

**AFRO 224/ CWL 226/ IB 299:  
Humanist Perspectives of the Afro-Am Experience  
Race and Food Security**

Spring 2021

Lecture: MW 2:00 – 3:20pm: [Class Zoom Link](#) | **Password:** 290710 | **Meeting ID:** 829 5208 1664

**Professors:**

Dr. Bobby J. Smith II, Ph.D., [bobbyjs2@illinois.edu](mailto:bobbyjs2@illinois.edu)

Department of African American Studies

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Department of Entomology

Department of African American Studies

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11a-1p (Schedule Appt.)

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**Password:** 918075

**Course Description**

Achieving food security across the world calls for an understanding of the racial inequalities that impact the ways in which food is produced, consumed, processed and distributed. Yet current food security strategies largely ignore issues of race while focusing on the productivity of agricultural methods and environmental sustainability. In this course, students will critically analyze and explore the food security continuum—from the soil to the fork—through humanist frameworks derived from an Afro-centric world view of agri-food systems. Such a view of food security enlarges our understandings of food access issues and how Black communities are working to build socially just and sustainable food systems for all. This course is designed for students interested in food and environmental systems, African American studies, and community development.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, through rigorous, engaged, socially conscious, and interdisciplinary class discussions, students should be able to:

1. Identify food issues through Afro-centric humanistic frameworks and learn how to develop sustainable food systems solutions that are socially just, inclusive, and equitable for all.
2. Analytically approach questions and problems of food security at the intersection of race, food, both domestically and internationally.
3. Describe the social, political, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of complexities surrounding achieving sustainable food security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century including racial inequalities.
4. Think critically and frame multidimensional understandings of food access issues, food systems and food insecurity both in the US and in Africa.
5. Use a variety of approaches to research and describe local, regional, and international perspectives on food security that include not only issues of race, but also of class and gender.

**Course Requirements**

- **Attendance (10%):** Students will be expected to attend all class meetings.
- **Participation (10%):** Students will be expected to contribute to all class discussions.

- **Readings (20%):** Students will be expected to complete all readings and complete any assignments associated with the readings before class.
- **Essays (60%):** Students will be expected to complete and turn in all required essays for the semester on their respective due dates. All essays must be typed (in a clear and readable print format), printed, and stapled. Please use 12-point font, double spacing, one-inch margins, and APA, MLA, or Chicago formatting for citations and works-cited. All papers should have titles.

### **Course Grading System**

Although the University of Illinois does not have a standard percentage associated with letter grades, in this course we have developed the following grading scheme:

<b>Numerical Grade</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Grade</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
97-100	A+	77-79.99	C+
93-96.99	A	73-76.99	C
90-92.99	A-	70-72.99	C-
87-89.99	B+	67-69.99	D+
83-86.99	B	63-66.99	D
80-82.99	B-	60-62.99	D-
Below 60		F	

### **Course Policies**

**Statement on University Policies and Regulations:** As the instructors for this course, we respect and uphold all University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing-impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to our attention.

**Statement on Academic Integrity:** Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Illinois Student Code as 'it is the responsibility of each student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions.' In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the student code is an "F" for the term.

\* Please know that it is our responsibility as instructors to uphold the academic integrity policy of the University, which can be found here: [http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1\\_part4\\_1-401.html](http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html). Please note that you are responsible for reading this policy. Do not hesitate to ask us if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity.

**Statement on Emergency Response Recommendations:** Emergency response recommendations can be found at the following website: <http://police.illinois.edu/emergency/>. Please review this website and the campus building floor plans website within the first 10 days of class: <http://police.illinois.edu/emergency/floorplans/>.

**Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

should self-identify to the instructor to ensure protection of the privacy of their attendance in this course. See <http://registrar.illinois.edu/ferpa> for more information on FERPA.

**Note to Students with Disabilities:** To ensure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class are asked to contact Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) and see us as soon as possible, or make an appointment to see us, or see us during our office hours. DRES provides students with academic accommodations, access, and support services.

To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TDD), or e-mail a message to [disability@uiuc.edu](mailto:disability@uiuc.edu). <http://www.disability.illinois.edu/>.

### **Semester Calendar and Schedule**

This course is separated into three units as indicated below. The first unit examines issues of food security in the Africa context. The second unit examines issues of food security in the United States context. The final unit examines issues at the nexus of the Africa and US contexts.

