

Faculty of Science Course Syllabus
Department of Economics, Fall 2026
Economics of Food and Food Systems – Econ 1214



Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched the part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Instructor: Talan B. İscan, tiscan@dal.ca
Office Hours: Wednesday 14:00–16:00, Economics B23
Lectures: In-person. Tuesday, Thursday 13:05–14:25, McCain 1130

Description

This course uses food and food systems to introduce, explore, and understand a range of economic themes and concepts using both historical and contemporary contexts. The economic themes include the demand for food, the supply of food, economic policies that affect both the demand for and supply of food, and climate change and biodiversity loss.

Prerequisites

None other than an interest in learning about the economics of what we eat using traditional and non-traditional methods.

Course exclusion

None.

Course materials

There is no required textbook for this course. Required material (readings, videos) are available through Dalhousie Libraries, and are listed in lecture presentations and at the end of each chapter. These materials provide additional context and opportunity for you to explore important ideas. You may be tested on the required material.

Assessment

There will be in-class reflections that are meant to infuse intentionality and purpose to the lectures. There will be assignments to develop ideas that are of particular interest to you. Assignments will be posted on the course web page and will be submitted through the Brightspace page. Exams will be used to reinforce learning and give everyone ample opportunity to test their understanding of the core economic concepts and principles. The final exam will be cumulative. (I will not distribute practice exams).

- In-class reflections: 15% of final grade
- Assignments (5): 25% of final grade
- Exam 1, in class: 1 October, 20% of final grade
- Exam 2, in class: 3 November, 20% of final grade
- Final exam, TBA: 20% of final grade

The conversion of numerical grades to Final Letter Grades follows the Dalhousie Common Grade Scale.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Letter</u>
90–100	A+	75–79.9	B+	62–64.9	C+	50–54.9	D
85–89.9	A	70–74.9	B	58–61.9	C	< 50	F
80–84.9	A–	65–69.9	B–	55–57.9	C–		

To pass the course at least a D letter grade average on the exams is required.

Requirements

Attendance to lectures and participation in lecture discussions are requirements. Lectures will include material that are not included in the required readings. Yet, not all required

readings will be covered in the lectures. Exams will assess your knowledge, comprehension, and application of the material.

Assignments will have a research component. Assignments will assess writing style, structure and logic, as well as content (research and analysis).

Policies

In addition to the University Policies and Statements on Academic Integrity the following policies will be enforced.

Electronic devices. Only accessibility related not-taking devices are permitted. Mobile phones and laptop computers will have to be turned off and stowed away during class time.

Large language models. Research and writing are important processes that should not be delegated to other during a university education. While it is practically impossible for me to prevent you from using large language models (LLM, e.g., ChatGPT) in your assignments, I ask you not to use them when writing your assignments. Search engines allow you to dismantle their embedded software by using the tag “-AI” at the end of your keyword search. These searches often give you wrong answers. More importantly, LLM teach you how to unthink.

Plagiarism. All assignments must reflect your individual effort and work. While discussions with your peers is encouraged, collaboration in the final write-up of your assignments is not permitted. You cannot use or paraphrase sources without citing them. Violations of this policy will be considered an academic integrity offence. I reserve the right to use plagiarism software.

Cancellations. In the case of a cancelled class due to illness or university closure, all the course content, including a scheduled midterm exam, for that class will be automatically postponed to the next scheduled one. University closures will not affect assignment due dates.

In-class reflections. For marking purposes there is allowance for one missed reflection without advance notice, and one with advance notice. You can submit in-class submissions, and I would be happy to read and comment on them.

Late assignments. Late assignments will be marked down by 10 percent per day up to a total penalty of 50 percent. I will continue to accept late assignments until the final exam date.

Make-up exam. Inform the instructor in advance if you will be missing a midterm exam due to illness. The weight of a missed midterm exam will be reallocated to the other two exams. If you miss the final exam due to illness or a significant circumstance extraneous to this course, there will be a make-up exam.

Other. University Policies and Statements are available on the course web page (under syllabus) and form part of this syllabus.

Student Resources and Support

There are many resources and supports on campus, including but not limited to the Writing Centre at the Killam Library. A list of these resources are available on the course web page (under syllabus) and form part of this syllabus.

Learning objectives

1. Observing the natural environment surrounding us; collecting, comparing, and evaluating information and data as needed.
2. Understanding of core economic concepts such as the demand for food, the supply of food, and the drivers of basic economic policies that affect both the demand for and supply of food, and how such policies may affect the food system, as well as lead to climate change and biodiversity loss.
3. Application of these core economic concepts to situations that are different from those presented in class, and ability to identify key aspects of a social and economic system.
4. Critical thinking and appraising whether what appears to be evidence for a certain approach is really so; evaluating the quality of an argument; disentangling cause from effect when appropriate; and identifying the strengths, shortcomings, and pitfalls of a particular argument in relevant contexts.
5. Effective communication, writing concise essays, and making a clear point.

Content

1. Introduction
2. Nourishing Economics
3. Eating Wild
4. Domesticated
5. Industrialized
6. Concentrated
7. Regulated
8. Malnourished
9. Depleted
10. Transformed