Heidi Gratner (Synergy Enterprise)
Mon, May 14 th 9-12 City Studio	Student lead seminars
Tues, May 15 th 9-12 City Studio	Student lead seminars II
Wed, May 16 th 9-12 City Studio	Local Food Mini-Conference Guest presenters: Virginie Lavallée-Picard (Food Systems Coordinator for the City of Victoria), Linda Geggie, (Executive Director – Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Roundtable), Fiona Devereux (Aboriginal Health)
Thurs, May 17 th 9-12 Topsoil	Reflections on the business of growing food in the city + reflective sharing circle
Fri, May 18 th 9-? City Studio	Final reflective assignment + socializing

“The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.”

We value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to us regarding the course and our teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. We will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

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