

**ENVS 350F (4 credits)**  
**Solutions to Environmental Problems (STEP): Food Systems**  
**Loyola University Chicago**  
**SYLLABUS - Fall 2018**

**Instructor:** Dr. Tania Schusler, 425 BVM Hall, 773-508-8954, tschusler@luc.edu  
**Office hours:** Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 p.m. and by appointment  
**Class meets:** Tuesdays from 1:00-2:15 p.m. and Thursdays from 1:00-3:45 p.m. in IES 110  
**Sakai site:** ENVS 350F 01E F18

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### **Contributing Instructors**

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This course includes instruction by faculty from across Loyola:

Dan Amick, Anthropology & IES	Marilyn Krogh, Sociology
Lena Hatchett, Stritch School of Medicine	Mariana Valencia Mestre, IES
Chris Peterson, IES	Michael Welch, School of Business

Several practitioners working in various sectors of food system sustainability also will share their expertise with us through class visits and field trips.

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### **Overview & Objectives**

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STEP is an interdisciplinary, hands-on course in which students develop and implement practical, local solutions to pressing global problems. Because of our focus on community engagement and leadership in sustainability, this course satisfies Loyola's Engaged Learning requirement.

#### IDEA Objectives

- Gain a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., facts, methods, principles)
- Learn to apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions
- Develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in this field
- Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team

#### Course Objectives

By successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate a multi-disciplinary understanding of the food system
- Make food-related choices that align with one's values
- Identify root causes of problems within the food system
- Actualize practical solutions through collective action to increase food system sustainability
- Demonstrate skills essential for working in the sustainability field: critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration, problem solving, project management, and leadership

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### **Texts**

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Weekly readings (including research articles, governmental and organizational reports, and case studies) will be posted on Sakai in Resources.

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## Course Structure

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We will explore the cultural, historical, economic, political, and environmental contexts of our food system from local to global scales. We will also focus on the health, environmental, and social consequences of the food system, while working to address some of these issues on campus and in our local community. The course consists of these elements:

Readings, Lectures & Discussions – Faculty from multiple departments within Loyola will provide you with a well-rounded understanding of the environmental, social, economic, and political intricacies of our local, national, and global food systems. Weekly readings posted on Sakai will enrich lectures, and discussions will explore student and faculty ideas about course topics. **You will be assessed on this content through two Synthesis Papers in addition to your participation in class discussions.**

Debates – Team debates (3-4 students/team) will occur on controversial issues within the food system. You will conduct independent research and prepare with your teammates to argue for or against a specific proposition. **You will be assessed by the quality of written, preparatory notes from your research, as well your oral contributions during the debate.**

Field Trips and Documentaries – These will occur on selected Thursdays. During field trips, we will get out of the classroom, see examples of solutions in the field, and learn practical skills relevant to the food system from professionals in the field. Documentaries will highlight current issues related to food and agriculture. **You will be assessed by your participation in these activities.**

Project-Based Learning – A **significant** portion of your work in this course will focus on semester-long group projects. Through the projects, you will have an opportunity to apply learning toward creating real and lasting solutions on campus or in the local community. **You will be assessed through 1) group presentation of proposed project, 2) project plan, 3) teamwork check-in, 4) teaching your topic, 5) final product, and 6) poster presentation.**

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## Assessments

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Participation (100 points) – I expect you to participate actively throughout the course. Participation is not just attending class or field trips, but being prepared and engaging thoughtfully in discussion by asking questions and sharing reflections. Because it is difficult if not impossible to make up field trips or documentary screenings, you will receive 10 points for preparing, attending, and actively participating in each of the following activities:

- *Fresh* Documentary
- Talking Farm Field Trip
- *Just Eat It* Documentary
- Food Preservation Lab
- Testa Produce Field Trip
- Field trip or Documentary TBA

The remaining 40 participation points will reflect your attendance and the quality of your interaction with peers and faculty during lectures, discussions, and other classroom activities.

2 Synthesis Papers (100 points each, 200 points total)

**DUE by start of class on 10/11 and 11/27 via Sakai Assignments**

Every 6-7 weeks, you will write a paper that reflects upon and synthesizes your understanding of course content during the specified time period and relates that content to your own professional goals and/or personal life. You will draw mainly upon readings, but can integrate lectures, discussions, documentaries, and field trips as relevant. *Optional*: Rather than submit a paper, you can post your synthesis online to a personal blog or LinkedIn long-form post. Provide the URL via Sakai Assignments so I can assess it using the same criteria below.

