This is a topics course which changes from year to year. This year we will consider the debate over the food distribution system from a special perspective: the so-called “food miles” or local sourcing question. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the American way of producing our food? We will consider this topic from the point of view of a leading critic of the American way, Michael Pollan, a journalist at the University of California, and two economic geographers at the University of Toronto, Pierre Desrochers and Hiroko Shimizu.

Class Format

The class will be structured around discussion. Each class will have an assigned student discussion leader, whose job it will be to present the main points in the reading for that class. For the first several weeks, we will consider and debate the merits and demerits of global versus local food sourcing. During that time, students will select a topic for a final paper and presentation. The second part of the course will be devoted to student presentations, first of their topics and then of their final papers.

Exams and Grading

There will be a midterm covering the readings in Pollan’s *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* and Desrochers and Shimizu’s *The Locavore’s Dilemma*, which will account for 40 percent of the grade. The final paper will account for 40 percent, and discussion and participation 20 percent.

Both books may be purchased, or they will be available on a 2-hour reserve in Magrath Library, and Waite Library in Ruttan Hall.
Introduction and Overview: assignment of discussion leaders

1. Pollan – Chapters 1-3, pages 1-64
2. Pollan – Chapters 4-7, pages 65-109
3. Pollan – Chapters 8-10, pp. 123-207
4. Pollan – Chapters 11-14, pages 208-276
5. Pollan – Chapters 15-17, pages 277-333
6. Pollan – Chapters 18-20, pages 334-412
7. Desrochers and Shimizu – Chapters 1-2, pages 1-58
8. Desrochers and Shimizu – Chapter 3, pages 59-86
9. Desrochers and Shimizu – Chapter 4, pages 87-106
10. Desrochers and Shimizu – Chapter 5, pages 107-140
11. Desrochers and Shimizu – Chapter 6, pages 141-162
12. Desrochers and Shimizu – Chapter 7 Conclusion and Epilogue, pages 163-192

13. Presentation ideas
14. Presentation ideas
15. Presentations

Final Papers: due Saturday, December 13