2025-26 2nd term CUS 510J (tentative only; subject to change)

Workshop in Cultural Practices - Harvesting the Future: Farming and the Food Movement

道在泥土：全球／本地農業與食物運動

Monday, 7-10pm/SEK205

Dr. Chow Sze-chung

Medium of instruction: Cantonese and English

Brief description

Being undoubtedly a prominent issue in the contemporary context, food could be examined in various ways. Whereas a corpus of literature is available for us to familiarize with the social, cultural, economic and ecological consequences associated with the present food system, relatively less attention is paid to the attempts and aspirations worldwide to safeguard our future through engaging with the current food system.

By taking a multi-disciplinary approach, this course is going to introduce how farmers in different locales, scientist, cooks, writers, CSA organizers etc., as well as animals, plants and the microbes that we are unable to see with our naked eyes, are working their way out of the crisis-ridden food system. Apart from lecture, class presentation and discussion, practicum sessions are designed to let students experience the robust texture of living soil through hands-on farmworks, students will also prepare and share food (and the stories behind) with the class in a farmhouse environment.

The course will conclude by reflecting on the mode of knowledge production in the sphere of agriculture and its implications to research, teaching and learning.

Aim

1. to critically introduce the dynamics and controversies of modern food system
2. to provide trends and concrete cases both locally and across the planet of how people working around different moments/sectors of the food system are seeking alternatives on an everyday life basis
3. to encourage students to rethink their relationship with the food they eat and the way foods are eaten everyday

Learning outcome

Upon completion of the course, the students will be able to:

1. demonstrate critical understanding of the modern food system in the contemporary context
2. acknowledge points of intervention from different position such as farmers, consumers, catering professional and other intermediaries equipped with ecological and social concerns
3. critically account and examine food as a concrete object, with meaning conferred and implications to other (both human and non-human world)
4. gain first-hand experience of how a farm/market garden is able to act as a constructive interface between the social and ecological spheres

Indicative contents

1. contexts and issues of the evolution of local paddy culture, urban agriculture and market gardening
2. ecologically and socially concerned trends (both local and global) in the production, marketing and preparation of food
3. intermingling relationships between production, circulation, consumption, representation and regulation in the present food system
4. practical experiences of how routines of market gardens are organized and executed, with special attention paid to restoration of soil fertility

Teaching method

A Combination of lecture, class discussion and practicum.

Measurement of learning outcome

1. Class participation
    - Group presentation on selected readings requires students to show their grasp of the key issues and controversies within the modern food system, discuss the issue critically and to associate critically to their own daily food experience.
    - readings selected for presentation are those underlined in the section "class schedule"
    - arrangement of group presentations will be made on feb 17
    - Class discussion will be organized around various issues of food production, preparation and consumption both as a mundane, socially constructed and yet indispensable act, with ethical, ecological, economic and social implications.
2. Practicum
    - student will be guided to assist in various farming routines, experiencing how farmers work/consider to restore soil fertility and robust ecology in a low-input or circulatory manner
    - food-sharing: students will be required to bring a dish/ a kind of food whose meanings for the students will be shared verbally and tastefully with the class. The term "meaning" is taken broadly here, which could be associated with upbringing, regional cuisine style, unique personal experience, etc.
    - the location and the traveling tips will be given in class in due course
3. Term paper
    - a critical account and analysis of a type of food/dish/style of cuisine in terms of the issues discussed in the course.

Course assessment scheme

1. class participation (40%)
    - group presentation on assigned readings(25%)
    - class discussion (15%)
2. practicum (30%)
    - farm work (20%)
    - food preparation and sharing (10%)
3. term paper (30%)
    - a critical account and analysis of a type of food/dish/style of cuisine in terms of the issues discussed in the course. Word length: approximately 5,000 characters in Chinese or 3,000 words in English
    - Due April 28, 2026

* language in class presentation, sharing and discussion: Cantonese, English or Putunghua

Assessment rubics

Class presentation (25%)