An exemplary synthesis paper will:

Compellingly advance a central thesis Demonstrate understanding of course content, including accurately and precisely referencing <u>at least 10</u> course materials (readings, lectures, field trips) from roughly the prior 6-7 weeks, <u>at least 7 of which are readings</u> Extend understanding by connecting course content with other aspects of your life	50 pts
Raise novel insights Demonstrate original, critical, and/or creative thinking Be suitable to a <i>general</i> audience (NOT someone taking our class)	20 pts
Accurately attribute information to sources within the text Include complete citations for references at end	10 pts
Be logically organized Be concisely written Use active voice Use paragraphs that include a topic sentence followed by supporting sentences Be free of typos or grammatical errors Be 800-1,200 words long Optional: Include relevant photos, diagrams, or figures with proper credit to sources	20 pts

Debate (40 points)

**Written notes DUE via Sakai Assignments by start of class on debate date: 9/13, 10/4 or 11/8**

In teams of 3-4, you will debate one of the propositions below.

1. Feeding the world's growing population requires industrial agriculture.
2. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are safe for the environment and human health.
3. Viable protein alternatives exist to reduce substantively the negative climate and other environmental impacts of industrial meat production.

You will submit preparatory notes based on independently conducted research prior to the debate and orally contribute by filling a specific role during the debate. See Sakai for detailed instructions.

Engaged Learning Reflection (10 points) DUE to Sakai Assignments at 11:55 pm on 12/6

Loyola University Chicago Mission Statement: “We are Chicago’s Jesuit, Catholic university – a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith.”

Holding in mind the University’s mission statement, please compose a written reflection of at least two double-spaced pages that explains:

- How did you connect your in-class and out-of-class Engaged Learning experiences?
- How did your Engaged Learning experience help you connect to the University’s mission?
- How did the Engaged Learning experience in this course affect your personal, intellectual, civic, and/or professional development?

Group Project (200 points total) – See project documents on Sakai for detailed instructions.

Proposed Project Presentation (20 points)

You will present your proposed project with your group members in class on **9/20**.

Project Plan (50 points) DUE 9/27--MUST have mentor’s approval.

You will work with your group to develop a project proposal.

Teamwork Check In (5 points) – to be completed in class **9/28**

You will assess your group’s performance and adjust as needed to improve progress.

Teach Your Topic (25 points) – In class on **11/29** or **12/4**

Your group will teach the rest of the class about your project topic. We will discuss expectations and generate criteria for evaluating your instruction together in class.

Final Product (60 points) Draft due 11/15, final due 12/6

Your group will create a final product suitable to your project objectives.

Poster Presentation (40 points) Due via email 11/29. The poster should be original, accurate, and professional. You MUST have my approval before it will go to print.

Your group will create a poster and present it publicly during our last day of class.

**\* Not all students within your group will necessarily receive the same grade. Achievement will be partially evaluated via self and group member assessments.\***

Course Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A (93-100%)	511-550	C+ (77-79%)	423-439	D+ (67-69%)	368-384
A- (90-92%)	495-510	C (73-76%)	401-422	D (63-66%)	346-367
B+ (87-89%)	478-494	C- (70-72%)	385-400	D- (60-62%)	330-345
B (83-86%)	457-477			F	329 & below
B- (80-82%)	440-456				

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## Course Policies

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Late Assignments – I will not accept late assignments unless arranged with me IN ADVANCE or in the case of a documented medical emergency.

Engaged Learning Documentation – To fulfill Loyola’s Engaged Learning requirement, you will need to document the project you are doing (including the site, mentor, hours, and learning objectives) in LOCUS. For help navigating LOCUS, visit: <http://luc.edu/experiential/forstudents/locustutorial/>. The Center for Experiential Learning staff is also available to assist you if needed.

Academic Honesty – You will be held to the University’s standard of academic integrity described at: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml). Please read this statement carefully and do not hesitate to ask me for further information about plagiarism and how to appropriately cite the work of others. Also visit <http://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism> to understand better what constitutes plagiarism.

Writing Center – The Writing Center offers tutors who are available to help you at any point of the writing process, from brainstorming and organizing to putting the final touches on a bibliography. To learn more or schedule a session, visit <http://www.luc.edu/writing/>.

Accommodations for Disabilities – Please let me know as soon as possible if you require accommodation for a disability. I will be happy to work with you. Disabilities must first be registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. For more information, visit <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/>.

