

# The Politics of Food

Fall 2009  
PSC 394-003, T/TH 12:15-1:30

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## Introduction

What did you have for breakfast? Did you ever stop to think about everyone and everything involved in the production of your banana or cereal or pancakes? If you skipped breakfast, was it because you didn't have the time or inclination to eat, or was it because your family just couldn't afford to provide you with three meals?

Food is something many of us take for granted. More and more of us are inundated with information about 'how many carbs' or 'how much fat' the stuff we eat packs, but most of us don't consider the political implications of food production, processing, technology, or trade. Food, however, is a politically entrenched issue that rallies interest groups, incites riots, and occasionally provokes trade wars.

As the world increasingly becomes more globalized and interdependent, the kinds of choices we make both define and dictate political policies. When we peel a banana, rarely do we think about the impact we have on banana workers in Honduras. When we eat a candy bar, most of us don't try to piece together where Hershey or Nestlé bought the cacao, milk, or nuts. Most often we don't consider the implications of choosing fast food over food prepared at home. For us, more often convenience and time take precedence over cost and nutrition. Our goal is to 'unwrap' how politically charged an issue like food actually is.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** In taking this course, you will:

- Learn important political science methods and concepts, and apply them to current problems.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how political science applies principles and standards to the study of individuals and/or groups.
- Examine the ethical issues relevant to research and applications in political science.
- Examine the impact of diversity issues within political science.
- Communicate an understanding of the social sciences using formats appropriate to political science.

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## Readings

With the exception of the book listed below, all other course readings are linked to your course webpage at the website listed above.

Roberts, Paul. 2008. **The End of Food**. NY, NY: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 978-0-618-60623-8

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## Course Requirements

- Assignments & Quizzes = 80% of overall grade
- Class Participation = 20% of overall grade

## Assignments & Quizzes

Assignments may include quizzes, exercises, or other writing assignments. Quizzes will be given at the start of most classes. You may use hand-written notes written on a separate piece of paper for the quiz. With the understanding that you may need to miss a class or two due to illness, car trouble, computer issues, or because life just got in the way of you preparing for class, I will allow you to miss/not take two quizzes. Make-up quizzes will not be given under any circumstances. Make-up quizzes will not be given under any circumstances.

Exercises and other writing assignments may be assigned. On days these assignments are due, if you are late to class, you will automatically lose points (determined by me based on the total points of the assignment) off of your assignment grade. If you miss class on the day an assignment is due (this does not apply to quizzes, as you already get two passes) and have what I determine is a legitimate, documented absence, then provide me with that documentation and a hard copy of the assignment within one week of the due date, I will accept your assignment.

**Class Participation:** Class participation is based on the following elements: class attendance, punctuality, participation, attention, and respect. Work is not a legitimate excuse for missing class. The syllabus provides comprehensive, detailed expectations for the course. It is important that you familiarize yourself with these details to participate to the fullest extent possible. Questions asked of me that are already answered in the syllabus will result in a deduction of class participation points. Work is not a legitimate excuse for missing class. At any point during the semester, you can request your class participation grade via email.

Three additional elements determine your participation grade:

1. *In-class participation*

All participation grades are based on the quality of your participation, not solely the quantity. Since it is necessary to give everyone an opportunity to participate, it is **imperative** that you raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking. I keep track of not only how often you participate, but take note of what you contribute.

2. *Email comments*

If you would like to email your comments, insights, criticisms about the readings to me at least 24 hours before the start of class, I will accept these and count them toward your participation grade. Email comments **are not** a substitute for in-class participation, but can certainly enhance your overall participation grade. You will not lose participation points for not emailing comments to me.

3. *Blackboard discussion of news-related topics*

The discussion board provides a way for you to post and comment on, as well as respond to articles you think are interesting and related to the course topics. I may also post articles I find, thus giving you the opportunity to comment on them. BlackBoard responses **are not** a substitute for in-class participation. If you never go on BlackBoard to post or comment, you will not lose participation points.

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## Additional Information

**Regular online access is a course requirement.** If you aren't able to regularly access the course schedule, your NKU email account, or the Internet, you need to drop this course.

