Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to analyze threats to global food security including those related to climate change and environmental degradation, animal and plant diseases, access to clean water, agricultural terrorism, and antimicrobial resistance. We will address national and global health, economic, social, and ethical impacts of these disruptive forces. We will also examine strategies for protecting and enhancing the security of global food production and supply systems. In the final analysis, our goal is to gain insight into the interrelationship between national security and food security and develop an understanding of policies and programs necessary to achieve global food security through ensuring availability, access, utilization, and stability to adequate nutritious food for all people.

Background: Food insecurity is one of the most critical problems confronting the global community in the 21st Century. Despite numerous national and international efforts over the past 60 years, its elimination remains elusive due to a complex array of environmental and human factors. Despite the existence of an adequate supply of food to feed the global population at this time, the absence of effective political will at the national and international level is perhaps the most significant obstacle to achieving global food security. Today, over 800
million people are chronically malnourished while millions more are suffering from acute malnutrition. A growing number of national conflicts throughout the globe over the past decade have significantly contributed to the increased number of individuals displaced and acutely malnourished. Hunger is number one on the list of the world’s top 10 health risks. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Missing out on essential nutrients in 1000 days from conception to a child’s second birthday translates into irreversible damage to cognitive and physical development. Global food insecurity is a major foreign policy issue affecting national security and economic development at an unprecedented level. The global community needs to increase food production by at least 60 percent by 2050, all while facing increasing pressures on land and water resources from a growing population and changing climate. Insufficient access to adequate water, limited arable land, and disputed land rights further exacerbate food insecurity. Concerns over food safety resulting from contaminated processes or terrorist interventions at the farm and market level provide a significant threat to global food security.

Objectives:

This course is a broad based cross-cutting interdisciplinary review of the causes and impacts of global food insecurity. It is designed to provide a comprehensive perspective on food insecurity as a multi-dimensional challenge to the global community. We will address why global food insecurity is so difficult resolve despite the multitude of resources available to society. The key objectives of this course are to:

1) Define the nature and scope of global food security from an interdisciplinary perspective (human rights, gender, age, health, agricultural policy, nutrition, land rights, water access, governance, finance, economic development, conflict, and national security);

2) assess food security’s impact on people, nation states, and the international community;

3) review and examine the development and implementation of U.S. Government and multilateral policies and programs designed to achieve global food security;

4) evaluate the relationship between governments, multilateral institutions, non-profits, and profit oriented companies in addressing global food security issues;

5) analyze the relationship between food security and national security;

6) review and analyze food safety issues, policies, and programs at the national and international level involving contaminated agricultural crops and terrorist threats to the food supply;
7) examine challenges confronting the attainment of global food security (lack of political will, climate change, urbanization, inadequate agricultural production, and *post-harvest food losses*).

8) Develop an efficient, effective, resilient and sustainable U.S. global food security policy and program.

**Bibliography of Selected Sources and Documents for use by students in addressing key objectives of the course, conducting relevant research, and fulfilling weekly class assignments.** (Many of the reading materials below are available online.)

4. Dr. Chase Sova, World Food Program USA, 2017: *Winning The Peace: Hunger and Instability*
5. Christopher B. Barrett (ed.), Oxford University Press, September 2013: *Food Security and Sociopolitical Stability*
6. Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell, 2005, *Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role*
8. Phil Thomas, George Mason University’s World Medical and Health Policy Journal, Spring 2014; *The Elusive Goal of Eliminating Global Hunger: Progress and Challenges*
9. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), March 2012: *Food Security: Definition, Four Dimensions, History* (accessible online)
11. The Independent Task Force on Global Food Security (Douglas Bereuter and Dan Glickman, Co-Chairs; 2017; *Stability in The 21st Century: Global Food Security For Peace and Prosperity*
12. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs; May 2014: *Advancing Global Food Security In The Face of a Changing Climate*
15. The National Intelligence Council; 2016; Implications For US National Security of Anticipated Climate Change
20. USAID’s Legacy In Agricultural Development: 50 Years of Progress; November 2013
22. USAID’s Feed The Future Website; online www.feedthefuture.gov
23. USAID’s Food Aid Website: www.usaid.gov
30. The Government Accountability Office (GAO), May 29, 2009; International Food Assistance: Local and Regional Procurement Can Enhance The Efficiency of U.S. Food Aid, But Challenges May Constrain Its Implementation; GAO-09-570; available online (www.gao.gov)

32. Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2012; *Straight Talk on Genetically Engineered Foods: Answers to Frequently Answered Questions*

33. Office Of The Director of National Intelligence; 2015: *Intelligence Community Assessment: Global Food Security*


37. Emmy Simmons, Center For strategic and International studies; 2017; *Recurring Storms: Food Insecurity, Political Instability, and Conflict*

38. Agriculture and Rural Development Department, World Bank; 2010: *Food Security And Conflict;* Henk-Jan Brinkman and Cullen S. Hendrix, The World Food Program; 2011: *Food Insecurity and Violent Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Addressing The Challenges*


41. International Food Policy Research Institute; 2014: *How To Build Resilience To Conflict: The Role of Food Security*

42. U.S. Agency For International Development,. Bureau for Food security, 2016: *Resilience at USAID 2016 Progress Report*

43. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; Human Rights: The Right To Adequate Food (Fact Sheet No.34)

44. Randy Schnepf, Congressional Research Service, May 28, 2014; *International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues* (www.crs.gov)

45. Stephanie Mercier, Agree, Transforming Food and Ag Policy; September 2012; *U.S. Agricultural Development Assistance and Food Aid: Programs and Issues*

46. (www.foodandagpolicy.org)

47. Elizabeth R. Bageant, Christopher Barrett, and Erin Lentz, Cornell University, June 2010 and November 2010; *Food and Agricultural Cargo Preference*

49. Patrick Webb, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University for USAID; 2011; prepared for USAID; Improving The Nutritional Quality of U.S. Food Aid: Recommendations for Changes to Products and Programs


52. 1000 Days Partnership; June 2013; Change a Life, Change The Future: 1,000 Days Partnership Progress Report

53. NGO Coalition, July 2012: A Roadmap For Continued U.S. Leadership To End Hunger


55. Thea King, Martin Barry Cole, Jeff Farber, and Jeremy P. Hill; August 2017: Food Safety For Food Security: Relationship Between Global Megatrends and Developments in Food Safety

56. Food Safety Magazine, October/November 2015: The Nexus Between Food Safety and Food Security

57. Mieke Uyttendaele, Ellen De Boeck, Liesbeth Jacxsens, 2015: Challenges in Food Safety As Part of Security: Lessens learned On Food Safety In A Globalized World

58. Barakat Mahmoud, Ph.D (Food Safety), AGRILINKS; March 17, 2017: Let’s Talk About Food Safety For Enhancing Food Security and Development

59. Irene B. Hanning, and others, Nature Education Knowledge; 2012: Food Safety and Food Security

60. Department of Food Safety, Cluster on Health Security and Environment, World Health Organization: May 2008; Food Safety Issues: Terrorist Threats To Food: Guidance For Establishing and Strengthening Prevention and Response Systems

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

1. Attendance, Readings and Discussion (20%). Class attendance is mandatory. Students are required to complete assigned readings before attending each weekly class. Students must come to class prepared to engage in a lively substantive discussion of key global food security issues and readings assigned for the week. Students are expected to exercise strong critical thinking skills.

2. Oral Presentations (15%): Each student will be required, alone or with partner(s), to present an analytical overview of one of the key issues threatening global food security to the rest of
the class. Students will choose the issues they wish to present by the end of our second class meeting.

3. Midterm (20%) A five essay question take-home mid-term exam will cover material from the first half of the course including assigned readings, lectures, discussions, guest speakers, and hand-outs.

4. Research/Policy Paper (35%): Each Student will submit a ten-page research/policy paper on a critical food security topic of his or her choice. We will discuss potential topics and strategies during our first meetings.

5. Final Examination (10%) In lieu of a traditional final examination, we will meet and have students orally present their findings, conclusions, and recommendations from their research/policy analysis papers to the class. Presenters will be required to respond to class questions and engage in a spirited substantive discussion of the issues they address.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1
August 27, 2018
Intro to the Course and Overview of Global Food Security Issues.

Read and discuss Phil Thomas’ 2014 Medical and Health Policy Journal article on the Challenge of Eliminating Global Hunger identified in the bibliography section of the this syllabus.
Presentation of power-point on the history and evolution of the global food security issues and policy process in the U.S. and the UN System. Review and discussion of the class/course grading system, expectations, and important dates. Will also discuss research/policy papers expectations as well as oral presentations.

