This course introduces you to the major issues surrounding the current food system and culture. We will engage with a broad range of texts written by academics and serious journalists highlighting current concerns about food consumption, production and distribution. We will begin with the United States but then head outwards as it shapes the rest of the world while being fashioned by the challenges and opportunities associated with an increasingly globalized system.

By the end of the course, students will be able to: identify the key economic, social, demographic, environmental, and ethical issues that currently shape our food production, distribution, preparation, and consumption.

**Readings:**

**Week 1:** Introduction + the rules

**Theme I: The Problem of American Affluence?**
Weeks 2-4: Fat and Fasting


**Alternatives?**

Recommended critique: Special Issue of *Gastronomica* 7:3 (Summer 2007); especially “Can’t Stomach It: How Michael Pollan et al. Made Me Want to Eat Cheetos,” by Julie Guthman, pp. 75-79.

**Americanization of the World or Hybridization?**


**Theme II: Managing Affluence: Ice Cream and Haute Cuisine**

**Theme III: Global Hunger. Political-Economy of Food**

**Week 9: The Problem of Hunger**

**AND**

**Recommended:**

**Week 10: A Political-Ecology of Famine: The Making of the Third World**

**Week 11: The Local and the Global**

**Week 12: An Alternative?**

**AND**

**Theme IV: New Technologies Assuaging Hunger?**

**Week 13: Genetically modified foods: problems and prospect**
Michael Ruse and David Castle, Eds., 2002, *Genetically Modified Food*, Prometheus Books (pp. 1-107)

**AND**
Grading
20% - Participation will be based on
(a) attendance
(b) rate of participation in class – i.e. once every class = 100%
(c) quality of participation – relevance, complexity, depth, comparative scope, all
in the judgment of the faculty member
80% - 2-page response (summary and critique) to any 8 readings submitted the week it is
discussed in class. Late papers will NOT be accepted.

Note: You are expected to read about 200 pages of text of varying density per week

Nature of the 2-page Response Paper
The paper must do the following:
1. Summarize the main argument/s of the author
2. Concentrate on one or a few of the arguments in the response
3. Justify the selection of that particular argument
4. Critique:
   a. Tell me what is good and compelling about it
   b. Tell me why it is so - evidence, logic, language, voice, analysis, etc.
   c. Tell me what is weak
   d. Tell me why it is so
   e. Tell me what else you would have liked to know about the subject, why?
   f. You may do the above by comparing with another reading from the
curriculum or outside of it.

To get full points for the response papers you have to do the above in the following
manner:
1. No errors of language and grammar.
2. Original critical insight.
3. Eloquence.
5. Capacity to develop critical distance from own argument.

Note: Any student who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, www.nyu.edu/csd.