



Poli 60: Global Politics of Food & Agriculture

Time: MW 2:45-4:00PM

Location: Carnegie 11

Instructor: Brian Engelsma

Email: Brian.Engelsma@pomona.edu

Course Website: <https://pomona.instructure.com/>

Office Hours: Tues. 11:00AM-1:00PM, or by appointment.

This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified of any changes through email.

Course Description: Addresses interplay among states and growers, how environmental problems affect farms around the world and the various ways that producers and governments attempt to address such problems; current issues in agricultural science and economics and debates about genetic engineering; international patent law and intellectual property.

Class Texts: There are no required textbooks. All class readings will be made available through Canvas. Please complete all assigned readings before the class in which they are assigned. There will be regular reading quizzes throughout the semester, described in more detail below. You are not responsible for readings labeled optional, and they will not be included on any quizzes or exams.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Assess the role of agricultural production in the formation of political institutions.
2. Identify political institutions governing and regulating agricultural production.
3. Discuss collective action problems facing agricultural producers, and several potential solutions.
4. Understand how agricultural production influences conflict.
5. Explain how famines, droughts, and technological changes affect elections and other political outcomes.
6. Describe the role of free trade and fair trade in global agriculture markets.
7. Consider how agricultural production and consumption influences the policy making process.
8. Research agricultural policy in a country of their choice.

Grading:

Final Grades will be calculated with the following weights:

Participation	5%
Reading Quizzes	5%
Agricultural Commodity Report	15%
Simulation	
Simulation Memo	10%
Simulation Reflection	5%
Midterm Exam	25%
Research Project	
Research Presentation	5%
Research Paper	30%

Note: No extra credit will be offered in this course.

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 94.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 93.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	60.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	≤ 59.99	F
77.00 - 79.99	C+		

Course Policies:

• General

- Exams are closed book, closed notes, reading quizzes are open-notes.
- Late assignments will not be accepted without a legitimate, documented excuse. Please inform me as soon as possible if you anticipate needing any accommodations.
- **No makeup quizzes or exams will be given.**

• Assignments and Evaluations

- Participation: I expect students to regularly contribute to our in-class discussions with thoughtful questions and comments that engage with course materials. Participation grades will be based on both the quantity and quality of contributions. A high-volume of low-effort contributions will not guarantee a good participation score, nor will occasional high-quality contributions.
- Reading Quizzes: Regular reading quizzes will be given throughout the course. Quizzes will be a combination of questions written by the instructor and you and your fellow students, and will be a mixture of multiple choice and true false. Quizzes will be done through Canvas. More details will be given during the first class meeting.
- Agricultural Commodity Report: Students will gain expertise on an agricultural commodity of their choice. You will write a 4-6 page paper analyzing this commodity. This analysis may focus on the need or effectiveness of interventions by

the government or other relevant actors, or on the political and social ramifications of your chosen agricultural commodity.

- Mid-term Exam: There will be a mid-term exam on March 11th. It will be a closed book exam conducted on Canvas. The exam will consist of multiple choice questions, definitions, and short answers. Additional details will be provided in-class.
- In-Class Simulation: We will have an in-class simulation, which will take the form of a meeting among international stakeholders to discuss a common pool resource problem. Students will be randomly assigned to teams.
 - * Simulation Memo: Before the simulation, each student will prepare a three page memo outlining their stakeholder’s objectives and potential strategies to achieve these objectives. The memo should include a recommended course of action for the simulation. Memos should be completed individually before meeting with your teammates.
 - * Simulation Reflection: Following the simulation, students will write a brief (2-3 page) reflection paper. This paper should analyze what happened during the simulation, with special attention to summarizing their personal experiences and describing the thought process behind their actions.
- Research Project: Students will prepare a research project during the course. You have two options for your project. Regardless of which option you select, I expect students to regularly communicate with me on your proposed projects. We will have one in-class workshop dedicated to final projects, which I will describe in greater detail during class.

The first option is to write a research paper on a topic of your choosing. You will select an appropriate research question, review relevant literature, formulate hypotheses, and evaluate your hypotheses using appropriate evidence. Your analysis could involve the structured comparison of qualitative cases, the use of appropriate summary statistics, or some other approach approved in discussion with me.

The second option is a project of your own creation approved by me. I recognize that many students taking this course may be coming from different academic backgrounds, and with a variety of personal and professional goals. I am open to any other reasonable structure for a final project so long as it includes original research and analysis. Potential structures could include an in-depth analysis of a particular crop or value chain, a report to a business, NGO, or government organization, a policy proposal to a public body, etc. If you are considering this option I recommend discussing it with me sooner rather than later so we can form an appropriate plan of action.

