

Updated on January 24, 2022

Spring 2022
Resource Economics 121
Hunger in a Global Economy

Professor: Dr. Debi Prasad Mohapatra
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Teaching Assistant: Xiaolin Zhou (xiaolinzhou@umass.edu)

Mode of Instruction: In-person classroom

Weekly Meetings: Tu Th 4:00PM - 5:15PM

Room: Integ. Learning Center S331

Any Questions: Please E-mail me for appointment, and for any other class related questions

Course Objectives:

- Explore the causes of hunger (chronic undernutrition) from an economic perspective.
- Understand how population growth and economic development are increasing demand for food.
- Assess the prospects for food supply to meet needs at affordable prices, while sustaining the environment and responding to climate change.
- Evaluate how our global economy, where increased trade links even the poorest urban and rural residents in developing countries to market forces, affects hunger.
- Discuss policy choices. What policies are effective and which would you choose in order to improve food security for poor families around the world?

Why ResEc 121 is a General Education Social & Behavioral Sciences- Diversity Global (SB-DG) Course:
(see <https://www.umass.edu/gened/objectives-designations/learning-objectives>)

As a General Education course, our goal is to address fundamental questions, ideas, and methods of analysis in the social sciences; apply these methods of analysis to the real-world problem of hunger; and stretch our minds. Economics as a social science provides us with basic analytical tools with which to look at the world. These tools can help us to understand why hunger exists and is persistent around the world. But they do not provide complete answers or perspectives and part of our job is to recognize their useful applications *and* their limitations. We do this through critical thinking using data to analyze food supply and demand and then writing about and discussing what we know as well as what we want to know. Students in this class will learn interdisciplinary theories and knowledge necessary to comprehend hunger related issues from diverse social, cultural, and political perspectives. Our global focus is on hunger where it is most prevalent in Africa and Southern Asia; where it is present but declining, for example in East Asia and Latin America; and where it persists at significant levels in developed countries in Northern America and Europe.

Required Reading:

1. *The World Food Problem: Toward Ending Undernutrition in the Third World.* Howard D. Leathers and Phillips Foster. 5th Edition. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2017
2. *2021 World Population Data Sheet.* Population Reference Bureau, Inc., Washington, DC. Available online to download and print the pdf available on Moodle
3. Other readings as assigned. Available on MOODLE (our on-line course site).

MOODLE Course Site:

1. Go to: umass.moonami.com and log in by entering your OIT NetID and Password at the upper left. After log in, under My Courses click on RES-ECON 121.
2. What will you find on our course MOODLE site?
 - Any class related announcements
 - Assignments of All Types
 - Week by Week Modules
 - Every week—Lecture Slides and Lecture Videos will be posted
 - Regular Quizzes

You are responsible for reading the assigned readings. You are also responsible for checking Moodle for updates, class materials, homework, due dates, etc. Hence there will be no excuses for not knowing what is or will be happening in the course.

Check Moodle Regularly!

Diversity and Inclusion:

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

Academic Honesty Policy:

While you are welcome to discuss individual work assignments with your colleagues, I expect the writing and reasoning in your individual work to be your own. If I find that you have cheated on any aspect of the course, I will pursue the matter to the fullest extent possible under the procedures outlined in the academic policy: http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy

Accommodation 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 (DS), 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. Finally, **if you are experiencing disruption in learning because of COVID19 related issues**, please let me know so I can find a way to accommodate you.

Course Outline:

1. What is Hunger and Who Are the Hungry?
 - Extreme Undernutrition: Famine
 - Defining and Measuring Undernutrition
2. The Basic Economics of Food Demand and Supply
 - Tools for Analyzing Food Markets
 - Applying the Tools to Study Undernutrition
3. How Much is World Food Demand Going to Grow Due to Population and Income Growth?
4. Can World Food Supply Meet Demand?
5. Approaches to/Policies for Fighting Hunger
 - Demand Side: Raising Incomes, Changing Demographics, Subsidizing Consumption
 - Supply Side: Direct Subsidies, Access to Credit, Technological Change
6. An End to World Hunger?

Course Work Overview—The Weights and Dates Making Up Your Final Grade:

	<u>% of Final Grade</u>
Cases (1-4)	25%
Due dates course schedule 11:59 PM EST on dates listed in course schedule below	
The World Now Discussion Postings (1-4)	5%
Due at 11:59 PM on dates listed in course schedule below	
Quizzes (1-5)	5%
Check Moodle regularly for deadlines	
Exams	65%
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	100 %

Exam 1

Tentatively scheduled for March-8 in class

Exam 2

Tentatively scheduled for April-14 in class

Cumulative Final Exam

Date and Time TBA (check Spire for updates)

Grades from Exams will be computed as follows:

Of these three exams, you will be allowed to **drop the lowest grade**. The resulting two best grades will be used to calculate your “exam score”.

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I will not allow makeup exams; should you need to miss an exam (for whatever reason), the grade for this missed exam (i.e. zero) will be dropped from the exam score calculation. The only reason for allowing a makeup exam is an unsurmountable situation (unexpected death of a family member, severe illness, etc.), in which case you will have to notify me in advance (i.e. not 1 hour before the test or the day after the test) and bring proof of the situation (e.g. Physician's note).

