

fruit and vegetable stands, community farms and farmers' markets that promote an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving learning in local schools. (See [http://www.urbannutrition.org/.](http://www.urbannutrition.org/))

***The White Dog Foundation's Fair Food program** is dedicated to promoting local, humane and sustainable agriculture. Among their various initiatives, you can volunteer to work at their Fair Food Farm Stand at Reading Terminal Market, which is open from Weds-Saturday. (See <http://www.whitedogcafeoundation.org/fairfood.html>.)

*The **Student/Farmworker Alliance** is a national group, working with the **Coalition of Immokalee workers**, a grassroots organization of immigrant farmworkers, to extend the gains made in their Taco Bell boycott victory with a new campaign targeting McDonalds in an effort to use the enormous purchasing power of fast food industries to improve wages and working conditions for farmworkers. (www.sfalliance.org or www.ciw-online.org)

*Other volunteer and organizing opportunities can often be related to the politics of food, but should be discussed with the instructor.

Requirements

- Regular participation in class and in a community service project
- At least 50 pages of weekly reading.
- At least 3 brief responses to readings posted on class blackboard.
- At least 3 brief reflections on community service posted on class blackboard
- 3-5 page discussion paper on your family "food ways"
- 3-5 page analysis/evaluation of community service
- A research project that analyzes the role/s played (or not played) by one organization in some aspect of "the politics of food," with special attention to the next Farm Bill and/or Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. May also want to consider minimum wage, immigration, animal rights/welfare or relevant regulatory (food safety, environment, advertising to children) legislation, and trade agreements.

- project for students interested in issues related to poverty, food insecurity, immigration, low wage work, and government programs, as well as students who want to look at nutrition support programs and political strategies of anti-hunger groups for their research paper.
2. **FarmEcology is an effort to work with Penn Dining Services, Aramark, and Williams' Cafe to introduce more locally grown food on campus.** www.upenngreen.org/farmecology. Projects initiated by students who took this course over the last two years have included establishing a local food “farm stand” in Houston Market, fall and spring “local food dinners,” ongoing efforts to increase the use of local foods in the Penn dining halls, and outreach and education programs to increase student interest in the nutritional and environmental benefits of local food. This project will involve attendance at regular meetings, responsibility for some aspect of group work, and participation in ongoing outreach on campus. Represents an opportunity to analyze the role played by non-profit organizations and foundations in promoting the “local food movement,” the environmental and social values associated with “local” and “organic” food, the potential for “marketing” these values to your peers, and the opportunities and constraints represented by the purchasing and marketing power of a large institution like Penn.
 3. **Sayre High School Breakfast & Lunch Initiative:** As rates of childhood and adolescent obesity and type two diabetes continue to rise, there is growing concern about the issue of school meals among community activists, parent groups, school boards, and the media. A number of school districts across the country have launched campaigns to make school lunch healthier. The Sayre High School Breakfast & Lunch Initiative aims to mobilize Sayre students, teachers, lunch staff/food coordinators and other interested parties in addressing this issue. Penn students will serve in the capacity of collaborators, mentors and project leaders working with a small group of Sayre High School students to document and analyze the quality of school meals and student participation, forge relationships with lunchroom staff and mobilize an action-oriented plan to make meals healthier, more appealing and available for students and teachers. The project will provide excellent field experience for students in school-community-university partnerships, real-world problem solving and youth empowerment. Additionally, excellent data for research papers looking at such topics as grass-roots/non-profits efforts to improve school lunch programs, the role of school districts and administrators, food corporations (McDonald's, Pizza Hut, etc), and outside contractors (Sysco, Aramark) in shaping program priorities.

Some other options include:

Local soup kitchens and food cupboards* give you a chance to work with the people and needs currently served by emergency food institutions. (For information and schedule for **University City Hospitality Coalition serving meals on/near Penn campus see <http://dolphin.upenn.edu/~soupkit/>.)

***Penn's Center for Community Partnership's Urban Nutrition Initiative** sponsors many projects promoting nutrition and health awareness, school-based gardens,

The Politics of Food and Agriculture

PSCI/HSOC/GAFL 135 ABCS and Fox Leadership Program Seminar

Professor Mary Summers
mysummer@sas.upenn.edu
Wednesdays, 3:30-6:30

This academically based community service and Fox Leadership Program seminar will explore the politics and institutions that have shaped –and continue to shape-- food production, consumption and problems like food insecurity and obesity here in West Philadelphia and around the world. Students will use the readings and their community service experience to analyze the politics of food in many different arenas: from kitchens, farms, schools, and factories to corporate boardrooms, research institutions, children’s television, and international trade. The primary focus will be on American politics; but there will also be opportunities to develop international and comparative perspectives on food and agriculture issues. A focus on the role of leadership in food and agricultural politics will include guest speakers, especially with regard to the different ideas, interests, and alliances seeking to impact debates over the current Farm Bill.

Students have the option of receiving an additional independent study credit (PSCI or HSOC 199), if they commit to at least four hours a week for their community service work, a journal to be submitted weekly on black board or by email, and a relevant research paper or project (which should be discussed in advance with the instructor). Examples of possible final projects include, but not limited to: an evaluation of the project; research report of value to organization you are working with; research on “best practices” with regard to a related issue; a proposal for a campaign or public policy initiative; a series of op ed pieces on related issues; a grant proposal; a series of lesson plans; a photographic essay or multi-media exhibit.

Community Service

Goals for community service work include “hands-on experience” with some aspect of food politics and the development of political knowledge and skills (institutional analysis, outreach, organizing, strategizing, etc.) Several options have been established for students’ community service work:

1. **A Food Stamp Enrollment Campaign led by the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger.** (<http://www.hungercoalition.org>). If the food stamp program were more fully utilized, it would bring millions more dollars in federal funds to low-income households and neighborhoods. Students working with this campaign will be trained to screen clients for food stamp eligibility and assist with the food stamp application process at sites in low-income neighborhoods (health centers, Career Links). You will be expected to work at your site for 2 hours at a regular time that fits your schedule (generally, M-F, 9-5). Excellent