Resource Economics 121 – Hunger in a Global Economy RAP Course – Fall 2016

Class Meetings
Mon/Wed 2:30 – 3:45 PM – Wheeler Hall – Room No. B 05

Instructor
Abdul Haleem Kidwai, Department of Resource Economics

E-mail
akidwai@resecon.umass.edu - Response time within 48 hours

Office
215 Stockbridge Hall, 80 Campus Center Way, Amherst, MA 01003

Office Hours
1:00 – 2:00 PM – Mon Wed; as well as by appointment

Course Objectives

- Understanding hunger through an inter-disciplinary perspective
- In-depth engagement with key issues – trade, climate change amongst others
- Critically examine the proposed solutions to hunger i.e. ethical consumption, green revolution

Course Description

Hunger in a global economy is one of the most important questions that we face today. One can argue that it is the question. After all, modern human civilization owes its existence to the development of agriculture. The problem of hunger is a multi-faceted one and therefore can be dealt with a variety of perspectives. For this course, we will examine the problem through the methods of analysis in social sciences, with a particular focus on techniques developed in economics. The goal would be to use these methods to engage with fundamental questions - where and why does hunger exist? And why does it persist? What policy responses have been formulated? What are the limitations of these responses? Of course, these methods cannot give us a definitive answer but they can enable us to highlight some key issues. We will examine the inter-connectedness of the global economy and how the production, consumption and distribution of food fits into it. We will draw upon qualitative and quantitative evidence to grasp this complex challenge. By the end of the course, we will have an understanding of the central issues and familiarity with the key debates related to hunger in our global economy.

General Education Objectives

This course is part of the University’s General Education program which seeks to enrich your learning experience. The purpose of the program is to equip you for lifelong learning and to comprehend a rapidly changing world. This course on Hunger in a Global Economy will help
develop the skills advocated the General Education program. You will be expected to engage in inquiry and analysis of this complex multi-faceted problem (hunger/poverty/inequality/distribution); critical analysis of existing issues using both quantitative and qualitative data (reading empirical studies as well as human interest news stories); drawing connections between what you read and real-world issues that you see around you (hunger in developing countries as compared to the US); clearly communicate your ideas to your classmates through discussions and presentations as well as to me through your writing; utilize existing resources, both on-campus and online, to understand this issue.

I highly recommend that you visit the General Education website to learn more about it: http://www.umass.edu/gened/index.html

**Residential Academic Program (RAP)**

This course is part of a unique educational opportunity, the Residential Academic Program. The purpose of the RAP is to ensure your smooth transition into college life. You will acquire the skills that you will need to succeed in college – the ability to critically analyze issues, to be able to discuss it with your peers, to present your ideas in front of others, to write effectively, to be punctual and follow deadlines. During the course, I will introduce you to resources on campus such as the library databases, the Writing Center, etc. Above all, the course will ask you to reflect deeply on issues of global importance – questions of wealth and income distribution, notion of fairness, role of technology in ending hunger – and to connect with other courses and life experiences.

**Grading – How you will be assessed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Fraction of Total Grade</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15 per cent</td>
<td>All classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Quizzes</td>
<td>20 per cent</td>
<td>Randomly Assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
<td>20 per cent</td>
<td>5(^{th}) Dec (Final Submission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>25 per cent</td>
<td>Through November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20 per cent</td>
<td>16(^{th}) December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Class Participation** (15 per cent)

This will be based on your attendance, questions you ask about the reading material, your responses to questions posed in class, listening attentively to the lecture and involvement in class discussions. Most importantly, I expect you to have read the assigned reading. Failure to do so would count as an absence, which entails a drop in your letter grade. So please do read beforehand!
- **In-class pop quizzes** (20 per cent)

There will be several quizzes throughout the semester. They will have multiple-choice and/or open-ended questions. The questions will be based on the material covered in class and the assigned readings. You will be allotted 20 minutes to finish them. The lowest score on the quiz will be dropped. These will be closed book quizzes, that is, you would not be allowed to refer to any material to answer these.

