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Location:           Talloires, France (May 12 – June 26, 2015)
Prerequisites:      EC 5 or equivalent

Course Description:
Agriculture and food systems differ dramatically among regions, and change rapidly over
time. This course will use economic principles to help explain these patterns and identify
ways to improve agricultural practices, food markets and nutritional outcomes. The food
system around Talloires offers a powerful laboratory in which to apply the analytical
methods introduced in Ec 5, and build insight into many broader environmental and
social forces. The course begins in the kitchen, examining differences in food
consumption that we then trace to local markets, trade and policy choices, many of
which are driven by concern about farm production, agricultural practices and
sustainability. At each stage in the food system we will observe and discuss current
conditions with our host families, local farmers and food sellers, and use our
background readings and data analysis exercises to see the local food system in its
global context.

Course Objectives
Our goal in this class is to explain, predict and evaluate changing food systems in
Europe, the US and around the world, using economic principles. Through local
observation, economic analysis and descriptive statistics, students will gain familiarity
with the data and methods needed to explain and predict dietary patterns and food
consumption as well as farming practices and agricultural conditions, and then evaluate
the consequences of alternative market structures, market failure and government
policies including taxation and regulation of the world food system.

Texts and Materials
All required readings will be distributed electronically. Students interested in advance
or background reading should purchase:

G.W. Norton, J. Alwang and W.A. Masters, *Economics of Agricultural Development:
World Food Systems and Resource Use*, 3rd edition. Routledge, 2014 (at your local
bookstore or any online bookseller).

Press, 2013 (at your local bookstore or any online bookseller).
Assignments and Grading
All class meetings will be supported by lecture slides and materials to be distributed electronically, and a series of five weekly assignments will lead up to completion and presentation of a final project. The three initial assignments have equal weight (15 pts each), and the three project-related assignments add up to almost half of the semester grade (45 pts), with the remainder (10 pts) given for verbal participation in class including comments on other students’ projects:

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<th>Summary of Assignments</th>
<th>Grading Weight</th>
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<td>Ex. 1. Food prices, consumption choices and nutrient intake</td>
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<td>Ex. 2. Farm resources, input use and production</td>
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Academic Conduct
In brief: Education invites you to take the ideas of others and make them your own, so you are encouraged to read widely and to discuss class materials with other students, but any material you produce to show mastery of these ideas must be your own work. More specifically, each student is responsible for upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, as specified in the Friedman School’s Policies and Procedures manual (http://nutrition.tufts.edu/student/documents) and Tufts University policies (http://uss.tufts.edu/studentAffairs/documents/tuftsStudentHandbook.pdf#page=4). It is the responsibility of each student to understand and comply with these standards, as violations will be sanctioned by penalties ranging from failure on an assignment and the course to dismissal from the school.

Accommodation of Disabilities
Students with documented disabilities are entitled to academic accommodation appropriate to their needs. If you require accommodations for this course, please contact me confidentially prior to the start of classes.
Topics, Assignments and Objectives

Week 1: Food consumption, dietary patterns and health
Assignment: Ex. #1: Food prices, consumption choices and nutrient intake
Objectives:
- Describe differences in food consumption between Talloires and your home
- Use indifference curves and budget lines to explain consumption choices
- Use food composition tables to estimate the nutrient content of a diet
- Use dietary reference intake tables to estimate nutrient requirements

Week 2: Food production, farming practices and the environment
Assignment: Ex #2. Farm resources, input use and production
Objectives:
- Describe differences in farm production between Haute Savoie and Mass.
- Use production possibilities frontiers to explain farm output choices
- Use input response curves to explain farmers’ use of fertilizer and other inputs
- Use farm survey data to describe variation in farm operations across countries

Week 3: Food markets, international trade and social welfare
Assignment: Ex #3. Retail markets, food prices and availability
Objectives:
- Describe differences in the food retail environment between Annecy/Geneva and Somerville/Boston
- Use supply, demand and trade to predict and explain food prices
- Use elasticities to characterize consumer and producer response to changes in income, prices and production possibilities
- Use economic surplus to evaluate the effects of government policies (taxes, subsidies and regulation) in food markets

Week 4. Food policy and politics
Assignment: Ex. #4. Topic selection and problem statement for final project
Objectives:
- Describe differences in agricultural and food policy between the EU and US
- Use price comparisons and subsidy/tax equivalents to measure net effects of government policy in food markets
- Use economic surplus per person to measure individuals’ incentives for lobbying and political activity
- Describe the strengths and limitations of economic incentives as an explanation for political activity
**Week 5: Agriculture in economic development**

**Assignment:** Ex #5. Literature review and data sources for final project

**Objectives:**
- Describe and compare the historical evolution across the US, Europe and the developing world of food consumption, farm production and agricultural policies.
- Describe and compare current events and controversies in the agricultural sectors of the US, Europe and the developing world, including the role of GMOs and other farm technologies, the rise of obesity and diet-related disease, or food insecurity and health disparities.

**Week 6: Presentation of student projects**

**Assignment:** Final project presentations

**Objectives:**
- Use economic principles to analyze a food or agricultural issue of personal or professional significance for you.
- Communicate your results in a persuasive and authoritative manner.
- Contribute constructively to discussion and debate of others’ analyses.