Grading Table

Final grades will be calculated according to the following minimum cutoff points:

A = 94, A- = 90, B+ = 87, B = 83 B- = 80, C+ = 77, C = 73, C- = 70, D+ = 65, D = 60 and F < 60.

Details of What You Do in Each of the Course Elements (See MOODLE for Additional Details)

❖ Cases:

In the cases, you do individual research, problem solving, written interpretation of readings, discussion of opposing sides of food issues, and development of your own opinions.

❖ The World Now:

You will contribute to **discussion forums** by posting material on current food issues and commenting on posts by other students. Topics will include global hunger, economic, and trade stories.

❖ Quizzes: **(Points are for Participation – so make sure to attempt the quizzes)**

Quizzes are made up of a number of multiple-choice questions based on the materials covered in the class. You will get full points from attempting the quiz before the quiz deadline.

❖ EXAM 1, EXAM 2, and the cumulative FINAL EXAM

Our exams will have multiple choice, short answer and essay format questions.

The Respectful Learning Environment

We are all responsible for maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning and discussion. In order to assure that we all have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, I propose these standards for creating a respectful learning environment.

- The instructor, teaching assistants, and students notice and respect each other.
- Respect includes appropriate humor, enjoyment, or other indications of a comfortable and pleasant classroom community.
- We are on time for class: no late arrivals and no packing up early.
- We avoid disruptions during class such as private conversations, using a laptop or cellphone for something other than current classroom work, reading newspapers, and, of course, sleeping.
- We avoid language that is racist, sexist, or homophobic or in other ways may exclude members of our campus and classroom community.

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Key Dates (Subject to revision)

Exam 1 :	March 8, 2022, in class
Exam 2 :	April 14, 2022, in class
Final Exam:	TBA (Check Spire)
Casework Due Dates:	(i) February 13 – casework 1
	(ii) March 25 – casework 2
	(iii) April 3 – casework 3
	(iv) April 22 – casework 4

!!Check Moodle regularly for deadlines for cases, assignments and blog post!!

Course Schedule (subject to revision)

Week 1 (Jan 25, Jan 27): Thinking about Hunger in a Global Economy, Famine

Reading: WFP Preface & Ch 1 & Ch 2

Week 2 (Feb 1, Feb 3): Famines, Measuring Chronic Undernutrition

Assignment: Discussion Forum Post 1 due Fri Feb-4 11:59PM

Reading: WFP Ch. 3, Ch 4, Ch 5

Week 3 (Feb 8, Feb 10): Prevalence of Chronic Undernourishment in the World

Reading: Ch. 15 & Ch. 6 & SOFI

Week 4 (Feb 15, Feb 17): Using Economic Tools to Understand Change in Food Markets

Assignment: Case 1 due on Sunday Feb-13 11:59PM

Reading: WFP Ch. 7, p. 97-119

Week 5 (Feb 22, Feb 24) : Using Economic Tools to Understand Change in Food Markets

Reading: WFP Ch. 7, p. 97-119

Week 6 (Mar 1, Mar 3): Price Elasticity, Supply Elasticity, and Food Price Spikes

Food Demand: The Dynamics & Economics of Population Growth

Reading: WFP Ch. 7, p. 119-124, WFP Ch. 8, p. 121-132; World Population Data Sheet
Review for Midterm 1 on March 3

Week 7 (Mar 8, Mar 10): Price Elasticity, Supply Elasticity, and Food Price Spikes

Food Demand: The Dynamics & Economics of Population Growth

Midterm 1 on March 8th

Assignment: Discussion Forum Post 2 due Fri March-11 11:59PM

Week 8 (Mar15, Mar 17): No class due to spring break

Week 9 (Mar 22, Mar 24): Income Growth and Predicting Overall Food Demand Growth

Assignment: Case 2 due March-25 11:59PM

Reading: World Population Prospects, WFP Chs. 9 & 10 & “UN Raises Projected World Population”

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Week 10 (Mar 29, Mar 31): Predicting Future Demand, Economic Growth, & Turning to the Economics of Supply

Assignment: Discussion Forum Post 3 due Fri Apr-1 11:59PM

Assignment: Case 3 due Sunday April 3 11:59pm

Reading: WFP Ch. 8, Chs. 11, 12

Week 11 (Apr 5, Apr 7): The Future of Agricultural Production & Turning to Policy to Reduce Hunger

Reading: WFP Chs. 13 & 14, "Genetically Engineered Crops", Controversy over World Food Prize & WFP Ch. 16

Week 12 (Apr 12, Apr 14): Policy for Reducing Hunger; Policies to Increase the Purchasing Power of the Poor

Midterm 2 on Apr 14

Reading: WFP Chs. 19, 20

Week 13 (Apr 19, Apr 21): Policies to Reduce Hunger; Issues Regarding Food Subsidies & Food Aid

Assignment: Case 4 due Apr 22 11:59pm

Reading: WFP Chs. 19, 20, 21 & 22;

Week 14 (Apr 26, Apr 28): Policies to Reduce Hunger; Issues Regarding Food Subsidies & Food Aid

Assignment: Discussion Forum Post 4 due April 29 11:59PM

Reading: "How India Feeds...", "Brazil Makes Headway..." & "Our Battle to End Hunger"

Week 15 (May 3): Wrap up: An End to World Hunger? What Will It Take?

FINAL EXAM: TBA