

## **Globalization and Food Security (DVST-855)**

### **Course Introduction:**

This course begins with a refusal to accept hunger as natural.

Hunger is not a drought, not a population problem, not a technical failure waiting for innovation. Hunger is a political outcome. It is designed, managed, justified, and normalized. In a world that already produces more than enough food to feed everyone, millions go to bed hungry not because food is absent, but because power decides who gets to eat.

Globalization promised abundance. It promised efficiency, growth, and prosperity through markets that supposedly reward productivity and innovation. Yet the people who grow the food, who seed, harvest, fish, and labor across fields and oceans, are among the most food-insecure on the planet. Farmers without land security. Farmworkers without living wages. Small producers crushed by trade rules written far from their soil. Communities displaced so supply chains can move faster and profits can move freer.

This course asks you to sit with that contradiction.

Food insecurity is not a tragic accident of development; it is a structural feature of the global economic order. Power flows through trade agreements, agribusiness monopolies, financial speculation, debt regimes, and corporate-controlled technologies. Capitalism is often presented as a neutral or even benevolent force, a magic wand that will lift all boats. But whose boats rise, and whose are deliberately sunk? Who benefits from “efficiency,” and who pays its human cost?

We will interrogate how global food systems extract value from the many to enrich the few. How corporations externalize risk onto farmers while internalizing profits. How white-collar theft through legal contracts, intellectual property regimes, and financial instruments robs people not only of income, but of dignity, autonomy, and the right to produce food for their own communities.

This is not a course that will allow comfort. You will be asked to question dominant narratives of development, charity, and sustainability. You will be challenged to see hunger not as a moral failure of individuals, but as a political failure of systems. You will confront the uncomfortable reality that policies celebrated in boardrooms and international institutions often translate into empty stomachs, broken livelihoods, and silenced voices.

Most importantly, this course is about responsibility. Responsibility to listen to those who bear the burden of feeding the world while being denied food themselves. Responsibility to recognize how

power operates invisibly through “normal” economic practices. Responsibility to imagine food systems rooted in justice, sovereignty, and human dignity rather than profit alone.

If you are looking for easy answers, this course will disappoint you. If you are willing to question who decides, who benefits, and who pays the price, then this course begins here.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze hunger and food insecurity as political and economic outcomes rather than natural or technical failures
- Examine how globalization, trade, finance, and corporate power shape global food systems
- Critically assess dominant development and food security narratives
- Understand famine, land dispossession, and food crises as outcomes of power and policy, including their differentiated impacts across gender.
- Compare food security and food sovereignty approaches
- Reflect ethically on responsibility, positionality, and development practice
- Articulate justice-oriented alternatives for global food systems

## **Course: Food Security and Globalization**

MS Development Studies

### **Final Ordered Reading List and Conceptual Flow**

#### **Week 1 – Hunger Is Political, Not Natural**

Goal: Shatter scarcity myths; reframe hunger as political and produced.

1. Lucy Jarosz, Contesting Hunger Discourses
  - Dismantles population, scarcity, and technical-fix narratives
  - Gives students critical language from day one
2. Martín Caparrós, “Hunger does not exist...” (interview excerpt)
  - Grounds critique in lived experience
  - Prevents abstraction and moral distancing

#### **Week 2 – Globalization and the Political Economy of Food**

Goal: Show how global markets, policy, and power organize hunger.

3. Patel & McMichael, A Political Economy of the Food Riot
  - Connects trade liberalization, global prices, and protest
  - Moves from discourse to political economy
  - Keeps momentum from Week 1 while introducing structure

Guiding question:

Who loses access to food, and through which mechanisms?

#### **Week 3 – Famine as a Political Technology**

Goal: Demonstrate that famine is governed, not accidental.

4. Amartya Sen, Starvation and Exchange Entitlements

Guiding question:

What does state protection look like when it is selective?

#### **Week 4 – What That Logic Does to People**

5. Madhusree Mukerjee, Churchill’s Secret War (Chapter 6 – Bengal famine)

- Case-based proof that famine results from decisions
- Makes policy violence visible and undeniable
- Anchors theory in historical accountability

Guiding question:

Why does this keep happening across places and decades?

#### **Week 5 – Capitalism, Neoliberalism, and Agrarian Change**

Goal: Explain why these patterns recur systemically.

6. David Harvey, Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction
  - Provides the governing logic: accumulation by dispossession
  - Connects famine, trade, debt, land, and austerity
  - Shifts students from “what happened” to “how the system works”

## **Week 6 – Trade, WTO, and Structural Inequality**

Goal: Expose how power is embedded in global food systems today.

### 7. ETC Group, Who Will Feed Us?

- Empirically demolishes efficiency and productivity myths
- Makes peasants and informal systems central, not marginal
- Shows how trade concentrates resources and hunger

### 8. Jennifer Clapp, The Problem with Growing Corporate Concentration...

- Names corporate power, mergers, policy capture
- Provides analytical precision and governance vocabulary

## **TRANSITION: From Structures to Everyday Life**

Up to this point, we have examined hunger through its governing structures: political economy, famine policy, neoliberal reform, corporate concentration, and trade regimes. The following weeks do not change direction; instead, they move closer to where these structures become ordinary and invisible. The same forces shaping markets and policy also shape bodies, health narratives, gendered labor, consumption practices, and ideas of ethical responsibility. This phase explores how the global food system reproduces itself through everyday life, revealing how power operates not only through institutions but through routine practices that appear personal yet remain deeply political.

## **Week 7 – Colonial Legacies and Identity**

### 9. The Aboriginal in All of Us (Chapter 1)

## **Week 8 – Food Sovereignty, Health, and Critical Agrarian Studies**

### 10. Reimagining Health with Food Sovereignty and Critical Agrarian Studies

## **Week 9 – Consumption, Politics, and Ethical Consumerism**

### 11. Josée Johnston and Norah MacKendrick,

“The Politics of Grocery Shopping: Eating, Voting, and (Possibly) Transforming the Food System”

(The Oxford Handbook of Food, Politics, and Society)

## **Week 10 – Seeds, Knowledge, and Corporate Control**

### 12. Vandana Shiva, Stolen Harvest (“Mad Cows, Sacred Cows”)

## **Week 11 – Gender, Labor, and Food Politics**

### 13. Deborah Barndt, “Whose ‘Choice’? Gender and Food”

OR

### 14. All the World Needs a Jolt: Social Movements and Political Crisis in Medieval Europe

OR

### 15. Silvia Federici, “The Accumulation of Labor and the Degradation of Women”

from the book, Caliban and the Witch

### **Week 12 – Regulation, Health Claims, and Industry Power**

16. Making Health Claims Legal: The Supplement Industry's War With The FDA  
(from the book Food Politics)

### **Week 13 – Junk Food**

17. Pollan, M. (2008). *In defense of food: An eater's manifesto*. Penguin. The Aborigine in All Of us.

18. Lawrence, F. (2008). *Eat your heart out: Why the food business is bad for the planet and your health*. Penguin UK. Chapter 5 on Sugar.

### **Week 14 – Food sovereignty**

19. Edelman, Marc, Tony Weis, Amita Baviskar, Saturnino M Borras Jr., Eric Holt-Giménez, Deniz Kandiyoti and Wendy Wolford. 2014. Introduction: Critical Perspectives on Food Sovereignty. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. 41(6), 911-931.

20. Henry Bernstein (2014) Food sovereignty via the 'peasant way': a skeptical view, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41:6, 1031-1063, DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2013.852082

### **Week 15 – Permacultures and Agroecology**

21. Fadaee, S. (2019). The permaculture movement in India: A social movement with Southern characteristics. *Social Movement Studies*, 18(6), 720-734.

### **Week 16 – Conclusive Discussion**