## Grading Scale

<b>A</b> = 93-100	<b>A-</b> = 90-92	
<b>B+</b> = 87-89	<b>B</b> = 83-86	<b>B-</b> = 80-82
<b>C+</b> = 77-79	<b>C</b> = 73-76	<b>C-</b> = 70-72
<b>D+</b> = 67-69	<b>D</b> = 66-60	
<b>F</b> = 59-0		

**Standard format for written work:** You will be penalized for failing to follow the standard format, with the exception of the last bullet, which will result in a zero grade for exceptionally poor work.

- Single space name, date, assignment number on top right hand side of paper
- Typed, in hard copy form
- Stapled (Paper-clipped **IS NOT** stapled, nor is dog-eared)
- Page numbers
- Double-spaced
- Prescribed margins: 1" all around
- Times New Roman 12 pt. font (or Mac comparable)
- Edited and proof-read so that paper is well-written
  - clarity in writing
  - well-organized
  - grammatically sound
  - appropriate length paragraphs

**Contact Information:** My primary objective is to help you learn and succeed. Please visit me during my office hours and/or contact me by email with any questions, clarifications, or concerns you have about this course. If you cannot come to office hours, you can arrange to meet me by appointment. If you opt to contact me, you will get a much faster response by emailing me, as I generally check my email at least once a day Monday through Friday.

Occasionally it may be necessary to contact you outside of class. For any correspondence outside of class, I will send messages to your NKU email account. I will post this information as well on your course webpage as soon as possible.

**Extra credit projects are not an option.**

**Syllabus amendments:** I reserve the right to amend the syllabus or schedule as necessary at any time as described under the Common Course Policies.

**All University policies apply, including the honor code.** The work you will do in this course is subject to the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code is a commitment to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct, a commitment that, individually and collectively, the students of Northern Kentucky University will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements.

Plagiarism is any instance of attempting to pass off the work of others as your own. This is not limited solely to directly quoting the work of others- it also includes paraphrasing the work of others without giving

appropriate credit. Put another way, if you take someone else's work and change, add, or delete some words here and there, you are still plagiarizing if the essential meaning remains the same. This applies to all papers, exams, quizzes, and exercises. Plagiarizing from other students, or even from your own previous work, is not acceptable.

You are expected to do your own work, properly cite the contribution of others, and use only expressly authorized materials on exams, quizzes, or assignments. If you aren't sure about when or how to credit the work of others, let me know and I will be happy to help you out.

The penalty for the first instance of lying, cheating, or plagiarizing is an automatic zero for the assignment in question and a 20 percent deduction in your final course grade. The penalty for a second instance of lying, cheating, or plagiarizing is a grade of 'F' for the class and dismissal from class. All instances of lying, cheating, or plagiarizing will be brought to the attention of the Dean of Students.

**Disabilities services:** Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services) for this course must register with the Office of Disability Services. Please contact the Disability Service Office immediately in the University Center, Suite 320, or call (859) 572-6373 for more information. Verification of your disability is required in the Office of Disability Services for you to receive reasonable academic accommodations.

**Additional problems:** You are expected to attend all classes. Work is not an excuse for missing class or assignments. If you encounter any problems throughout the semester regarding this class or your ability to attend and participate, please let me know **ASAP**. It is not advisable to wait until the end of the semester to inform me of difficulties you are having; that is after the fact.

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## Course Schedule

An outline schedule for the semester is posted on your course web page. This schedule will be updated throughout the semester, so be sure to check it regularly for the reading assignments, RA assignments, and exercises that will be posted on your course webpage.

## **Common Course Policies Approved April 2005**

The following policies apply to all courses taught by faculty in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice. Please note that individual faculty may have specific applications of these policies in their syllabi.

### **1. Classroom and Electronic Participation:**

Classroom participation is essential to the educational process. It is vital to your understanding of the course material, and to your overall performance. It is also a student responsibility. Class participation is generally defined as regular class attendance, proper class preparation, completing assignments and activities in a timely manner, completing assignments in the format requested, and participating in discussions both during and outside of class (e.g. Black Board discussions). Participation also refers to regular monitoring of and responding to electronic contact by professors via email, Black Board or other means. Participation may have a specific grade percentage in your class; see your course syllabi for specifics.

### **2. Class Professionalism:**

- A. Out of respect to your fellow learners, **electronic devices should be turned off** during class time unless you are required to be on-call by your employer. In that case, please set your beeper / phone to a non-audible signal. If you are required to leave a beeper or cell phone on during class, inform the professor of this prior to class.
- B. **Disruptive behavior or conduct** (whether in-class or electronic) that demeans fellow class members or the instructor will not be tolerated. Please see the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities Section 4.3 for "What the Professor May Expect of the Student." Instructors reserve the right to dismiss or remove a disruptive student from a classroom in accordance with the appropriate College of Arts and Science Policy.  
[http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/disruption\\_guidelines.html](http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/disruption_guidelines.html)
- C. It is important that work with your name attached is, in fact, **solely your work** unless properly referenced or cited. In these days of increased access to information, it is critical that you understand the meaning, seriousness and consequences of plagiarism. If you ever have a question about giving proper credit for academic work, please consult your instructor **well in advance of an assignment due date**.
- D. The work you will do in this course and your behavior in this course are subject to the **Student Honor Code**. The Honor Code is a commitment to the

highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct. By being a student at NKU you make a commitment that individually and collectively, you will not lie, cheat, or plagiarize to gain an academic advantage over fellow students or avoid academic requirements. You also make a commitment to behavior in a professional manner, especially when involved in academic activities off campus such as travel courses or CCSA Study Abroad. For specifics concerning the honor code, see the Dean of Students website: [http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/student\\_rights/honor\\_code.htm](http://www.nku.edu/~deanstudents/student_rights/honor_code.htm).

### 3. Right to Revise a Syllabus:

A syllabus is required for every class and will be distributed at the beginning of each semester. Faculty reserve the right to **revise the course syllabus** as needed. Changes in the specific course schedule may happen frequently, so you need to keep abreast of these changes regularly. Should a major change occur in the syllabus (e.g. moving a specified test date, changing the grading percentages, changing the assignment types, etc.) the specific change will be announced at least a week in advance of any activity due date (e.g. paper, test). Major revisions in a course grading scheme or mechanism will also be in writing, which may include paper distribution, email, or posting to Blackboard or an appropriate online forum.

### 4. Student Responsibilities to Meet Course Obligations:

**You are responsible for all course assignments** including class preparation, class attendance, class activities, tests, papers, labs, projects, group work or other course assignments. By reviewing the syllabus at the beginning of a course, you are responsible for meeting all specific course obligations. Additionally, some faculty may even require that each student initial a document to recognize their course obligations. Failure to attend classes, or meet course obligations is a serious matter and it is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor should you have difficulty with meeting any course obligation. Faculty may, at their discretion, reduce grades or even fail you for not meeting specified course obligations, including but not limited to, class attendance, taking tests at a specified time, turning in papers on time and in the format required and other assignments. It is the faculty's discretion to determine the consequences of not meeting a course obligation, and many times the specific provisions and penalties are specified in the syllabus. Faculty may also require written documentation verifying your inability to meet a course obligation.

### 5. Final Examination:

With rare exception, all classes will meet at the time prescribed, will meet until the last scheduled day of classes, and will **meet during the final exam period** printed in the *Schedule of Classes*. This is an Arts and Science College policy.

Your syllabus should include the date and time of the final exam period scheduled for the course. There is also a final exam schedule posted on the NKU website. Faculty will provide an indication of the final exam's nature (cumulative final, regular test, return of take-home exam, presentation of final project, etc.) well in advance of the final exam.

There may be courses for which a cumulative final exam is not appropriate. However, these courses will still meet as scheduled during their final exam period. The final exam period will used, as appropriate for the course, including, but not limited to, a non-cumulative exam, project presentation, return of take-home exam, or paper presentation.

**6. Students with Disabilities:**

*Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services) for this course must register with the Office of Disability Services. Contact the Office of Disability Services immediately in University Center suite 320 or call X-6373 for more information. Verification of your disability is required in the Office of Disability Services for you to receive reasonable academic accommodations. Visit the disability services website at [www.nku.edu/~disability/](http://www.nku.edu/~disability/).*