Week 2
September 3, 2018
No Class/Labor Day Holiday

Week 3
September 10, 2018
Review UN 2017 Food And Agriculture Organization (FAO) Annual Report on the State of Food and Nutrition in The World. The class will address the many challenges confronting the global community as it attempts to address a wide variety of complex interactive natural and man-made challenges affecting global food security today and in the future. Guest speaker from the UN FAO’s Washington Office will present and answer questions. Students will begin making oral presentations on key global food security issues during this class.
Week 4  Topic  September 17, 2018

(RESEARCH/POLICY PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS). Research proposals will identify issues, problems, and policies for analysis. Proposals will include identification of the issue, problem, policy, and a suggested analytical approach which will include objectives, scope, and methodology.

Review and discussion of the U.S. and UN global food security policy process. Focus on policy goals and objectives, the emergence of the whole of government approach, and the challenges to this process. Identify and examine the key US and UN agencies involved in this process. The class will also address the role of non-profit and for-profit entities in the policy development and implementation process; assess effectiveness and efficiency of the current process. The class will review multiple GAO reports identified in the syllabus bibliography as part of their preparation for class discussion assessing the process.

Week 5  September 24, 2018

Identify, describe, and assess the role of climate change, environmental degradation, and other natural and man-made factors challenging the viability of the current and projected food security situation. Gather and analyze this information from reports in the syllabus bibliography. An official from the National Intelligence Council will present and discuss factors identified and analyzed by the NIC in its 2015 Report on global food security and its 2016 report on climate change. This official presented his updated analysis at GMU’s November 15, 2017 4th Annual Global Food Security Summit.

Week 6  October 1, 2018

This class will focus on the role of conflict and its threat to global food security. Students are required to read and review a series of conflict related food security reports in the syllabus bibliography. The December 2017 World Food Program Report on Winning The Peace: Hunger and Instability will be provided students in advance of the class. A former high level official of USAID and the WFP USA author of the 2017 reports will be guest speakers. She has authored
many articles on the linkage of conflict and food security. Students must review Syllabus bibliography sources pertaining to conflict and food security to inform their discussion on the issue. Students will continue to make oral presentations to the class on assigned topics.

Week 7  
(Tues)  October 9, 2018

The topic of this class will be the interrelationship between food security and national security which has emerged as a major issue challenging the national and global community over the past decade. The class will address issues of funding, turf, communication, collaboration, and integration. Is a comprehensive integrated approach possible? What are the pros and the cons of increased collaboration and integration. Could such integration undermine U.S. Global food security and national security goals, objectives, and operations? What has been the experience of increase collaboration so far. Should such effort continue? Students will continue to make oral presentations on selective food security topics. A five question take-home mid-term will be provided to students to be returned at the next class. Questions on the mid-term will be based on issues addressed in class since the beginning of the semester. Emphasis on demonstrating critical thinking in written answers will be the key to the successful completion of the mid-term.

Week 8  
October 15, 2018

(TAKE-HOME MID-TERM DUE). Students and professor will discuss their overall assessment of the first half of the semester suggesting possible opportunities for enhanced learning during the second half of the semester. This class will address the importance of food safety to food security. Students will review material presented in the syllabus bibliography on this issue. A guest speaker from the FDA will be invited to participate in a discussion on the globalization of food safety issues critical to the future of global food security. Students will make oral presentations on this issue for discussion in class.

Week 9  
October 22, 2018

This class will focus on the importance of solid participatory, transparent, and accountable governance and the formation of political will as essential to efficient and effective food security policies and programs. Information from the syllabus bibliography will help inform
the class discussion of this important issue. An senior official from USAID’s Africa Bureau will be our guest speaker. He is an expert on governance issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. Students will continue their oral presentations on selected food security issues during this class.

Week 10  
October 29, 2018

This class will focus on the development of an efficient, effective, resilient, and sustainable global food security policy. It will address reforms to U.S. Food Security Policy embodied in the 2016 Global Food security Act emphasizing the importance of national security, inclusiveness, monitoring, oversight, and accountability. Students will assess the 5 year U.S. Whole of Government Global Food Security Strategy included in the syllabus bibliography and efforts at implementing that strategy under the current Administration. Students will be asked to make recommendations based on their review and analysis to improve U.S. and UN global food security policy and strategy.

