

SYLLABUS

Economics 263:

Sacramento State University, Department of Economics

Fall 2013

Kristin Kiesel

Email: kiesel@csus.edu

Food Economics

Office: Tahoe 3011

Office phone: (916) 278-7078

!Please read this information carefully. It describes important course policies and deadlines, and I will assume that you are familiar with them!

Lectures: Th 5.30-8.20pm Amador 217

Office hours: Tu 3:00-4:00pm, Th 4:30-5:30pm Tahoe Hall 3011

Please feel free to schedule appointments with me at other times as well. The best way to meet me outside of office hours is to email me and schedule a time. If you have any problems with this course, or with any other matters that may affect your work in this course, please contact me as soon as possible and we can try to work out a solution.

Course overview:

Introduction to advanced economic theory and econometric methods applied to the economics of food. Starting with an overview of demand and supply determinants for foods and food policy directions, the emphasis of this course will be on food consumption and the complexity of individual food choices. We will introduce and apply cost-benefit analyses and concepts like behavioral economics, constrained utility maximization, household production, hedonic price analysis and discrete choice models. The second half of the class applies learned concepts to recent research articles in applied economics and the policy evaluation literature focusing on health, environmental, and ethical concerns of food choices.

3 units.

Prerequisites: Graduate student standing or instructor permission

Learning objectives:

This class will allow you to:

1. Explore the complexity of individual food choices using economic terminology.
2. Recognize the effects of food policy on supply and demand of food products.
3. Understand the contribution, an economic approach—economic theories and econometric methods—can make in developing a better understanding of our food choices and its global consequences.
4. Apply introduced theories and methods in a discussion of recent research papers.
5. *Sharpen your analytical skills and critical thinking.*
6. *Improve your academic reading and writing skills.*
7. *Improve your oral communication and presentation skills.*
8. *Deepen your understanding of conducting applied economic research.*

Required Text: The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy, Lusk, Roosen, Shogren (Select Chapters)
Food Politics, Nestle (Select Chapters)
Additional articles posted on the SacCT class website

There will be a number of recommended readings introduced in class and made available on SacCT, additional books are available for check out from my office

Grades and exam policies:

Exam: There will be one take-home exam posted on **Friday, October 18th**. You will have a week (**til Thursday, October 24th**) to complete this exam. Please check your schedule to ensure that you can complete the exams. **There will be no make-up exams.**

The exam will consist of a variety of types of questions and will require a solid understanding of the material covered in the first half of class. I grade exam answers based on the correctness, and the quality of the economic reasoning in the answer. Sometimes people give a correct answer but do not explain that answer well enough for me to know if they did not just make a lucky guess, and sometimes people give an incorrect answer that shows solid economic reasoning, but with one or two minor mistakes. Thus, I give partial credit for all questions.

Final Paper: You will be asked to complete a final paper in order to apply the learned material. You have two suggested options regarding the format of this final paper, depending on your current student status and future plans:

- Thesis prospectus (more traditional term paper)
- Opinion piece/information brochure
- Details on the final paper will be discussed throughout the semester.

Participation: This is a graduate-level class. You are expected to be involved in the class to a degree that might not have been expected of you in your undergraduate classes. You are expected to stay current on all of the assigned readings, and be able to answer my (or other students) questions, ask insightful questions of your own. Zero participation earns you an “F” grade for participation, not a “C”.

In-class presentation: You will also be asked to review, present and lead the discussion one relevant applied research paper of your choice in class.

Weekly Reports:

In addition, you will have to prepare weekly reports. More information will be provided in class

Food day: Participation in the events on Food day (October, 24th) is mandatory during regular class time. More information will be provided in class.

Final grade breakdown:

Exam:	20%	(100 points)
Final Paper:	30%	(150 points)
In-class presentation	20%	(100 points)
Participation:	10%	(50 points)
Weekly Reports:	20%	(100 points)
	100%	(500 points)

The approximate final grade distribution is:

Percent	Grade
93 – 100%	A
90 – 92%	A-
85 – 89%	B+
80 – 84%	B
75 – 79%	B-
70 – 74%	C+

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is expected as this class will be conducted in strict observance of the **Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures available in the University Policy Manual** (<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm>). It assigns specific responsibilities to both faculty and students. Please review your responsibilities carefully and adhere to these rules. I encourage you to work together on problem sets and study in groups as I strongly believe it supports the learning process. However, work submitted for a grade must be your own.

Courtesy:

As a courtesy to me and your fellow students, please be on time for class. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. The use of laptops is not necessary during lecture. If you need to use your laptop during class, please let me know.

Disabilities:

If you have a learning disability or a physical disability that requires accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. All needs that have been verified through the Services to Students with Disabilities (Lassen Hall) will be accommodated.

Tentative Course Timeline:

Week	Topic	Readings
Week 1 (Th 9/5)	Introduction, course overview, determinants of demand and supply for food products	
Week 2 (Th 9/12)	Benefit-Cost Analysis and food policy (from “eat more” to “eat less”)	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 22, Food Politics: Chapters 1-3
Week 3 (Th 9/19)	Theory and Methods I: Behavioral Economics	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 4 <i>Wansink: Mindless Eating</i> Journal article: <i>Wansink, 2010</i> <i>Just and Wansink, 2010</i>
Week 4 (Th 9/26)	Theory and Methods II: Household Production Function	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 2
Week 5 (Th 10/3)	Theory and Methods III: Discrete Choice Theory and Modeling	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 5 <i>Train: Discrete Choice Methods with Simulation</i>
Week 6 (Th 10/10)	Theory and Methods IV: Hedonic Price Analysis	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 6 Journal article: <i>Kiesel and Villas-Boas, 2007</i>
Week 7 (Th 10/17) Take home exam posted Friday, 10/18	Applications I: Providing information (e.g. Nutritional Labeling),	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 18 Kiesel, McCluskey, Villas-Boas, 2011 (review) Journal articles: <i>Kiesel and Villas-Boas, 2010</i> <i>Bollinger, Leslie, Sorensen, 2011</i>
Week 8 (Th 10/24) Food day: 10/24		
Week 9 (Th 10/31)	Applications I: Providing Information (e.g. Food Education)	Journal articles: <i>Gripshover and Markman, 2013</i> <i>Kiesel, Smialkova, Anderson, Villas-Boas 2013 (working paper)</i>

Week 10 (Th 11/7)	Applications II: Altering prices (e.g. access and availability, taxes and subsidies)	Journal articles: <i>Anderson and Matsa, 2011</i> <i>Currie, DellaVigna, Moretti, Pathania, 2010</i> <i>Chouinard, LaFrance, Perloff, 2007,</i> <i>Lusk and Schroeter, 2011</i> <i>Fletcher, Frisvolt, Tefft, 2010</i>
Week 11 (Th 11/14)	Applications III: Restrictions (e.g. soft drink bans)	Journal articles: <i>Taber et al. 2011, Craddock et al. 2011,</i> <i>Huang, Kiesel, 2012</i> <i>Lichtman, 2012</i> <i>Kiesel, Huang, Craypo, Crane 2013 (working paper)</i>
Week 12 (Th 11/21)	Applications IV: Additional quality considerations (e.g. Environmental concerns)	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 34 Journal articles: <i>any article referenced in above chapter</i>
Week 13 (Th 11/28) <i>Thanksgiving, no class</i>		
Week 14 (Th 12/5)	Applications IV: Additional quality considerations (e.g. Ethical considerations)	The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy: Chapter 35 Journal articles: <i>any article referenced in above chapter</i>
Week 15 (Th 12/12)	Final Paper workshop	
Dec. 13 th 5pm Final paper due		Final paper due