- **Final Exam** (20 per cent)

You will have two-hours to finish this exam. It will consist of multiple-choice and/or open-ended questions. The questions will be based on the material covered in class and the assigned readings. On the day of the exam, you will be allowed to bring an index card with your notes on it. However, you will not be allowed to refer to any material during the exam. [Tentative Date – 16th December]

- **Written Assignment** (20 per cent)

You will prepare a 1,000 word assignment on a journal article of your choice. Your task will be to argue for its inclusion in the course syllabus (I might just add it for the next time I teach, so choose carefully!). The first component would be to ensure that it is indeed a journal article, and not a newspaper or magazine report. Next would be to make sure that it is a respected journal, not a vanity journal (yes, unfortunately, academic fraud exists, therefore, stay clear of pay to publish journals). I will help you in the process of identifying an appropriate article, keep me in the loop of your article search. So once you have your article, prepare your assignment with two parts. In the first part you should present the key findings of the article and in the second part, you should demonstrate how these findings are relevant to this course. You will be graded on

[Tentative Dates – Choose paper by 15th October / First Draft by 15th November / Final Submission by 5th December]

- **Group Presentation** (25 per cent)

These presentations would be in-class and towards the end of the semester. You and two other of your classmates (making it a group of three) will be given a question / issue to present on. You will have to synthesize the insights you gained throughout the course. This presentation should not a simple summary of facts. You should strive for some analysis.

Your group will have a total of 20 minutes, of which fifteen will be for presenting and the remaining five minutes for discussion. You can choose your own group members or you can ask me to place you in a group. [Tentative Dates – Late October and throughout November]

Bonus Points (5 per cent) – You get these bonus points for simply reading the syllabus! As long as you do not ask me a question that has already been answered in the syllabus, you will get these bonus points. The easiest points that you will get in this course, and probably the campus!
Textbook / Assigned Readings
There is no assigned textbook for the course. You are already spending an exorbitant amount on your education. I do not intend to burden you further. All required reading material or links would be posted on Moodle.

Academic Honesty Statement
As for cheating, don’t. If caught cheating, I will follow the procedures as per the University’s Academic Honest Policy. Please read and familiarize yourself with it http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acad honesty/

Accommodation Policy Statement
The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services or the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Tentative Timeline – (All Readings are on Moodle)

Week 1 – The Fundamental Questions about Food
Week 2 – The Philosopher Economist, Amartya Sen, on Hunger
Week 3 – Key Concepts related to Hunger
Week 4 – Key Concepts related to the Global Economy
Week 5 – The International Context of Hunger
Week 6 – Paradox of Hunger and Obesity with special reference to US
Week 7 – International Trade and Hunger
Week 8 – Climate Change and Hunger
Week 9 – Green Revolution
Week 10 – Ethical Consumption and Hunger
Week 11 – Group Presentations
Week 12 – Policies and Responses to World Hunger
Week 13 – Assignment Submission and Exam
Last but Not Least

Attendance

This class has been designed as a participatory class and if you are absent, then the class will not succeed. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. If for some valid reason you will not be able to make it, let me know and we will work something out. As I said, the reason should be valid. Attendance counts towards your class participation grade. For every class you miss, I will reduce your letter grade by one letter i.e. if you score A- but missed a class, you will earn a B+.

Time

Please arrive on time (ideally fully awake) and don’t pack up before time. We start at 2:30 PM. Therefore, plan on arriving a few minutes early, so you have enough time to settle down. We also end at 3:45 PM. If I drone on beyond that, remind me to stop!

Electronic Devices

Please refrain from using electronic devices i.e. laptops, tablets during class EXCEPT for the purpose of taking notes. However, according to latest research you learn more when you take notes on old-fashioned paper. True story. I am not making this up. Cell phones are NOT permitted under any circumstances. If you have some emergency i.e. a family member in hospital, please inform me and I will make an exception.

NOTE: Do remember bring your laptop in week #6 because you will be required to complete a mid-semester feedback survey.

Respectful Learning Environment

Please show due courtesy to everyone (and that includes the instructor!). Make sure your behavior is neither distracting nor offensive. Please strive to build an environment conducive to learning.

Communication

If you have any concerns, doubts, questions or any issues whatsoever about the course, feel free to talk to me. I genuinely value your feedback. You can reach me through email as well as see me during office hours. It is important to remember that successful communication is a two-way street. Therefore, I will urge you to regularly check your email, that is, your school email address, not your personal email. If you are not already checking your school email regularly (which means at least twice a day), then please do so now. Furthermore, checking your email is not enough. If your response is required, then please do respond!

Progress through Course

To ensure that you are on track and are not struggling with the course, I will arrange for individual meetings either during office hours or at a mutually convenient time. I think two meetings should suffice but if more are required, we will work on that.