Global Policy and International Institutions: Hunger and Environment

This course provides a basic introduction to issues of food, famine and environmental problems arising from agriculture and poverty. Millennium Development Goals number 1 and 7 adopted by the United Nations in 2000 call for reducing world hunger and poverty by one half by 2015, and to do so in a sustainable, environmentally responsible manner. This course examines selected policies in both industrialized and less developed countries that affect the achievement of these goals. Its purpose is to explore the food situation of individuals, families and nations and the consequences of this—upon people’s life, on the environment, and on resources. We will especially focus on implications of these circumstances as a basis for public policy that has global implications.

The most central concern during the semester will be the factors shaping food security, such as a country’s farm policies, civil strife, technology, trade, weather, income distribution, macro economic policy choice, and the provision of public goods (institutional rights and guarantees, roads, safety nets). The effects of all the above factors on both outcomes for hunger and the environment are important. For example consider how agriculture causes water pollution and soil loss, how water is vital to growing crops and to our physical requirements; or consider how the rate of harm by chemicals used in agriculture is related to alternative technology in farming, including GM crops. Within complex food systems we will attempt to understand the purposes and consequences of food-oriented policies, including ones shaped and implemented by local, national and international policy-making bodies.

While the world now produces more food per person than ever before, enough to feed everyone adequately, an estimated 850 million people are hungry [UN 2005]. This needless waste of human lives shocks many. Further, people who grow food or other agricultural crops -- farmers -- have become poorer in recent decades. In the US many have lost their farms; in Africa and Latin America farmers are frequently those most hungry. Often poor rural populations employ highly resource depleting strategies. Thus major forces explaining hunger—poverty, high population growth, poor soil—are forces that also drive environmental harm such as deforestation, over fishing and soil toxicity. We will examine such varied explanations to account for these unsatisfactory outcomes and explore the justification (justice) of current policies.

Course Grading and Dates
A final exam and a major "thesis" paper are required, along with labs; together these will provide the basis for a final grade. The final exam will be held just before Thanksgiving break. On Monday, November 21, there is an in-class exam; at its conclusion you will receive take-home questions due on November 23. A prospectus and bibliography for the major paper will be due on Monday, October 31. An oral presentation of the paper's principal thesis (es) is to be given during the class periods following Thanksgiving break. The paper is due no later than the last day of the exam period.

The exam and paper (oral and written parts together) will count equally [40%] in the final grade. Class and "lab" performances will be weighed 20%. The labs will include one exercise to understand the basis for claims about who is hungry. Dates for completing major tasks are: prospectus, October 31; final, November 21-23; oral reports on November 29--December 7. The written final version of your research "thesis" paper is due by December 17.

Laboratories
Evening laboratories are scheduled most Wednesday evenings before the final. These involve activities that take about two hours. There are four case studies, two films and one 2 week exercise to estimate food security.

Books and Readings
We will use Blackboard for many course readings. Login to Int'l Policy: Hunger&Environment - S05. Nine books are proposed for reading in the course. All are available for purchase at the bookstore; three are recommended, the rest are quite optional. The three “text” type books are: 1] Phillips Foster and Howard Leathers, The World Food Problem (Lynne Rienner, 2004, 3rd edition). This is a comprehensive overview of the problem of undernutrition with a special focus on targeted policy interventions; 2] a second book is an essay on Prosperity and Violence (Norton, 2001) by Robert H. Bates that offers an analysis of how state evolution affects prosperity and hunger; and 3] the a collection on the environment edited by Regina Axelrod, et. al. The Global Environment: Institutions, Law and Policy (CQ: 2005). Other books that I have used in past years and or are broadly interesting and germane are International Agricultural Development edited by Carl Eicher and John Staatz (Third edition, Johns Hopkins Press, 1998); Ronnie Lipschutz, Global Environmental Politics (CQ Pres, 2004); Famine Crimes by Alex de Waal (1997); Food, Inc. by Peter Pringle (2003); Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser (2002) and Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies by Jared Diamond (1997). Diamond’s latest book, Collapse, is also of interest. Try to read the last three of these at leisure times, perhaps over this summer.

