

## GREEN ECONOMY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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GEO 101 Cultural Geography  
Unit: The Geography of Agriculture

This will be used in Fall 2012, the next time I teach GEO 101 face to face.

Title: Is Agriculture Still Green?

Course end competences addressed:

- a. identify major historical trends in population, industry and agriculture in developed countries.
- b. identify major historical trends in population, industry and agriculture in underdeveloped countries.
- c. investigate the cultural problems that result from the depletion, destruction, and inefficient use of the world's resources.

Learning outcomes for the agriculture unit follow, with the last three specific to the assignment.

- Define agriculture and identify its hearths.
- Distinguish among the first, second, and third agricultural revolutions.
- Contrast the Green Revolution and the Gene Revolution.
- Distinguish between subsistence and commercial systems of agriculture.
- Identify four types of subsistence agriculture and discuss the distribution of each.
- Provide examples of specialization in different types of commercial agriculture.
- Summarize the von Thunen model.
- Define desertification and salinization.
- **Distinguish between sustainable agriculture and organic agriculture.**
- **Explain how agriculture has been affected by globalization.**
- **Summarize the causes of the recent global food crisis.**

Set up:

Play the Fruit Rap (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9YAdB>), a veggie song (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4H8jZNPjro&feature=colike>) and/or one of my favorites from the 1990s Veggie Tales - His Cheeseburger (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XFntXbkeIM>) as class begins.

Then I will do my usual geography of agriculture lecture. I begin by asking: "How did agriculture start?" I get the usual dull answers from students and then tell them it started because of a 4 letter word – BEER.

The lecture is a quick look at the history of agriculture from a geographer's perspective and a brief introduction to the geography of food. It includes not only food stuffs - but cooking methods - and hits a lot of the "must include" content such as the agricultural revolutions, green revolution, and blue revolution.

Then I will ask about our food today - and how has our food system changed? What are the current issues for us - here at MV? For the U.S? For the world? Based on their responses to these questions, I will select a group of shorts and excerpts from longer films. Candidates will include the Sierra Club's The True Cost of Food ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bO\\_XMq0bonA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bO_XMq0bonA)), chapters 13 through 17 from the long version of Vanishing of the Bees, selected chapters from Food Inc., the chapter in King Corn where the students find out how much corn they have in their bodies, a short on fair trade, an excerpt from a film on India's return to biodynamic farming, the trailer for Play Again with the student saying we don't need nature, etc. I also thinking about adding the Bittman article from the Is Junk Food Cheaper course and the graphic to the reading assignment for the unit.

Prior to beginning the unit students have identified a favorite meal consisting of at least one appetizer, a main course, two side dishes, dessert, and a beverage. First, they will create a graphic for their meal. They will now need to source the ingredients and compare what is needed in terms of domestic and imported products. If there are convenience foods in the meal, they will need to look at what would be needed to create the dish from scratch. The food source table also includes a designation for mileage for each item to track the transportation involved in getting that food to their door from the source. Following completion of the table, they will write an essay addressing the role of advertising on food choices, the pros and cons of cheap imported food, and/or the pros and cons of prepared foods.

When they return with their written assignments, we will discuss their results. Mileage totals will go into the base we created for measuring our carbon footprint.

Then we will complete the unit by discussing our food system here versus food availability and distribution on a global basis. This also reintroduces nutritional or physiological density which was defined in the course introduction (as was food globalization as illustrated by McDonald's in India), the map of malnourishment, the von Thunen model, the green and blue revolutions, the agricultural landscapes, the slow food movement, and food fears in a global distribution system.

To be completed: revised data table for the assignment (it's repurposing an existing assignment) and a rubric for evaluation. The group of assignments will be 10% of the grade. The existing table/essays have a detailed rubric which will need modification once I decide on the final format. I'm still doing some research and not yet ready to solidify the assignment.

The exit essay for the unit will be tied to a set of scenarios. Students will draw a scenario such as: "If a natural or human caused disaster occurred and your usual food supplies were cut off, where would you get your food and what would you eat?" or "If you had to feed a family of 4 on \$70 per week what would your diet look like?" - from my "scenario globe" and respond to the scenario drawn.