**Note:** This course has no required books. All course readings will be posted on Illinois Compass.

As we navigate this unusual and uncertain semester surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, here are some useful resources:

[University COVID-19 Information and Updates](#)

[COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#)

[UI Counseling Center COVID-19 Resources](#)

[Remote Learning Resources](#)

### **Week 1**

**Monday, January 25** | Course Introduction Syllabus and the U of I Food Security Plan Report

**Unit One: Race and Food Security in Africa | Professor Ngumbi**

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**Wednesday, January 27** | Food Security around the World

Reading(s): United Nations, FAO, 2020: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. In Brief <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5249en/ca5249en.pdf>; 2020 State of Food Security and Nutrition in Full ;<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9692en/online/ca9692en.html>  
<http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2020/en/>

Carth, U. Mc. et. al. (2018). Global food security – Issues, challenges and technological solutions. Trends in Food Science & Technology. 77: 11-20.

### **Week 2**

**Monday, February 1** | Food Security Continuum.

Reading(s): Hendriks, S.L. (2015). The food security continuum: a novel tool for understanding food insecurity as a range of experiences: Food Security. 7. 609-619.; To ensure food security-keep the soils healthy - <https://worldpolicy.org/2017/12/12/to-ensure-food-security-keep-soils-healthy/> ;

Hurni, H. et al. (2015). Soils, agriculture and food security: the interplay between ecosystem functioning and human well-being. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*. 15: 25-34.

**Wednesday, February 3** | Food Insecurity, Hunger and Poverty in Africa-Understanding the Dynamics

### Week 3

**Monday, February 8** | Food Insecurity, Hunger and Poverty in Africa-Understanding the Dynamics (continued) | **Assignment 1: Unit 1**

Reading(s): Four things you should know about Food Insecurity in Africa. Washington Post. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/10/30/four-things-you-should-know-about-food-security-in-africa/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.3dfd8118e892](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/10/30/four-things-you-should-know-about-food-security-in-africa/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.3dfd8118e892) ; Zakari S. et al. (2014). Factors influencing household food security in West Africa: The Case of Southern Niger. *Sustainability*. 6: 1191-1201.; Ahluwalia S. (2019). Food aid to the developing world: The subversive effects of modern-day neo-colonialism. *Seattle Journal of Environmental Law*. 9: Article 4. <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1089&context=sjel>

**Wednesday, February 10** | Can Africa Achieve Food Security?

Reading(s): van Ittersum et al. (2016). Can sub-Saharan Africa feed itself? *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 113: 14964-14969.; Schez, P.A. (2015). En route to plentiful food production in Africa.; Waha K. et al. (2018). Can farm households improve food and nutrition security through adoption of climate-smart practices? *Empirical evidence from Northern Ghana*. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy* pp 1-22.

### Week 4

**Monday, February 15** | Communicating and Advocating for a Just and Equitable Food Security System in the US and around the World (Learning the art of writing opinion pieces) | **Assignment 2 Info.**

**Wednesday, February 17** | Break – Non-instructional day [**NO CLASS**]

### Week 5

**Monday, February 22** | **Attaining Food Security: Role of policy and international markets-Guest Lecture – (Consulting with Hope Michelson-Tentative Speaker)**

**Wednesday, February 24** | Can we Improve Global Food Security? and the Role of Gender in Achieving Food Security?

Reading: Garcia, A.S. and Wanner, T. (2017). Gender inequality and food security. Lessons from gender-responsive work of the International Food Policy Research Institute and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. 9: 1091-1103. Unleashing the power of women farmers in Africa and beyond. <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/unleashing-the-power-of-women-farmers-in-africa-and-beyond-19883>

### Week 6

**Monday, March 1** | Food Security: Drawing the Parallels that exist between the US and the rest of the world. Class discussion.

**Wednesday, March 3** | Reframing Food Security Issues in a globally connected world

Reading(s): Cole, M.B. et al. (2018). The Science of food security. *npj Science of Food*. 2:14.; Khoury C.K. et al. (2018). Increasing homogeneity in global food supplies and implications for food security. *PNAS*. 111. 4001-4006.

## Unit Two: Race and Food Security in the United States | Professor Smith

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### Week 7

**Monday, March 8** | | Perspectives on the Duality of Race and Food

Reading(s): Smith II, B. J. (2019). "Food Justice, Intersectional Agriculture, and the Triple Food Movement," *Agriculture and Human Values*. 36(4), 825-835. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-019-09945-y>; Leslie, I. S., & White, M. M. (2018). Race and Food: Agricultural Resistance in US History. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Racial and Ethnic Relations* (pp. 347-364). **Assignment 2 Due.**

**Wednesday, March 10** | Defining Food Security in the US Context

Reading(s): Pinstrup-Andersen, P. (2009). Food security: definition and measurement. *Food security*, 1(1), 5-7; and Hinrichs, C. C. (2013). Regionalizing food security? Imperatives, Intersections and Contestations in a post-9/11 world. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 29(2), 7-18.