There is an extraordinary range of helpful reading, containing both information and analysis, on several dozen websites. One of particular importance, located on BB for your use, is the FAO—and its publications. This body’s annual report, The State of Food and Agriculture is generally valuable, as is their report on state of food insecurity [SOSI]. The 2002 volume is available on Blackboard as #3 under Course Documents and contains an analysis of how pressures from population, economic growth and environment relate to one another and the environment. All the above books are also on Library Reserve for PS47.

Assigned articles will be on the Blackboard website under Readings. You will find there the four main topics on the syllabus, as well as four cases and the lab exercise. Under library resources are links useful for our course. For example, the site for the World Food Summit: http://www.fao.org/wfs/homepage.htm.

Research Paper
The paper you are expected to write should deal with a major policy issue. It may be confined to one country or organization or it may examine several. You should find a topic of substantive interest to you. Be sure there are library and/or data resources available to do a good paper. The thesis and scope of the proposed paper should be summarized in your prospectus, due the end of October. It is helpful to discuss your topic and approach with your instructor. Sample paper topics include the following: (1) Do feeding programs help end chronic hunger? (2) Does food aid help development (or is it a disincentive to development by lowering incentives to productive work or good policy)? (3) Has the green revolution been a success or failure? (4) Does food production hurt the environment; if so, what can or should be done about it? (5) Is there a global right to food? And, if so, whose responsibility is it to provide this "entitlement"? (6) How successful are international programs aimed at protecting people’s access to food while encouraging “sustainable agriculture?” (7) Do conflict and democratic institutions explain differences among countries as to whether people eat adequately and/or the environment is protected? (8) Are food security and/or sustainable development “public” goods? You may wish to narrow such topics considerably. This is readily accomplished by focusing on one country or on a single aspect of the issues mentioned above.

Resources
In preparing your paper, in addition to class readings, you will want to consult the bibliography in various readings (e.g., Foster and Leathers). There are certain journals and sources
of publications that will contain pertinent articles and/or information. These include World Bank publications, e.g. various WDR’s, the UNDP’s Human Development Report [2005] available after September 7] and documents from selected agencies, most especially the International Food Policy Research Institute, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the World Food Programme. On environment issues there are data at the UN Environmental Program, the World Resources Institute, and World Wildlife Fund. Most of these are available on line at the respective organizations websites. There is also a wide array of professional journals, some in political science, to peruse. Interdisciplinary journals that you should review on topics of interest include:

- Food Policy
- Journal of Agricultural Economics Research
- Hunger Notes
- World Development
- Environment and Development Economics
- Journal of Development Studies

Class Format

On most occasions, the first part of class will introduce a topic and provide background. The predominant method of reinforcing the readings is discussion. Completion of reading by the assigned date will facilitate class discussion. During the semester we will explore certain problems by means of films, “cases,” and an exploration in statistics of hunger. These occur during the Wednesday evening lab sessions. The case method of teaching is meant to encourage group efforts to understand a particular episode, drawing upon theories to explain and evaluate the case situation. While this class is not a seminar, nor a graduate level undertaking, some of the expectations about individual initiative and learning from peers associated with this level of teaching are employed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND READINGS

I. Introduction to National and International Global Food/Environment Policy

August 29-31

1. Hunger, Interdependence and the Role of Government

   Texts:
   - Engelman and Rabbinage essays on BB from Aspen Institute 2005 volume on "Biodiversity."

   During the first week please raise issues you find important from readings of Pringle, Food, Inc., Schlosser, Fast Food Nation and Diamond, Guns, Germs and Steel and the FP July, 2005 exchange [on BB]. For the case study for week one, on the Ethiopian famine of 1984-85, follow recent developments in Niger that have echoes of events 21 years ago. Be ready to discuss regimes, institutions, and organizations that play a role in global policy, as discussed in readings in Axelrod and Hopkins.

   Suggested for further reading are other selections from books relevant to broad course themes:
Dreze, et.al., The Political Economy of Hunger (1995), Ch. 2, pp. 50-68.
Hopkins and Puchala, The Global Political Economy of Food (1979), Ch. 1, pp. 3-38.