Technology Use – As a courtesy to your instructors and classmates, your cell phone should be off during all class meetings. You can use your tablet or laptop ONLY for note-taking or project-related tasks. Absolutely NO email, Facebook, web-surfing or other distractions will be tolerated during lectures.

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## Course Calendar

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Our schedule follows on the next page. All activities are subject to change. I will provide notice of any changes in advance.

Date	Tuesday 1:00-2:15 pm	Date	Thursday 1:00-3:45 pm
8-28	Welcome to STEP: Food Systems What is a food system? (Schusler)	8-30	Origins of Agriculture (Amick) <a href="#">Project Overview &amp; Team Formation</a>
9-4	<a href="#">Project Workday</a>	9-6	Agricultural Paradigms (Schusler) Film & Discussion: FRESH <a href="#">Project Workday</a>
9-11	<a href="#">Sustainable Meal – Eat and Discuss</a> <a href="#">Project Workday</a>	9-13	Debate 1: Feeding the Planet <a href="#">Writing for Impact</a> <a href="#">Project Workday</a>
9-18	Green Revolution & Genetic Engineering (Peterson)	9-20	<a href="#">Project Presentations (in class)</a>
9-25	Agriculture & Food Policy (Schusler)	9-27	Urban Agriculture <i>Field Trip: The Talking Farm</i> <a href="#">Project Plan Due to TS &amp; Mentor</a> <a href="#">Teamwork Check-in Due</a>
10-2	Health Disparities & Community Food Systems (Hatchett)	10-4	Debate 2: Genetically Modified Organisms <a href="#">Project Workday</a>
10-9	<i>Mid-semester Break – No class</i>	10-11	Food Waste Film & Discussion: JUST EAT IT
10-16	<a href="#">Project Workday</a> <a href="#">Synthesis 1 Due</a>	10-18	Food Distribution <i>Field Trip: Testa Produce</i>
10-23	Climate Change & Food Choices (Schusler)	10-25	Food and the Circular Economy <i>Field Trip: The Plant</i>
10-30	<a href="#">Project Workday</a>	11-1	Food Preservation – Canning Lab <i>Field Trip: Peterson Garden Project</i> Meet at the Broadway Armory (Broadway & Thorndale)
11-6	Global Food Security (Krogh)	11-8	Debate 3: Consuming Meat <a href="#">Project Workday</a>
11-13	Agroecology (Valencia Mestre)	11-15	TBD <a href="#">Draft Final Product Due</a>
11-20	Sustainability in the Food Industry (Welch and Wondolowski)	11-22	<i>Thanksgiving – No Class</i>
11-27	<a href="#">Project workday</a> <a href="#">Synthesis 2 Due</a>	11-29	<a href="#">Teach your topic! Student-led content related to projects</a> <a href="#">Project Poster Due</a>
12-4	<a href="#">Teach your topic! Student-led content related to projects</a>	12-6	<a href="#">Public Poster Session, IES Atrium</a> <a href="#">Project Final Product Due</a> Course Evaluation <a href="#">Engaged Learning Reflection Due</a>
		12-14	One-on-one consultations 1-3 pm

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## Related Events & Opportunities

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### Upcoming Events

- Loyola Farmers Market – Every Monday, 3 – 7 pm, through October 16<sup>th</sup> on the Loyola CTA stop plaza <http://blogs.luc.edu/farmersmarket/>
- Loyola Urban Agriculture Volunteer Days - Meet at IES Greenhouse. From 11 am to 1 pm on: September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4, 11, 18, December 2 <http://www.luc.edu/sustainability/initiatives/urban-agriculture/educationandoutreach/>
- HungerWeek – Check [luc.edu/hungerweek](http://luc.edu/hungerweek) for event schedule, such as Hunger Banquet, Poverty Simulation, and Sustainable Food Fair

### Extend Your Project's Impact

In addition to our public poster session in December, other opportunities exist to extend the impact of your project by sharing it with others:

- Student Perspectives About Civic Engagement (SPACE) – This online journal hosted by a consortium of Chicago area universities welcomes manuscripts from students who have had a robust civic engagement experience and want to further explore its meaning through writing. <http://digitalcommons.ni.edu/space/about.html>
- Undergraduate Research and Engagement Symposium – Although URES will not take place until next April, you are encouraged to present your STEP project as an oral paper or poster. Watch for the call for presentations in the spring semester. <http://www.luc.edu/luop/undergraduateresearchengagementsymposium/>