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Identifies and addresses clearly the main question(s) Examines the question /issue/ problem from all important perspectives. Overall logic is clear. Presenter(s) engage the audience at all times. Excellent performance of teamwork. Demonstrates full communication with formal roles for each group member. Equal distribution of workload.	Identifies and addresses most of the main question(s). Examines the question/ issue/ problem from most of the important perspectives but not all relevant arguments and counter arguments are fully examined. Presenter(s) engage the audience most of the time. Good performance of teamwork. Demonstrates some communication with roles for each group member. Moderate distribution of workload.	Identifies and addresses most of the main question(s). Examines the question/ issue/ problem from some of the important perspectives. Presenter(s) engage the audience most of the time Fair performance of teamwork. Demonstrates limited communication with informal roles for each group member. Some distribution of workload.	Lacks an understanding of what the question requires. No critical engagement with issues, and themes. Presentation characterized by serious inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Presenter(s) seem to make little attempt to engage the audience Poor performance of teamwork. Demonstrates no communication with unclear roles for each group member. Unequal distribution of workload.

Class participation (15%)

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Participates actively and constructively all the time. Engages constructively with, all course material (assigned readings, issues, concepts). Provides insightful analyses, raises critical points, and advances and deepens group discussion. Consistently appreciates others' contribution and engages with their ideas sensitively.	Participates actively most of the time. Demonstrates a good understanding of, and engages constructively with course material. Frequently provides helpful points or asks questions that advance and deepen group discussion. Generally appreciates others' contribution and engages with their ideas sensitively.	Participates most of the time but sometimes requires prompting. Demonstrates a basic understanding of most of the course material and engages with it, though not always successfully. Sometimes makes positive contributions that advance group discussion. Attempt to appreciate others' contribution and to engage with their ideas sensitively, with some success.	Student does not attend the tutorial. Or if student does attend, he or she demonstrates little or no understanding of course material, lacks engagement with it, or makes little or no effort to contribute to group discussion. Little or no engagement / participation in group discussion even with prompting. Shows no appreciation of others' knowledge and skills.

Practicum (30%)

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Participates actively and constructively all the time. Being able to understand all the instructions and execute the required farmwork accurately. Excellent understanding of the logic of farm routines in terms of labour efficiency and conservation of energy/ resources. Good effort shown in preparation of choice of food and clear presentation of the meaning and stories	Participates actively most of the time. Being able to understand most instructions and perform the required farmwork. Good understanding of the logic behind farm routines in terms of labour efficiency and conservation of energy/ resources. Some effort shown in preparation of choice of food and presentation of the meaning and stories	Participates most of the time but sometimes requires prompting. Being able to understand some instructions and perform the required assistance. Some unnderstanding of the logic behind farm routines in terms of labour efficiency and conservation of energy/ resources. Choice of food is prepared, meaning and stories behind presented.	Student does not attend the practicuym. Or if student does attend, he or she demonstrates little or no understanding of course material, lacks engagement with it, or makes little or no effort to contribute to activity. Failure to understand the instruction and perform the required farmwork. Unable to prepared the choice of food and present the stories/ meaning.

Term paper (30%)

A, A-	B+, B, B-	C+, C, C-	F
Identifies and addresses clearly the main question(s); Consistent perceptive and critical engagement with relevant concepts and theories; Introduction states clearly writer's thesis or position, and conclusion clearly summarizes main arguments. The language contains very few, if any, errors in grammar and vocabulary. If slips are present, the meaning is still clear. Conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.) are followed meticulously.	Identifies and addresses most of the main question(s). Frequent perceptive and critical engagement with relevant concepts and theories; Introduction states writer's thesis or position, and conclusion summarizes main arguments. The language is generally accurate but contains some systematic errors in complex grammar and vocabulary. Conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.) are followed apart from the occasional oversight.	Identifies and addresses most of the main question(s). Some perceptive and critical engagement with relevant concepts and theories; Introduction and conclusion are included and generally capture the essence of the topic and discussion. The language is mostly accurate; and errors, when they occur, are more often in complex grammar and vocabulary. Errors are distracting but the overall meaning is still intelligible. Conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.) are followed but at times inconsistencies and/ or errors occur.	Lacks an understanding of what the question requires. No critical engagement with issues, and themes. Introduction and conclusion are unclear, lack detail or missing altogether. Very little evidence of an ability to organize the essay into paragraphs Errors in language and vocabulary are so frequent and distracting that the essay is largely incomprehensible. Does not adhere to the conventions of academic writing (e.g. citation, references, footnotes, etc.).