- * Final Presentation: Students should prepare and present a seven minute presentation based on their project, to be delivered during the last week of classes.
- * Final Paper: Students will write a 15-20 page paper based on their project to be turned in during finals week.

- **Grades**

- Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets expectations**; Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations; Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
- Grades will be maintained in Canvas. Students are responsible for tracking their progress by referring to the online gradebook.
- If you are dissatisfied with a grade, you may contest your grade by writing a one-page memo within one week of receiving your grade. This memo should describe both what you believe to be the grading error, as well as the grade you feel you deserve. Note that regrade requests should be to correct an error in grading, not to negotiate for a higher grade.

University Resources and Policies:

- **The Writing Center:** The Center for Speaking, Writing, and the Image (formerly The Writing Center) is one of the most widely-used academic resources on campus and is a fantastic, free resource for all students. Writing, Speaking, and Image Partners meet one-on-one with students to talk about their work and provide feedback at any stage of their preparation process. Trained to think deeply about written, oral, and visual rhetoric and communication, these student peers facilitate conversations about everything from ID1 papers to senior theses, lab reports to creative writing, giving presentations to developing strategies for reading and engaging more deeply and confidently in class discussion. The CSWIM also offers specialized writing and speaking support for multilingual students navigating English as an additional language (email Jenny.Thomas@pomona.edu for more information.) To make an appointment with a Writing, Speaking, or Image Partner, please log onto the Portal and go to Academics Writing Center. They can also pair you with a regular Writing or Speaking Partner for weekly or bi-monthly appointments over the course of the semester. Contact them at writing.center@pomona.edu. They offer both in-person and virtual appointments, and have regular drop-in hours in Smith Campus Center 148.
- **Quantitative Skills Center:** Some students may choose to include the quantitative analysis of data in their research projects. The Quantitative Skills Center (QSC) provides academic support to Pomona College students in courses that feature a large degree of quantitative and/or scientific reasoning through our QSC Partners Program. QSC partners meet one-on-one with students to provide support for a variety of Pomona courses for course specific help. The QSC also offers non-course specific help in general quantitative skills and offers consultations for projects and theses involving quantitative methods. To make an appointment at the QSC, please visit pomona.mywconline.com, or contact us at qsc@pomona.edu. The QSC is located in SCC (Smith Campus Center) 228.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** I expect all students to uphold the principles of academic integrity throughout the course. Lying, cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated under any circumstances. You can read more about the college's academic dishonesty policies at <https://catalog.pomona.edu/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=8860>.

- **Accessibility & Accommodations:** Students requiring special accommodations may request them through Accessibility Resources and Services. Please inform me of any accommodations with the proper documentation as soon as possible. More information is available online at <https://www.pomona.edu/accessibility/student-accessibility>.

If at any point in the semester your personal circumstances make it difficult for you to keep up with the course, please let me know as soon as possible so I can make sure to provide you with whatever support and accommodations you may need.

- **Inclusion & Basic Needs:** I am committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspective, experience, and identity. To that end, half of all course texts have at least one author from a group underrepresented in academia. Harassment of any form will not be tolerated. Any speech or act that is blatantly or implicitly discriminatory, intimidating, or predatory will be reported to [Student Affairs](#).

Course Outline:

Any changes to this outline will be announced on Canvas.

Class	Content
	Unit 1: Agricultural Production and the State
Class 1: January 21	• Syllabus/Course Overview • Food and Politics • Readings: 1. SKIM: Bates, Robert H. and William P. Rogerson. 1980. "Agriculture in Development: A Coalitional Analysis." <i>Public Choice</i>. Link 2. Conway, Gordon. 2012. <i>One Billion Hungry: Can We Feed the World?</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapter 4. 3. Mann, Charles C. 2019. <i>The Wizard and the Prophet</i>. New York, NY: Vintage Press. Pages 39-40. 4. Thurow, Roger. 2012. <i>The Last Hunger Season: A Year in an African Community on the Brink of Change</i>. New York, NY: Public Affairs. Chapter 1. 5. Optional: Watch Harris, Johnny. 2020. <i>How the U.S. Snagged All These Islands</i>. Youtube. Link.
Class 2: January 26	• The Original Affluent Society? • Readings: 1. Sahlins, Marshall. 1974. <i>Stone Age Economics</i>. London, U.K.: Routledge. Chapter 1. 2. Suzman, James. 2017. <i>Affluence without Abundance: The Disappearing World of the Bushmen</i>. New York, NY: Bloomsbury. Chapters 1, 8 and 15. 3. Optional: Watch Ragusea, Adam. <i>How people first boiled food</i>. Youtube. Link.
Class 3: January 28	• Peasant Communities • Readings: 1. Popkin, Samuel L. 1979. <i>The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam</i>. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapter 2. 2. Scott, James C. 1976. <i>The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia</i>. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