### Week 8

**Monday, March 15** | Food Insecurity, Hunger, and Poverty

**Assignment 3: Film Response Paper**

Movie: A Place at the Table – Part I; Reading(s): Guptill, A. E., Copelton, D. A., & Lucal, B. (2013). "Chapter 8: Food Access: Surplus and Scarcity" in *Food and society: Principles and paradoxes*. John Wiley & Sons. (Elmes, M. B. (2016). Economic inequality, food insecurity, and the erosion of equality of capabilities in the United States. *Business & Society*, pp. 1045-1074.

**Wednesday, March 17** | Food Insecurity, Hunger, and Poverty (continued)

Movie: A Place at the Table – Part II; Reading(s): Reese, A. M. (2018). "We will not perish; we're going to keep flourishing": Race, Food Access, and Geographies of Self-Reliance. *Antipode*, 50(2), 407-424; Howerton, G., & Trauger, A. (2017). "Oh honey, don't you know?" The Social Construction of Food Access in a Food Desert. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 16(4), 740-760.

### Week 9

#### Monday, March 22 | Black Farmers, Farmworkers, Native Americans, and Food Security

Reading(s): Green, J, Green, E., and Kleiner, A. (2011). From the past to the present: Agricultural development and black farmers in the American south. In *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*, eds. Alison Alkon and Julian Agyeman, 45-64. MIT Press.; Penniman, L. (2015). “Radical Farmers Use Fresh Food to Fight Racial Injustice and the New Jim Crow” in *YES! Magazine*, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/radical-farmers-use-fresh-food-fight-racial-injustice-black-lives-matter>; and Penniman, L. (2019) “A New Generation of Black Farmers Is Returning to the Land” in *YES! Magazine*, <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2019/11/19/land-black-farmers-reparations/>

#### Wednesday, March 24 | Break – Non-instructional day [NO CLASS]

### Week 10

#### Monday, March 29 | Black Farmers, Farmworkers, Native Americans, and Food Security (cont.)

Reading(s): Brown, S. and Getz, C. (2011). Farmworker food insecurity and the production of hunger in California. In *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*, eds. Alison Alkon and Julian Agyeman, 121-146. MIT Press.; and Norgaard, K., Reed, R., and Van Horn, C. (2011). A continuing legacy: Institutional racism, hunger and nutritional justice on the Klamath. In *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*, eds. Alison Alkon and Julian Agyeman, 23-46. MIT Press.

#### Wednesday, March 31 | Inequality, Resistance, and Food Security in Historical Contexts

Reading(s): Sbicca, J. (2018). *Food Justice Now!: Deepening the Roots of Social Struggle*. University of Minnesota Press (Chapter 1, “Inequality and Resistance: The Legacy of Food and Justice Movements”); and Patel, R. (2011). Survival Pending Revolution: What the Black Panthers Can Teach the US Food Movement. *Food Movements Unite!: Strategies to Transform Our Food Systems*. E. Holt-Giménez. Oakland, Calif.: Food First Books. | **Assignment 3 Due | Unit 1 Review Paper Discussion (Assignment 4)**

### Week 11

#### Monday, April 5 | Inequality, Resistance, and Food Security in Historical Contexts (cont.)

Reading(s): Kerssen, T. M., & Brent, Z. W. (2017). Grounding the U.S. Food Movement: Bringing Land into Food Justice. In Alison Alkon & Julie Guthman (Eds.) *The new food activism: opposition, cooperation, and collective action* (pp. 284-315). Oakland, California: University of California Press.; and Bowens, N. (2015). *The color of food: Stories of race, resilience and farming*. New Society Publishers (Part 2: Rooted in Rights – “Land is Freedom” and “Black Land Loss”)

#### Wednesday, April 7 | Unit Two Review and Paper Discussion: Rethinking Race and Food Security

**Week 12**

**Monday, April 12** Guest Lecture: Metropolitan Food and Environmental Systems

Dr. Megan Dailey, PhD, Director, Metropolitan Food & Environmental Systems  
College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences, UIUC

**Wednesday, April 14 | NO CLASS**

**Unit Three**

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**Weeks 13-15**

Monday, April 19: *Course Review/Theme Building* |

Group Research Project Topic Discussion: *Food Security in a Post-COVID World*

**Assignment 4 Due**

Wednesday, April 21: Group Research Project Meetings – *In Class*

Monday, April 26: Brief Research Proposal Presentations

Wednesday, April 28: Group Project Work Day – NO CLASS

Monday, May 3: Student Presentations | Wednesday, May 5: Student Presentations