August 31 evening: Case 1: Famine in Ethiopia, 1984-85. Wednesday evening

This case focuses on the UN special representative's views. Ethiopian leaders such as Mengistu and Wolde are mentioned; various reasons for the famine and difficulties in its alleviation are to be the subject of your inquiry. A chapter from the De Waal book is on the BB site. It is also in the book, if purchased as Alex de Waal, Famine Crimes, pp. 106-132. De Waal, now at Harvard, has also written on the situation in Niger and Darfur [see WP and NYT op-ed articles and editorials that relate to recent famine problems in these areas as well as currently in Ethiopia. The case materials in BB conclude the case readings. We will want to discuss reasons for the famine 21 years ago as well as the situation now! Please do a web search on Ethiopia, famine, food aid. Check on web sites of a few groups whom skeptics refer to as the "coalition of the billing" based on the large sums they receive from the US government and/or EU for delivering food aid. A question for both eras, drawing on the first document in the case [that I wrote a few years ago] is: who/what is responsible? The case does not have all the answers, but those already familiar with the country may be able to add more.

II. Policy Issues in Developed Countries

September 5

2. American Agriculture and Policy Issues: The key readings are:

*Houthakker, "The Farm Problem," Readings
Various newspaper items for background information.

Suggested:
Peter Eisinger, Toward an End to Hunger in America, 1998.

September 7


Suggested:

September 7 evening Film - "Grapes of Wrath" 7:30. This film is a classic. It raises issue of farm, environment, and the role of the state. Most 20th century revolutions were peasant based; we might discuss
this proposition and the insights of political scientists such as James Scott and Robert Bates afterwards if you like. Popcorn provided, if you remind me!~

**September 12-14**

4. US and other Industrial Countries' Food Policies: Europe, Japan, Russia--AND WTO creation in Uruguay Round and the ongoing Doha Negotiations

Axelrod, chapter 10-11, pp. 181-224.
*Read case 2 --Paarlberg, Josling [and others as possible]

Suggested: in the library:
- Dan Morgan, Merchants of Grain (Viking, 1979), Chs. 1, 6, 7.
- I.M. Destler, Ch. 2, in Hopkins and Puchala. The Global Political Economy of Food
- Robert Paarlberg, Food Trade and Foreign Policy (1985), Ch. 4, pp. 100-142.

**III. Problems in Developing Countries: Hunger, Environment and Low Policy Control**

**September 21**

5. Introduction to** issues** within developing countries, especially related to states and markets and their interaction under the effect of globalization.

Required:
- Axelrod, chapter 12-14—developing country perspectives and cases of dams, nuclear power in countries seeking energy resources, pp. 225-283.

Suggested:
- Nicholas Stern, “Globalizaton…” on BB
- Francis Fukuyama, State Building (2004)

**September 23**

6. Nutrition and Undernutrition

Foster, Chs. 3-6.

Suggested:
- Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom (1999) and various FAO publications such as SOFI.

**September 21 evening: Case Two:** This lab draws on readings for last week as well as a diffuse set of readings on agricultural trade from various perspectives, including those of developing countries. Prepare for the lab by reading ahead, using Monday, 19th as possible. We will consider briefly the formation of the WTO in the Uruguay Round [as Paarlberg discusses], but principally focus on current situations in the Doha round. Read the introduction for the case on BB by September 16.

**September 26-28**

7. Population and World Hunger
Leathers and Foster, Chs. 7, 9.

Suggested:
http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/paper/143.html
Lester Brown and Hal Kane, Full House (1994), esp. 2-4, 12-16.

8. Poverty, Inequality and Hunger
Leathers and Foster, Chapter 10-13.
*Sen, Entitlements reading,
Suggested:

September 28 evening: Workshop on FS I: Measuring food insecurity: how secure are insecurity estimates?

October 3

9. Institutional Barriers: Intra-Family Distribution, Technology and Health: Green revolution issues and their "situational" impact

*Carl Gotsch, pp. 197-212.
*Binswanger/Elgin and James Scott: essays on farm size and exploitation of peasants

Suggested:
Also Eicher and Staatz, eds., chs. 28-29.
Bina Agarwal, "Bargain and Gender Relations" (Washington: IFPRI, 1997).

October 5

10. Markets and States Shaping Food Security

Robert Bates, Markets and States in Tropical Africa, in Chs. 1-3 (Blackboard)
*Michael Jenkins, et. al. "Markets for Biodiversity" and Nepstead, “Governing the Forests”

October 5 evening: Workshop II: Reports and Appraisals—the intelligence phase in policy making

October 7-16: FALL BREAK

October 17

11. Supply Related Policies to Reduce Hunger

Foster and Leathers, chs. 22-24

Suggested:

Eicher and Staatz, eds., chs. 19, 31-32
Check IFPRI web site, e.g. http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/newsletters/ifpriforum/if2.pdf

October 19
12. Access, Entitlements and Nutritional Intervention policies

Required:
Foster and Leathers, ch. 18-21.

Suggested:
Per Pinstrup-Andersen, ed., *Food Subsidies in Developing Countries* (1988).
Hoddinott, et. al. IFPRI paper, BB—(2002) and Adato on BB [read—4 pages]

Discussion Question: What are the virtues and problems in “targeting” in global resource transfers; in local ones?

**October evening 19: Film  7:30 p.m. - “Three Faces of Hunger”**

IV. Global Policy and Intergovernmental Organizations--Ending Hunger and Protecting the Environment

**October 24**

13. Global problems, national policy and international institutions: Overview and FAO case

Reading: Axelrod, Chs. 6-9.
Hopkins, "International Food Organizations and the United States: Drifting Leadership and Diverging Interests," in The United States and Multilateral Institutions, edited by Margaret Karns and Karen Mingst (1992), Readings

Suggested:

**October 26**

14. Complex connections in food, environment and policy

Readings to date inform this topic. Review links of agriculture and environment, looking at issues such as biodiversity or GM crops for example. Read/skim recent UN and WB publications on food, environment and global public goods. Examples of how the connections of our two dependent global goods [food security and a sustainable environment] activate demands for public agencies [states, national governments, IGOs] to secure them via policies abound. E.g. the FAO on this topic, e.g. *State Of Food and Ag* 2002. The intro and selected sections of interest to you, including pp. 175-212 on GPGs and Rio follow-up, including sections public goods and post-Rio issues are available under the first three positions of BB in “Documents”. Using this volume, and/or other readings that you [we] may discover, seek to clarify policy and empirical propositions under the rubric “complex connections.” *This effort may help you begin work on your paper.* [Recall you should be talking with me about your paper topic, materials relevant for it, and the prospectus, which is due shortly. So work in class will be a chance to relate environmental topics to food policy and vice versa.]

**October 26 evening: Case Three: Rural Reform in Centropico  Lab session as usual, but with role-playing.**

**October 31**

**Prospectus and Bibliography due on October 31—either in class or by 5 pm!**

15. International Institutions and LDC Policy
Axelrod, chs. Review readings: chapters 3-4.
*Douglass North, on the role of institutions, a classic argument (found in Eicher and Staatz, ch. 4)
Consider issues of corruption, structural adjustment, and the nature of the government in LDCs; look again at Bates, Prosperity and Violence and Markets and States. Also review issues on WB website on the topic of institutional failure and the role of global policy to fix state failure [s].  check out Transparency International.

November 2

16. Economic Aid, Food Aid and Development
*Mohamed EI-Ashry, “Multilateral and Bilateral Assistance…
"World Food Summit, Food Security and Food Assistance. Technical Paper # 13, (1996);
Web: http://www.fao.org/wfs/homepage.htm;
*Per Pinstrup-Andersen, "Food aid……[in Tarp volume].

Suggested:
Tony Jackson, Against the Grain.

November 7

17. Emergency Assistance and International Responses

*Readings in BB by Cohen, Clay, Hopkins, ["Complex Emergencies, Peacekeeping and the World Food Program]

November 9

18. War and Agricultural Prospects: International Implications/Initiatives

Review Bates and look at the Prio document on the web site provided in BB for the volume:
*To Cultivate Peace—Agriculture in a World of Conflict. Pick one case and look up information about it—the conflict and its effects of food security, famine, environment. Examples include Afghanistan, Cambodia, Somalia and Sudan.

November 14-16

19. International Ethical, Humanitarian and Political Duties

Leathers and Foster, Ch. 16

*Hunger Notes, Summer 1998, Selected essays in Readings.

Suggested:
November 17 evening: **Case Four**: The World Food Program Went to War.

**November 21 - 23**: FINAL EXAMINATION  
**November 24 - 27**: THANKSGIVING VACATION  
**November 29 - December 7**: ORAL PRESENTATIONS  
**December 17**: MAJOR PAPER DUE [extensions only with permission]