Class	Content
Class 4: February 2	• Agriculture and the State I - The Agrarian State Hypothesis • Readings: 1. Diamond, Jared. 1997. <i>Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies</i>. New York, NY: W.W. Norton. Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 14. 2. Optional: Watch Ragusea, Adam. <i>How the Potato Made the World</i>. Youtube. Link.
Class 5: February 4	• Agriculture and the State II - The Agrarian State Hypothesis Reconsidered • Readings: 1. Scott, James C. 2017. <i>Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States</i>. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Introduction; Chapters 4 and 6. 2. Optional: OER Project. <i>How Farming Led to the Formation of States</i>. Youtube. Link.
Class 6: February 9	• Experiments in Agriculture - Researching Food • Readings: 1. Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. <i>Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation</i>. New York, NY: W.W. Norton. Ch. 1. 2. Goldstein, Markus et al. 2018. "Formalization without certification? Experimental evidence on property rights and investment." <i>Journal of Development Economics</i>. Link 3. Mann, Charles C. 2019. <i>The Wizard and the Prophet</i>. New York, NY: Vintage Press. Pages 121-143. 4. Optional: Duflo, Esther, Michael Kremer, and Jonathan Robinson. 2011. "Nudging Farmers to Use Fertilizer: Theory and Experimental Evidence from Kenya." <i>American Economic Review</i>. Link 5. Optional: Watch Ragusea, Adam. <i>Why Pizza Steels Beat Pizza Stones (Yes, They Do)</i>. Youtube. Link.
	Unit 2: Producers
Class 7: February 11	• Collective Action, Common Pool Resources, and Governing the Commons • Readings: 1. Olson, Mancur. 1965. <i>The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 1. 2. Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. <i>Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action</i>. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3 and 5. 3. Optional: Watch "Cod is Dead," <i>Rotten</i>. Netflix, 2018.
Class 8: February 16	• Governing World Markets • Readings: 1. Bates, Robert H. 1999. <i>Open-Economy Politics: The Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade</i>. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 4 and 5. 2. Pendergrast, Mark. 2010. <i>Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How it Transformed Our World</i>. New York, NY: Basic Books. Pages 248-255; 268-271. 3. Raynolds, Laura T. 2003. "The Global Banana Trade," in <i>Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas</i> edited by Steve Striffler and Mark Moberg. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Pages 23-47. 4. Optional: Watch Harris, Johnny. <i>How the US Stole Central America (With Bananas)</i>. Youtube. Link. 5. Optional: Watch Soluri, John. <i>The Dark History of Bananas</i>. Youtube. Link.

Class	Content
Class 9: February 18	- Producers and Political Institutions I: Democracy and Autocracy - Readings: - Bates, Robert H. and Steven A. Block. 2013. "Revisiting African Agriculture: Institutional Change and Productivity Growth." <i>Journal of Politics</i>. Link. - Thomson, Henry. 2019. <i>Food and Power</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2 and 3. - Samuels, David J. and Henry Thomson. 2020. "Lord, Peasant . . . and Tractor? Agricultural Mechanization, Moore's Thesis, and the Emergence of Democracy." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i>. Link. - Optional: Varshney, Ashutosh. 1993. "Introduction Urban Bias in Perspective" in <i>Beyond Urban Bias</i> edited by Ashutosh Varshney. Routledge: London, UK.
Class 10: February 23	- Producers and Political Institutions II: Electoral Institutions COMMODITY REPORT DUE - Readings: - Kasara, Kimuli. 2007. "Tax Me If You Can: Ethnic Geography, Democracy, and the Taxation of Agriculture in Africa." <i>American Political Science Review</i>. Link - Rickard, Stephanie. 2018. <i>Spending to Win: Political Institutions, Economic Geography, and Government Subsidies</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 39-53; Ch. 5. - Sukhtankar, Sandip. 2012. "Sweetening the Deal? Political Connections and Sugar Mills in India." <i>American Economic Journal: Applied Economics</i>. Link - Optional: Boone, Catherine and Michael Wahman. 2015. "Rural bias in African electoral systems: Legacies of unequal representation in African democracies." <i>Electoral Studies</i>. Link. - Optional: Rogowski, Ronald and Mark Andreas Kayser. 2002. "Majoritarian Electoral Systems and Consumer Power: Price-Level Evidence from the OECD Countries." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>. Link
Class 11: February 25	- The Green Revolution - Readings: - Mann, Charles C. 2019. <i>The Wizard and the Prophet</i>. New York, NY: Vintage Press. Pages 143-155; 188-200. - Evenson, R.E. and D. Gollin. 2003. "Assessing the Impact of the Green Revolution, 1960 to 2000." <i>Science</i>. Link - Pingali, Prabhu L. 2012. "Green Revolution: Impacts, limits, and the path ahead." <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Science</i>. Link - Optional: Watch OER Project. <i>What is the Green Revolution?</i> Youtube. Link.
Class 12: March 2	- Political and Social Effects of the Green Revolution - Readings: - Dasgupta, Aditya. 2018. "Technological Change and Political Turnover: The Democratizing Effects of the Green Revolution in India." <i>American Political Science Review</i>. Link - Dawson, Neil, Adrian Martin, and Thomas Sikor. 2016. "Green Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications of Imposed Innovation for the Wellbeing of Rural Smallholders". <i>World Development</i>. Link - Shiva, Vandana. 1991. <i>The Violence of the Green Revolution</i>. Zed Books: London, UK. Chapter 5. - Optional: Watch Ragusea, Adam. <i>Problems with the Green Revolution</i>. Youtube. Link. - Optional: Watch Veritasium. <i>The Man Who Killed Millions and Saved Billions</i>. Youtube. Link.

Class	Content
Class 13: March 4	• Land Politics • Readings: 1. Baland, Jean-Marie, and James A. Robinson. 2012. “The Political Value of Land: Political Reform and Land Prices in Chile.” <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>. Link 2. Banerjee, Abhijit, and Lakshmi Iyer. 2005. “History, Institutions, and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India.” <i>The American Economic Review</i>. Link 3. Boone, Catherine. 2014. <i>Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2. 4. Optional: Bastiaens, Ida. 2016. “Investing in agriculture: A preference for democracy or dictatorship?” <i>British Journal of Politics and International Relations</i>. Link.
Class 14: March 9	• Food (In)security - Agriculture and Conflict • Readings: 1. Koren, Ore. 2018 “Food Abundance and Violent Conflict in Africa.” <i>American Journal of Agricultural Economics</i>. Link 2. Rezaeedyakenari, Babak, Steven T. Landis, and Cameron G. Thies. 2020. “Food price volatilities and civilian victimization in Africa.” <i>Conflict Management and Peace Science</i>. Link 3. Optional: Watch “The Avocado War,” <i>Rotten</i>. Netflix, 2019.
Class 15: March 11	• Mid-Term Exam
Class 16: March 23	• Field Trip to Organic Farm (To be confirmed) • Optional: Watch “Common Ground.” 2025. <i>Amazon Prime Video</i>. Link.
Class 17: March 25	• In-Class Simulation • Optional: Watch Wendover Productions. <i>The Broken Economics of Oceans</i>. Youtube. Link.
Class 18: March 30	• In-Class Simulation: Part Deux!
	Unit 3: Consumers
Class 19: April 1	• Hunger, Famine, and Political Stability • Readings: 1. Conway, Gordon. 2012. <i>One Billion Hungry: Can We Feed the World?</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Chapter 2. 2. Thomson, Henry. 2019. <i>Food and Power</i>. Chapter 5. 3. Sen, Amartya. 1999. <i>Development as Freedom</i>. New York, NY: Anchor Books. Chapters 1, 7, and 9. 4. Optional: Walsh, Bryan. 2025. “The world is producing more food crops than ever before.” <i>Vox</i>. Link. 5. Optional: Listen to <i>BBC Focus on Africa</i>. 2023. “Is There a Baguette Shortage in Tunisia.” Link. First 8:30. 6. Optional: Watch CNBC. <i>Why The U.S. Can't Solve Hunger</i> Youtube. Link.

Class	Content
Class 20: April 6	• Food Riots • Readings: 1. Hendrix, Cullen S. and Stephan Haggard. 2015. “Global food prices, regime type, and urban unrest in the developing world.” <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>. Link. 2. Patel, Raj and Philip McMichael. 2014. “A Political Economy of the Food Riot.” in <i>Riot, Unrest and Protest on the Global Stage</i> edited by David Pritchard and Francis Pakes. Palgrave MacMillian: London, UK. 3. Thomson, Henry. 2019. <i>Food and Power</i>. Chapter 4.
Class 21: April 8	• Free and Fair Trade • Readings: 1. Ehrlich, Sean D. 2010. “The Fair Trade Challenge to Embedded Liberalism”. <i>International Studies Quarterly</i>. Link 2. Hainmueller, Jens, Michael J. Hiscox and Sandra Sequeira. 2015. “Consumer Demand for Fair Trade: Evidence from a Multistore Field Experiment.” <i>Review of Economics and Statistics</i>. Link 3. Naoi, Megumi and Ikuo Kume. 2011. “Explaining Mass Support for Agricultural Protectionism: Evidence from a Survey Experiment During the Global Recession.” <i>International Organization</i>. Link 4. Optional: Watch “Bitter Chocolate,” <i>Rotten</i>. Netflix, 2019.
Class 22: April 13	• Public Health Consequences of Food Policy • Readings: 1. Cutler, David M. Edward L. Glaeser and Jesse M. Shapiro. 2003. “Why Have Americans Become More Obese?” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>. Link 2. Hawkes, Corinna et al. 2015. “Smart food policies for obesity prevention.” <i>The Lancet</i>. Link. 3. Berthold, Jess. 2023. “Sugary drink tax improves health, lowers health care costs.” <i>UC Berkeley School of Public Health</i>. Link. 4. Optional: Watch The Present Past. <i>How Sugar Enslaved the World</i>. Youtube. Link. 5. Optional: Watch Edwards, Phil. <i>Frozen orange juice is actually super weird</i>. Youtube. Link.
Class 23: April 15	• Food Deserts • Readings: 1. Bitler, Marianne, and Steven J. Haider. 2010. “An Economic View of Food Deserts in the United States.” <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i>. Link. 2. Zhen, Chen. 2021. “Food Deserts: Myth or Reality?” <i>Annual Review of Resource Economics</i>. Link. 3. Optional: Wright, James. D, Amy. M Donley, Marie C. Gualtieri, and Sara M. Strickhouser. 2016. “Food Deserts: What is the Problem? What is the Solution?” <i>Social Science and Public Policy</i>. Link. 4. Optional: Watch The Guardian. <i>The food deserts of Memphis: inside America’s hunger capital — Divided Cities</i>. Youtube. Link.

Class	Content
Class 24: April 20	- Regulating Food - The California and Delaware Effects - Readings: - Broehm, Victoria. 2022. "Lessons Feed Industry Can Learn From California's Prop 12." <i>American Feed Industry Association</i>. Link. - La, Lynn. 2023. "Supreme Court backs California's pigs proposition." <i>California Matters</i>. Link - Vogel, David. 1995. <i>Trading Up</i>. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. Chapters 1 and 5. - Optional: Watch Edwards, Phil. <i>Why most Americans have never had this bean</i>. Youtube. Link. - Optional: Listen to Flightless Bird. <i>Eggs</i>. Link.
Class 25: April 22	In-Class Workshop - Final Papers
Class 26: April 27	- Soft Power and Gastrodiplomacy - Readings: - Nye, Joseph S. 1990. "Soft Power." <i>Foreign Policy</i>. Link. - Rockower, Paul. 2020. "A Guide to Gastrodiplomacy," in <i>Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy</i> edited by Nancy Snow and Nicholas J. Cull. New York, NY: Routledge. Pages 205-212. - Optional: Listen to <i>The Food Chain</i>. 2025. "Thai food: Winning hearts and minds." Link.
Class 27: April 29	- The Debate Over Meat Alternatives - Readings: - Brown, Marcia. 2023. "The industry tapping K Street to one day dethrone beef." <i>Politico</i>. Link. - Zaleski, Andrew. 2023. "Inside the Battle Between Big Ag and Lab-Grown Meat." <i>The New Republic</i>. Link. - Taylor, Shareefah. 2020. "Meat Wars: The Unsettled Intersection of Federal and State Food Labeling Regulations for Plant-Based Meat Alternatives." <i>University of Massachusetts Law Review</i>. Link. - Optional: Sollee, Kate. 2022. "The Regulation of Lab-Grown Meat under Existing Jurisdictional Authority." <i>Journal of Health Care Law and Policy</i>. Link.
Class 28: May 4	Final Presentations
Class 29: May 6	Final Presentations
Final May 13	Final Paper Due at 5:00PM