Class Schedule

1. Introduction: Food movements for whom? The world, us, plants, microbes reimagined beyond the apocalyse. (Jan 12)
    - Dunn, Rob (2022). *A natural history of the future: what to laws of biology tell us about the destiny of the human* species. New York: Basic Books. Ch. 1 & 8
    - Mancuso, S and Viola, A. (2015). *Brilliant Green: the surprising history and science of plant* intelligence. Washington: Island Press. Ch. 3
    - Sheldrake, Merlin (2020). *Entangled Life: how fungi make our worlds, change our minds and shape our futures*. New York: Random House. Intro.
    - Chakraberty, Dipesh (2021). *The climate of history in a planetary* age. Chicago and London. Ch.6.

2. Urban agriculture and community resilience (Jan 19, guest lecture: Mr. Lau Hoi Lung)
    - Wesselow, M., & Mashele, N. W. J. (2019). "Who needs money if you got hands, if you got plants" forming community resilience in two urban gardening networks in South Africa. Human Ecology, 47(6), 855-864.
    - Hou, Jeffrey (2020). "Governing urban gardens for resilient cities: Examining the "Garden City Initiative" in Taipei". *Urban Studies*. Vol. 57(7) 1398-1416

3. Not only fresher – buying local and the CSA experience (Jan 26, Guest lecture: Ying @ Tin Yeah 田嘢)
    - Henderson, E. and Van En, R (1999). *Sharing the harvest: a Citizen's guide to community supported agriculture*. London: Chelsea Green. Ch. 3
    - 彭碧珊（2022）。《菜園裡的人情味：社區支持農業三十年》。香港：香港有機生活發展基金。

4. Seeds Lab farmworks and local paddy culture (Feb 2, practicum, double session 10:00-16:00)
    - Yuk Wah Chan & Johnny Hoi Lung Lau (2023). "Producing rice, eating tradition? A multiscalar ricescape in Hong Kong". *Food, Culture & Society*. DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2023.2284051
    - 胡應手（2019）。《種稻的人：香港稻米生產的技術與承傳》。香港：伍集成文化教育基金會。

5. Sangwoodgoon farmworks and market gardening in situ (Feb 9, practicum, double session, 10:00-1600)
    - Salatin, Joel (2013). *Everything I want to do is illegal: war stories from the local food front*. London: Chelsea Green. Ch 8 & 11
    - Brown, Gabe (2018). *Dirt to soil: one family's journey into regenerative agriculture*. London: Chelsea Green.

No class on Feb 23

6. HK market gardening: a critical perspective (Mar 2)
    - *Chow, S. C. (2022). Bringing the Vegetables Back In: The Unruly Dynamics of Postwar Market Gardening in British Colonial Hong Kong. Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 11(3), 287-307. https://doi.org/10.1177/22779760221133679

- 康皓雲（2024）。《被城市取代的田地：香港農業政策與九龍農》〔未出版之碩士論文〕國立成功大學歷史系

7. Presentation session #1 — Rethinking the foundation of multi-species life: the approach of regenerative agriculture (Mar 9)
    - Ohlson, Kristin (2014). *The soil will save us: how scientists, farmers, and foodies are healing the soil to save the planet*. New York: Rodale. Ch. 2 & 3
    - Montgomery, David R. (2017). *Growing a revolution: bringing our soil back to life*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company. Ch. 6 & 10
    - Further reading: Montgomery, D. And Bikle, A. (2016). *The hidden half of nature: the microbial roots of live and health*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co. Ch. 6

8. Presentation session #2 — Culture, ecology and ethics of food and eating (Mar 16)
    - Barber, Dan (2014). *The third plate: fieldnotes on the future of food*. New York: Penguin. Part II
    - Greenberg, Paul (2010). *Four fish: the future of the last wild food*. New York and London: Penguin Books. Ch. salmon
    - Further reading: Waters, Alice (2021). *We are what we eat: a slow food manifesto*. New York: Penguin Press. pp.121-148

9. Presentation session #3 — On the mode of learning and the uniqueness of food and agricultural research (Mar 23)
    - Ranciere, Jacques (1991). *The ignorant schoolmaster*. California: Stanford University Press. Ch. 1
    - Howard, Albert (2007).*The soil and health: a study of organic agriculture*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. intro
    - Further reading: King, F. H. (2011) *Farmers of forty centuries; or, Permanent agriculture in China, Korea and Japan*. Global Orient. Intro