Week 11  
November 5, 2018

(RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS). Oral presentations and discussion of student research/policy papers begin today. Each student will make at least a 20 minute oral presentation derived from their research/policy paper, answer class questions, and then engage the rest of the class in discussion of the substantive points of their presentation. Emphasis once again will be placed on critical thinking, substantive conclusions, and constructive recommendations.

Week 12  
November 12, 2018

This class will focus on the interrelationship between food security, nutrition, and health. Emphasis will be placed on how improvements in nutrition and health can enhance food security and lead to improved economic stability and growth. Representatives of major US international NGO’s will present their views on the integration of quality food, enhanced nutrition, adequate clean water, quality health care, enhanced women’s rights, and title to farm land can lead to improved social, political, and economic conditions, ultimately driving more robust food security. Oral presentations of class research and policy papers will continue.

Week 13  
November 19, 2018
The class will address the pros and cons of further integrating genetically modified foods in the global food security system. The increasingly strident polarized political debate over the environmental and health effects of GMO’s has caused great concern within government, the private sector, and the NGO community. With the prospect of needing to increase global food production by 60 percent by 2050 to feed the growing population and respond to climate change pressures, there is an urgent need to resolve the political conflict, and reach a constructive consensus on a way forward. The basic question remains: Are GMO’s safe and environmentally appropriate to enhance agricultural production. If not, what are suitable alternatives? Should society focus on more efficient and safer means of production? What are the incentives for seeking more viable alternatives? Another key question remains: How can global society reduce food loss and waste which severely undermines food security? Guest speakers from USDA and the NGO community will address the class. Students will continue their oral presentations following the guest presentation and discussion.

Week 14  
November 26, 2018

Continuation of student oral presentations and class discussion. A representative from the Global Harvest Initiative will present a multinational private sector oriented agenda for enhancing global food security. She will emphasize the important role of agribusiness in globalization of food security and the need to develop complimentary national food security policies and programs consistent with the need of the ever-expanding and diverse global population.

Week 15  
December 3, 2018

Continuation of student oral presentations and class discussion. Class discussion of key food security issues addressed during the semester. Emphasis on lessons learned and developing a global food security agenda for the future. Presentation of an overview of GMU’s Global Food Security Project and the recently issued report by the Association of Land Grant Universities (APLU) report titled, “The Challenge of Change: Harnessing University Discovery, Engagement, and Learning To Achieve Food and Nutrition Security” We will discuss the critical conclusions and recommendations of the Report concerning a new cross-cutting university approach to global food security issues. A representative from the APLU will present, answer questions, and lead a discussion of the report’s key messages.

Week 16  
December 10, 2018

Reading Days/No class

Week 17  
No exam. No class  
December 17, 2018
INSTRUCTOR

Phil Thomas is currently an Adjunct Professor and Research Fellow at GMU’s Schar School of Policy & Government where he is leading a Global Food Security Project that has sponsored systematic research, convened annual Global Food Security Summits at GMU, authored a 2014 report on Global Food security Challenges, and completed a 2015 GMU grant funded report on reforming U.S. international food aid. He has also taught classes on global food security and globalization at GMU’s Honors College for the past 4 years. Phil retired from the U.S. GAO in 2013 as an Assistant Director where he led numerous reviews of U.S. Global Food Aid & Food Security Programs which resulted in many congressionally mandated management reforms. These reviews addressed food security, national security, and food aid related issues in Russia, North Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, and Central America. He is an expert in U.S. and United Nation Nations Food Aid and Food Security Issues and Programs. Phil did undergraduate work at the University of Virginia and has an M.A. and B.A. in International Affairs from California State University in Sacramento. His Master’s Thesis addressed efforts to end Apartheid in South Africa. Phil was also an investigative reporter for the California Journal of Government and Politics where he wrote a series of articles on California State Government. He was also elected to the Falls Church, Virginia City Council as a non-partisan Candidate where he served from 1990 to 1994 as a Council Member and Vice Mayor. He is a Navy Veteran and served ashore and on the USS Shenandoah in San Diego, Annapolis, Norfolk, the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean.