

# Economics and Business of Food

A A E 375 Agricultural and Applied Economics

2 Credits - Fall 2022



**Time and Location:** Monday & Wednesday 1:20 PM – 2:10 PM, Russell Labs room 150

**Instructor:** Jeremy Beach ([jpbeach@wisc.edu](mailto:jpbeach@wisc.edu))

Office: 223 Taylor Hall

Phone (608) 262-9485

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM and by appointment

**Course Description:** An introductory examination of food systems in the US from an economic and business perspective. A critical evaluation of historical market concentration, corporate consolidation, competition, food access, food insecurity, hunger relief efforts, policy, consumer expenditures and production costs, management, and marketing. Students will evaluate farm and food business models using case studies from Wisconsin and will contribute towards a food justice class project titled the Wisconsin Food Project.

## **Course Learning Outcomes:**

- Evaluate food systems and social structures from an economic perspective
- Use and evaluate economic information to reach defensible conclusions
- Identify the implications of business decisions on the supply and demand of food
- Describe the effects of information and policies on food markets
- Analyze the consequences of consumer behavior for food products including prices and preferences

## **Textbook:**

- Howard, Philip H. Concentration and Power in the Food System: Who Controls What We Eat? Bloomsbury: 2021. Available as a PDF on the Canvas course page.

**Course Credit Hours:** This class meets for two 50-minute class periods each week over the fall semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities such as assigned readings, reflection papers, reviewing lecture content, studying for in-class quizzes, and completing written reports for about 2 hours out of the classroom for every class period. This syllabus includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work. The instructor will provide lecture content during in-person class periods and facilitate class discussions that center on course learning outcomes. The instructor will provide substantive feedback on student's learning outcomes during in-person class periods and outside of class periods.

## **Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement**

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully evaluates and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university's full [teaching and learning data transparency statement](#).

## **Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement**

See more information about [privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures](#).

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

## **How to Succeed in This Course**

Description of student attendance & participation, course assignments, and graded work is provided on pages 3 & 4. Additional campus services to help you succeed at UW-Madison include:

- [University Health Services](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Advising and Career Services](#)
- [Office of the Registrar](#)
- [Office of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)

## **Course Evaluations**

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your confidential feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

### Digital Course Evaluation (AEFIS)

UW-Madison uses a digital course evaluation survey tool called [AEFIS](#). For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. Evaluations are anonymous. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

## **Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities**

### **Diversity & Inclusion Statement**

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

## **Academic Integrity Statement**

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Statement**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

## **[Academic Calendar & Religious Observances](#)**

### **Assignments & Course Grades:**

- Attendance and Participation ..... 15%
- In-class Quizzes:
  - Quiz #1 (Oct 3) ..... 10%
  - Quiz #2 (Oct 31) ..... 10%
- Reflection Papers:
  - 10 papers @ 3% each ..... 30%
- Investigative Retail Report (Due Nov 28) ..... 15%
- Business Case Study Report (Due Dec 14) ..... 20%

### **Grading:**

A	93-100
AB	88-92
B	83-87
BC	78-82
C	70-77
D	60-69
F	59 and below

## **Graded Work:**

Graded assignments, other than *Attendance and Participation* (see Rubric below), will consist of the following:

- **Reflection Papers:** 1-2 page written reflective summary papers based on assigned articles, textbook chapters, and videos.
- **Quizzes:** Two in-class quizzes will be administered and will consist of short-answer questions based on lecture content, assigned readings/videos, and class discussion.
- **Investigative Retail Report:** 2-4 page written report where students describe and evaluate the economic, environmental, and social impact of ten retail food items. A brief in-class presentation is also required.
- **Business Case Study Report:** 3-6 page written report where students thoroughly analyze and evaluate two food-related businesses case models operating in Wisconsin. A brief in-class presentation is also required.

## **Attendance and Participation Rubric**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Accomplished</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>0 points</b> 5 or more absences	<b>10-20 points</b> 3-4 absences	<b>30-40 points</b> 2 absences	<b>50 points</b> Attended all class sessions or at most 1 absence	<b>/50</b>
	<b>0-10 points</b> Student does not initiate contribution & needs instructor to solicit input. Does not listen to others; does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion, etc.	<b>20-50 points</b> Student initiates contribution at least in half of the class sessions. Student is often inattentive and occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	<b>60-80 points</b> Student initiates contribution often and is mostly attentive when others present ideas. Provides mostly insightful and constructive comments relevant to the discussion or speaker	<b>90-100 points</b> Student initiates contributions during most if not all class sessions. Student listens attentively to other's comments, including speakers, and builds off remarks by contributing to the dialogue.	<b>/100</b>
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/150</b>

## Course Schedule:

### Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>

- Introductions
- Syllabus review
- Canvas course page review
- Needs Assessment
- Class discussion - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEcnU2XNNJ0>

### Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Economics of Food
- **Reading:** “Corporate concentration in the US food system makes food more expensive and less accessible for many Americans” - <https://theconversation.com/corporate-concentration-in-the-us-food-system-makes-food-more-expensive-and-less-accessible-for-many-americans-151193>
  - **Reflection paper #1 due by 1:20pm**

### Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Economics of Food
- **Reading:** “To Revive Rural America, We Must Fix Our Broken Food System” - <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/to-revive-rural-america-we-must-fix-our-broken-food-system/>

### Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Economics of Food
- **Watch:** “Food, Inc” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGrggPQFU3A&t=630s>
  - **Reflection paper #2 due by 1:20pm**

### Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>

- **Lecture:** Economics of Food
- **Watch:** “Monopoly Power in our Food System webinar” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EW4dy5AwuMY>

### Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Economics of Food
- **Reading:** “Revealed: the true extent of America’s food monopolies, and who pays the price” - <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2021/jul/14/food-monopoly-meals-profits-data-investigation>
  - **Reflection paper #3 due by 1:20pm**

### Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Economics of Food
- **Reading:** “Op-ed: Fake Meat Won’t Solve the Climate Crisis” - <https://civileats.com/2022/04/07/op-ed-fake-meat-wont-solve-the-climate-crisis/>

Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>

- **QUIZ #1**

Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Government Intervention
- **Reading:** “USDA Announces Framework” - <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/06/01/usda-announces-framework-shoring-food-supply-chain-and-transforming>
- **Reading:** “Sri Lanka’s organic farming disaster, explained” - <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2022/7/15/23218969/sri-lanka-organic-fertilizer-pesticide-agriculture-farming>

Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Insecurity
- **Reading:** “Why giving surplus food to charities is not a solution to food poverty” - <https://theconversation.com/why-giving-surplus-food-to-charities-is-not-a-solution-to-food-poverty-72210>
  - **Reflection paper #4 due by 1:20pm**

Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Insecurity
- **Reading:** “Inflation hits Wisconsin food pantries and the families they support” - <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/inflation-hits-wisconsin-food-pantries-and-the-families-they-support/>
- **Reading:** “The hunger industry: does charity put a Band-Aid on American Inequality?” - <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/28/our-unequal-earth-food-insecurity-aid-corporate>

Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Socio-Economic Polarization of Food
- **Reading:** “What Food Says About Class in America” - <https://www.newsweek.com/what-food-says-about-class-america-69951>
  - **Reflection paper #5 due by 1:20pm**

Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Socio-Economic Polarization of Food
- **Reading:** “Greater Equality: The Hidden Key to Better Health and Higher Scores” - <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ920510.pdf>

Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup>

- **Class Discussion:** The Social Impact of Food Production
- **Watch:** “Food Chains” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vw-qTCW8fo>
- **Watch:** “How 4 Companies Control the Beef Industry” - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_hCljUrK1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_hCljUrK1E)

Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** The Environment
- **Reading:** “A shrinking fraction of the world’s major crops goes to feed the hungry, with more used for nonfood purposes” - <https://theconversation.com/a-shrinking-fraction-of-the-worlds-major-crops-goes-to-feed-the-hungry-with-more-used-for-nonfood-purposes-181819>
- **Reading:** “Climate Change Is Intensifying the Effects of Fertilizer Runoff” - <https://modernfarmer.com/2021/12/nitrogen-fertilizer-runoff-midwest/>
  - **Reflection paper #6 due by 1:20pm**

Monday, October 31<sup>st</sup>

- **QUIZ #2**

Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>

- **Lecture:** Business of Food
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 1

Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Business of Food
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 2
  - **Reflection paper #7 due by 1:20pm**

Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Business Models: Business Overview
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 3

Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Business Models: Operations
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 4
  - **Reflection paper #8 due by 1:20pm**

Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Business Models: Marketing
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 5

Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Business Models: Case Studies #1
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 6
  - **Reflection paper #9 due by 1:20pm**

Wednesday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **No Class**

Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>

- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 7
- **Investigative Retail Report due by 1:20pm**
  - **Student Presentations**

Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

- **Lecture:** Food Business Models: Case Studies #2
- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 8

Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

- **Reading:** Howard - Chapter 9
  - **Reflection paper #10 due by 1:20pm**

Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

- **Class Project:** Wisconsin Food Project

Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>

- **Class Project:** Wisconsin Food Project

Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>

- **Business Case Study Report due by 1:20pm**
  - **Student Presentations**