10. Seeds Lab farmworks and food sharing (29 March, practicum, double session, 10:00-1600)
    - Berry, Wendell (2009). *Bringing it to the table: On farming and food*. Berkeley: Counterpoint Press. Part III, "The pleasure of eating"
    - 華琛、華若璧（2011）。《鄉土香港：新界的政治、性別及禮儀》。香港：香港中文大學出版社。第五章
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11. Special Tutorial for term paper (Apr 14)

Term paper due Apr 28

* Required readings are underlined

Readings:

- Barber, Dan (2014). *The third plate: fieldnotes on the future of food*. New York: Penguin.
- Berry, Wendell (2009). *Bringing it to the table: On farming and food*. Berkeley: Counterpoint Press.
- Berry, Wendell (2015). *The unsettling of America: culture and agriculture*. Berkeley: Counterpoint Press.
- Brown, Gabe (2018). *Dirt to soil: one family's journey into regenerative agriculture*. London: Chelsea Green.
- Chakraberty, Dipesh (2021). *The climate of history in a planetary age*. Chicago and London.
- Chan, Y. W. & Lau, J. H. L. (2023). "Producing rice, eating tradition? A multiscalar ricescape in Hong Kong". *Food, Culture & Society*. DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2023.2284051
- Chow, S. C. (2022). Bringing the Vegetables Back In: The Unruly Dynamics of Postwar Market Gardening in British Colonial Hong Kong. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 11(3), 287-307. https://doi.org/10.1177/22779760221133679
- Henderson, E. and Van En, R (1999). *Sharing the harvest: a Citizen's guide to community supported agriculture*. London: Chelsea Green.
- Hou, Jeffrey (2020). "Governing urban gardens for resilient cities: Examining the "Garden City Initiative" in Taipei". *Urban Studies*. Vol. 57(7) 1398-1416
- Howard, Albert (2007). *The soil and health: a study of organic agriculture*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky
- King, F. H. (2011) *Farmers of forty centuries; or, Permanent agriculture in China, Korea and Japan*. Global Orient.
- Mancuso, S and Viola, A. (2015). *Brilliant Green: the surprising history and science of plant intelligence*. Washington: Island Press.
- Masters, Nicole (2019). *For the love of soil: strategies to regenerate our food production systems*. New Zealand: Printable Reality.
- Mintz, Sidney W. (1985). *Sweetness and power: the place of sugar in modern history*. New York: Penguin Books
- Montgomery, David R. (2017). *Growing a revolution: bringing our soil back to life*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Ohlson, Kristin (2014). *The soil will save us: how scientists, farmers, and foodies are healing the soil to save the planet*. New York: Rodale.
- Pollan, Michael (2006). *The omnivore's dilemma: a natural history of four meals*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Raj, Patel (2007). *Stuffed and Starved: Market, power and the hidden battle for the world food system*. New York: Melville House Publishing.
- Ranciere, Jacques (1991). *The ignorant schoolmaster*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Salatin, Joel (2013). *Everything I want to do is illegal: war stories from the local food front*. London: Chelsea Green.
- Sheldrake, Merlin (2020). *Entangled Life: how fungi make our worlds, change our minds and shape our futures*. New York: Random House.
- Waters, Alice (2021). *We are what we eat: a slow food manifesto*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Wesselow, M., & Mashele, N. W. J. (2019). "Who needs money if you got hands, if you got plants" forming community resilience in two urban gardening networks in South Africa. *Human Ecology*, 47(6), 855-864.
- 康皓雲（2024）。《被城市取代的田地：香港農業政策與九龍農》〔未出版之碩士論文〕國立成功大學歷史系
- 彭碧珊（2022）。《菜園裡的人情味：社區支持農業三十年》
- 周思中（2022）。《夕陽的光：誰說香港沒有菜園》
- 胡應手（2019）。《種稻的人：香港稻米生產的技術與承傳》。香港：伍集成文化教育基金會
- 華琛、華若璧（2011）。《鄉土香港：新界的政治、性別及禮儀》。香港：香港中文大學出版社

- 果力文化編（2015）。《巷仔口的農藝復興：社區協力農業，開創以農為本的美好生活》。台北：果力文化。

Important Notes

(1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.

(2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.

(3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.

(4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on https://pla.ln.edu.hk/

(5) Students must adhere to the University's guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents "Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University" and "Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments" can be found here: https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificial- intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices.