RS 5530: Sociology of Agriculture and Food Systems
Tuesdays 12:40 -3:20 PM
Kottman Hall 245
Fall 2018

Instructor:
Dr. Shoshanah Inwood
135 Williams Hall – OARDC, Wooster
469A Kottman Hall, Columbus Campus
Inwood.2@osu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00-12:00 pm or by appointment

Description:
A review of theory and research associated with the sociology of agriculture and food systems from the 1970s to the present. The course focuses on theory and research that seeks to understand the evolution of the agricultural system; public agricultural research and the Land Grant system; the diffusion and adoption of agricultural innovations; the impacts of agricultural change; consolidation and power in the food and agriculture system; farm size and communities, and workers; commodities, consumption, and culture; gender, race, class; sustainable agriculture, and the role of consumers in transforming the agro-food system; critiques of alternative agrofood movements; and gender, race, class, and food justice. This course exposes students to the varied research designs and methods used by social scientist who study agriculture and food systems topics. The course focuses primarily on U.S. agriculture and food systems.

Objectives:
When the course is completed, the participant will demonstrate the ability to
1. Describe some of the major theoretical perspectives for interpreting agricultural change of the last 45 years;
2. Describe what is meant by the structure of agriculture and explain some of the changes and consequences of change in the structure of agriculture;
3. Understand how race, gender, class and ethnicity intersect in the food and agriculture system;
4. Become familiar with contemporary global food system challenges, including food security/sovereignty, and environmental issues;
5. Describe key features of the alternative food system movement and Civic Agriculture and evaluate the meanings and strategies of each;
6. Identify various intersections of the state, capital, and society in the food system and explain how the actions/interests of each component contest, counteract, or complement those of others.

Background:
This course will give students an opportunity to learn about changes in the agricultural and food system. With this information they will be empowered to more critically consider the practical and policy implications of agricultural change for nations, communities, families and individuals. This course provides foundational knowledge to graduate students interested in the specialized knowledge of the sociology of agriculture and food systems; to graduate and undergraduate students it also provides sociological insight into understanding contemporary food system change, and introduces students to the social dimensions of achieving a more sustainable food and agricultural system.

Course Overview:
The course can be divided into several sections, with the first focusing on some of the overarching theoretical perspectives for studying the sociology of agriculture; the second focusing on contemporary issues of global food and agricultural change; and the third section focusing on proposed solutions, alternatives, and social movements for affecting change in the food system.
The course begins by exploring the “New” Sociology of Agriculture, reviewing literature related to the political economy of agriculture, agricultural industrialization and the Goldschmidt Hypothesis, and commodity chain analysis. We then examine food regimes, followed by neoliberalism and governance of the food system, with a consideration the intersecting motivations of the state, capital, and society. The source material in this section of the course will be a range of journal articles and chapters.

The course then explores social problems related to food and agriculture’s relationship to the environment, globalization, global food security, and malnutrition. We give particular attention to the intersection of global capital with global food security.

The focus then shifts to considering possible solutions to the above issues. We consider the role of consumers and consumption, institutional buying, the alternative agricultural movement, as well as the emergence of Civic Agriculture and its underpinnings and goals.

It is important to note that the scholarship and study of the U.S. food and agriculture system includes approaches and perspectives based in rural sociology, rural geography, agricultural economics, and a wider range of disciplines, actors, perspectives, theories and methods. Each discipline/group approaches the subject matter differently, and we cannot do justice to any one of these in one class. However, we will work to understand the key social processes the scholarly literature seeks to capture, explore leading debates on agrifood systems and conceptual frameworks we use to interpret them. Readings will address the interplay between various actors in the food system from both a historical and contemporary perspective.

**Required Readings:**

There are two required textbooks for the course. Additional texts are recommended, but not required (several chapters from these texts are assigned and readings are on Carmen). In addition, selected readings from journals, edited books, and single authored volumes as described in the course outline are available on the Carmen course site.

**Required:**


**Recommended, but not required:**

Several chapters will be used from the following volumes, although each text has additional content of possible interest. I recommend that all rural sociology students purchase the new rural sociology decennial volume edited by Bailey et al. Only a couple chapters from the Howard text will be assigned, but this accessible volume contains several interesting chapters related to the structure of the food system.


All or most readings are available for you to download directly from Canvas (the system that replace Carmen in 2016). If a reading is not posted on Canvas/Carmen please download it via the OSU Library electronic journal system.
Course Requirements and Grading:

Classroom time will primarily focus on discussion of the course readings, with supplemental content provided through lectures or guest presentations. Assignments to be completed outside of class will facilitate in-class work.

Grades will be assessed according to student performance on several different assignments. The breakdown of each assignment’s weight as a part of the final grade is as follows. There are a couple assignments unique to graduate students in the course and unique assignments for undergraduate students as well:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment and Evaluation</th>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Reaction Paper (15% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
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<td>Book Review</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Lightening Talk</td>
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The minimum percentages to achieve a given grade are as follows:

- A: 93%
- A-: 90%
- B+: 88%
- B: 83%
- C+: 78%
- C: 73%
- C-: 70%
- D+: 68%
- D: 63%
- D-: 60%
- F: <60%

Assignments and Evaluation:
*Assignment due dates may change depending on the rate we move through the material. You will be given at least one week notice of a change in due date.

Participation (10 percent):
Classroom participation will be judged according to: (1) activeness in the classroom as well as (2) consistency of classroom participation and attendance, (3) quality of classroom participation and (4) periodic short reflection assignments based on class readings and activities.

You can earn a large part of your grade based upon your performance in class. This requires that you are able to demonstrate that you have read the assigned material in advance and that you are fully prepared to contribute to the class discussion. Quality is more important than quantity in what you have to say. As part of your class contribution, you may have short-in class assignments where you work with other students to demonstrate your ability to apply your knowledge in this class.

Grading criteria for what you earn from class participation are the following: (1) High quality class participation reflects thoughtful consideration of the required readings and course assignments, clearly demonstrating your knowledge, questions, and concerns about the topics introduced each week. In class discussion, it is important to reference the readings. (2) High quality class participation reflects an in-class assignment performance that provides excellent coverage of the points outlined in the assignment instructions. (3) High quality class participation reflects consistency in participation, which also means that you are present each class as well as the entire time for each class—and that you are devoting full-attention to the class. (4) High quality class participation means that you have
fully prepared for the class in terms of the reading assignments and that you fully engage in the learning experience. Your class-preparation will be partly assessed with periodic in-class quizzes that will be given on the week’s reading material that you should have read prior to coming to class.

Your input to class discussion is very important. You are expected to attend all class sessions. Please do not come to class late or leave early, as this disrupts the learning experience for other students. This course is based on in-class discussion and it includes group activities. Some participation points will come from in-class assignments. If you need to miss a class due to illness, please provide a written, physician’s note so that your grade will not be affected. Please know that it is your responsibility to secure any missed material and notes from another student in the case you are ill.

Midterm Exam (20 percent):
A midterm, in-class exam will take place on October 9th. Students will be asked to answer a series of short answer, essay and/or multiple choice questions concerning course materials covered up to the day of the exam.

Book Review (20 percent):
Undergraduate and Graduate students in the course are to identify an appropriate scholarly book (single authored or edited volume) related to the Sociology of Agriculture and Food Systems. You can consult with me for ideas, do your own literature review, or check out resources such as the database maintained by Phil Howard to identify possible books to review (see https://creator.zoho.com/howardp/books-and-films/view-embed/CFA_books_and_films_View/). Once you have selected a book, you need to let Dr. Inwood know by October 9 the author and title of the book. Book reviews are to be submitted on or before November 13 to Dr. Inwood.

Guidance for the contents of the book review is on CARMEN under Module 1 Week 1 and under Assignments.

Book Review Lightening Talk (20 percent undergraduate students; 10 percent graduate students):
Graduate and Undergraduate students will present a lightening talk of their book review. In no more than five minutes (practice ahead of time!), each student will tell the class: (a) descriptive information about his/her selected book (e.g., title, author name/affiliation, year); (b) brief content summary (e.g., key arguments, methods, conclusions); and (c) personal reaction and recommended readership.

This is an opportunity for the entire class to learn more about the book you reviewed, and will help build a community library of books related to the sociology of food and agriculture. Additionally, lightening talks are increasingly a popular presentation option at conferences. The short time presentation time forces a tight presentation, this is an opportunity for you to experiment and practice the lightening talk model, and should be approached as a professional development opportunity. Presentations will occur over two class periods. The graduate students will present first on November 13th, providing a model and mentoring opportunity for undergraduate students who present on November 20th. These dates may change depending on scheduling the kitchen classroom at the Ohio Union. Additional guidelines and presentation dates will be posted on CARMEN.

Undergraduates Reaction Papers (30 percent):
Undergraduates will complete two reaction papers, each worth 15% of your final grade. These reaction papers will be an opportunity for undergraduate students to synthesize course readings and discussions. The second reaction paper will be due at the end of the semester. Additional information on the reaction papers will be posted on CARMEN. The reaction papers will be due October 30th and December 11th by 2:00pm.

Discussion Leader (graduate students only) (10 percent):
Graduate students will be responsible for serving as a class discussion leader once during the semester. Assignment of class leader responsibilities will occur during the second class session. Discussion leaders are required to the optional reading and provide a summary/commentary on it. Discussion leadership will entail
two parts, 1) A brief opening oral presentation (including a set of between 4 and 7 slides) highlighting the most important two or three points of the chapters/articles under consideration. Please note that all readings in a particular session are thematically related so the opening oral presentation should seek to succinctly synthesize some of the material. Creativity in presenting/augmenting the material is encouraged. 2) Development of two or three questions intended to stimulate class discussion after the brief opening oral presentation. More than one discussion leader may exist for a class session and students should coordinate with each other regarding how to facilitate discussion.

**Graduate Student Final Term Paper (30 percent):**
For the final project graduate students will have the choice of preparing one of three paper options. All papers must be theoretically informed and be approximately 20 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12 point font. Please let Dr. Inwood know which option you are selecting by October 9th. Papers are due by December 11th at 2:00pm.

(A) A comprehensive literature review with explicit analysis of key concepts, theories, and/or debates. A literature review can take many forms: interpreting old material in a new light, tracing the intellectual history of a particular topic (including major debates), or evaluating the literature on a particular topic and offering advice to readers. Regardless of the type of literature review, I want to hear your voice in this paper! This option is appropriate for students wanting to explore particular agriculture or food systems topics via extensive reading in the social sciences.

(B) A research proposal with the following sections: introduction, literature review, research questions/hypotheses, proposed methods, and project significance. This option is appropriate for students starting to plan out a Masters or Dissertation project. The instructor will be available to help students develop research questions/hypotheses and select appropriate research methods.

(C) An original empirical research paper with the following sections: introduction, literature review, research questions/hypotheses, methods, results/discussion, and project significance. This option is appropriate for students who have completed Masters or Dissertation research or students seeking to submit a manuscript (based on original research) for publication. The instructor will be available to advise students on preparing manuscripts for publication, selecting an appropriate journal, and other aspects of the manuscript submission/review process.

**References/Citations**
Use in-text citations for original material and quotations. Full references must also be listed again at the end of the document. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. When in doubt, make a reference and citation.

**Wikipedia:** Wikipedia and other online open topic contribution collectives are great places to start your search for references. If you find information you want in a Wikipedia article, then follow up and verify it by perusing the references at the bottom of the article. Those are the sources on which to base your references and citations in your work. Repeat: Wikipedia cannot be a citation in your references.

**Late Assignment Policy:** The final grade of all late assignments will be docked by 10% for each day late, or at the discretion of the instructor. After one week, late assignments will not be accepted unless prior approval has been received from the instructor.
Respectful and Responsible Class Conduct in a Mixed Graduate-Undergraduate Class

In RS 5530 we are all a member of a community of learners and teachers, each of us has something to give, learn and teach in this course. Participation and preparedness is a significant aspect of community development and your grade. Students are expected to be active, engaged, respectful and responsible participants. The subject matter in RS 5530 requires us all to be critical thinkers and effective communicators in order to understand and engage in the complex food and agriculture issues facing our world. I will give some ‘min-lectures’ but students are expected to be active participants. In the spirit of creating an intellectual community around community, food and agricultural issues, participants are encouraged to help shape our efforts to explore these issues.

RS 5530 is a mixed graduate and undergraduate class, respectful and responsible class conduct improves the experience. A mixed graduate and undergraduate class has benefits and presents unique challenges. If the course material is moving too slowly or seems too rudimentary, bring your concerns immediately to Dr. Inwood. Likewise, if the material is confusing or there are terms and concepts you do not understand bring these concerns and questions immediately to Dr. Inwood. I can only respond and adjust the course content if students help me identify what is going well and what course material needs to fine-tuned.

The course deals with issues relating to the sociology of agriculture and food systems, on which there are a variety of perspectives and opinions. Thoughtful and respectful comments are welcome. Hurtful or strong negative criticism of others is not appropriate or welcome. It is appropriate and encouraged to raise your hand and ask questions during class. Constructive comments and feedback on the course are greatly appreciated and should be given before or after class, or by e-mail.

Our time together is limited therefore, I respectively ask that you arrive early, be ready to take notes when class starts, and stay for the entire lecture. It is expected that students arrive prepared for class with assignments read. Your attendance and engagement will make or break our experience in this course. Dr. Inwood will hold herself to the same standards.

During class only one person should be speaking at any time. You may be asked to leave the class and will not earn your participation point for that day if you:

- Continue to talk while the recognized speaker is talking
- Fall asleep in class
- Read newspaper/articles or do other assignments not related to our class
- Sit on the floor
- Leave the class early without prior permission of the instructor or your TA
- Talk or text message on your cell phone during class. **Cell phones should be turned off before class.**
- E-mail or look at web sites on your lap top or phone.

Dr. Inwood will keep her phone on vibrate for EMERGENCY Alerts.

Academic Misconduct: **Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated.** Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations and laboratory exercises. See Code of Student Conduct: Rule 3335-31-02. This and other rules can be found in the Resource Guide for Students or in the back of the Student Telephone Directory. **Individual effort is expected on all assignments.** If you have a question about approaches and procedures that might constitute academic misconduct, see the instructor.

Statement about the availability of accommodations: If an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is needed, students should contact the instructor to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment the course format can be discussed and any needs and potential accommodations can be anticipated. This class relies on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If students have not previously contacted the
Office for Disability Services, they are encouraged to do so if appropriate to their needs. The office for Disability Services is at 150 Pomerene Hall; 292-3307; 292-0901 TDD.

**Excused absences** are those that are both valid and verifiable, such as a doctor’s note for an illness. For any circumstances affecting your ability to participate fully in class (i.e. on-going medical or counseling treatment or the death of a friend of family member), please let us know.

**OSU Links:**
Office of Disability Services: [http://ods.osu.edu](http://ods.osu.edu)
Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing: [http://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center](http://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center)
Student Wellness Center: [http://swc.osu.edu](http://swc.osu.edu)
Younkin Success Center: [http://younkinsuccess.osu.edu](http://younkinsuccess.osu.edu)
Counseling and Consultation Services: [http://www.ccs.osu.edu](http://www.ccs.osu.edu)

**Student Athletes:** In order to be excused, student athletes must bring in appropriate documentation in advance of scheduling conflicts. We expect these to be handed in within the first two weeks of class. It is the responsibility of student athletes to make up the missed work.

**Observance of Religious Holidays:** Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to the instructor in writing by the end of the second week of classes. You are permitted to make up work within a mutually agreeable time.

**Classroom Electronics Policy: Digital Detox.** RS 5530 is combination lecture-discussion course. Research increasingly shows that students learn better when they take hand written notes and are not distracted by electronic devises. In RS5530 there will be no laptop or digital devises permitted, thereby allowing us to better connect as a community of learners. If not having a laptop represents a significant challenge and you have an accommodation that allows you to use a laptop please let Dr. Inwood know. Cell phone calls and text-messaging are strictly prohibited during class unless you have an emergency call that you have notified the instructors about prior to the beginning of class. Students who do not follow this policy will not earn participation points and may face further actions at the discretion of the instructors.

**Lectures:** Power points will **not** be posted after class. Students should take handwritten notes. Along with your class and reading notes, you should use class presentations as a study guide for the exams.

**Reposting Class Materials:** Class materials (including but not limited to power points, photos, quizzes/exams, notes or similar materials) may not be posted online or republished without written permission from the instructor. All power points are copyright by OSU.

**Students joining after the first class:** Students who join after the first class are still responsible for all previous assignments and readings which can all be found on Carmen. Due dates for past assignments for those students who enrolled late will be posted on Carmen. Please email or talk to Dr. Inwood if you have any questions about these assignments.

**Course Outline**
Below is an outline of course topics we will cover. Please note that due to changes in schedule and the rate we move through the material, and student interest, dates may shift and additional topics may be added.
COURSE OUTLINE

Tu, August 21: Introduction to the Sociology of Agriculture
- Marx and Engles. “Manifesto of the Communist Party”
- Max Weber, "Class, Status, and Party"
- Carolan text, Introduction

Part 1. Research Theories and Themes: 1970s to Present

Tu, August 28: Agrarian Political Economy: The Agrarian Question and Beyond

Tu, September 4: U.S. Agriculture and Change
- Carolan text, 19-24. “Perseverance of the Family Farm.”

Recommended but not required:

Tu, September 11: Part A) Agricultural Industrialization, Concentration and Power, and; Part B) Goldschmidt, Community and Economic Structure
- Carolan text, Selections from Chapter 3, Understanding the Food System: Pages 34-43.
- Carolan text sections related to Goldschmidt, 106-115 (scan table 5.1)

Required for Graduate Students:

Recommended but not required:
Tu, September 18: Public Research and The Land Grant System

- Farm Science Review Week

Recommended but not required:

Tu September 25: Commodity Chains and Food Regimes

- Carolan text sections related to commodity systems, Pages 47-50 and 51-53.

Required Reading for Graduate Students: recommended but not required for undergraduates:

Tu, October 2: The Role of the State: Neoliberalism & Private Governance of the Food System

Midterm exam review


Required Reading for Graduate Students: recommended but not required for undergraduates:

Tu, October 9: Midterm exam. Graduate students meet with Dr. Inwood to check in on paper topic.
Part 2. Disharmonies in the Neoliberal Food Regime

Tu, October 16: Agriculture and the Environment

- Tentative reading assignments (final assignments TBD)
  - Carolan text, Chapter 9: Agroecosystems and The Nature of “Natures”
  - Carolan text, Chapter 10: Food, Agriculture and the Environment

Tu, October 23: Race and Gender in the Food and Agriculture System

- Readings TBD

Tu, October 30: Malnutrition & Food Security vs. Food Sovereignty & Responses to Food Crisis.

- Carolan text, pages 262-265. La Via Camesina and Food Sovereignty.

Required Reading for Graduate Students: recommended but not required for undergraduates:


Part 3: Consumption

Tu, November 6: Consumption, Transnational Supermarket Chains, Labeling and Governance


Th, November 13: Consumption, Culture, and Production

- Final readings TBD
- Carolan Text, Chapter 6, Food & Culture
Part 4. Creating Alternatives: Social Movements and Food System Development

Tu, November 20: Alternative Agrifood System Movement

- Carolan text selected sections from Chapter 11: Alternative Agrofood Networks. Pages 296-305.

*Required Reading for Graduate Students: recommended but not required for undergraduates:*


Part 5. Food, Agriculture, Development & Policy

Tu, November 27: Ag & Food System Development

- MacRae, R., Gallant, E., Patel, S., Michalak, M., Bunch, M., & Schaffner, S. 2010. “Could Toronto provide 10% of its fresh vegetable requirements from within its own boundaries? Matching consumption requirements with growing spaces” *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 1(2): 105–127.


*Final Reading List TBD*

- The People’s Department: A new Era for Civil Rights at USDA. [https://medium.com/usda-results/https-medium-com-usda-results-chapter-8-b57f91b64d49](https://medium.com/usda-results/https-medium-com-usda-results-chapter-8-b57f91b64d49)
- 21st Century Land Grant

Fri, December 11, 2:00pm-3:45pm (Final Exam Period): Final Papers Due.
All emails related to this course must be sent from your OSU email account and must include a subject line that begins “5530” followed by the purpose of your email.

Language and personal relationships play a critical role in community development, we are going to practice and engage with community development best practices. Below is a guide for how to Email your professor and is a good reference for all professional communications.

How to Email Your Professor from STEM Diversity Network
Every semester, I see the tweets and Facebook posts. My professor friends, they are annoyed. Their students do not know how to write emails, they say. What they really mean is that their students don’t know how to follow the conventions of email etiquette in the academy. I used to be exasperated by student emails too. Until I realized that there was a simple explanation for why they didn’t know how to write them — they’ve never actually been taught how.

Here’s a template you can follow in constructing your email to a professor. Each element is explained further below.

Dear [1] Professor [2] Last Name [3],
This is a line that recognizes our common humanity [4].I’m in your Class Name, Section Number that meets on This Day [5]. This is the question I have or the help I need [6]. I’ve looked in the syllabus and at my notes from class and online and I asked someone else from the class [7], and I think This Is The Answer [8], but I’m still not sure. This is the action I would like you to take [9].Signing off with a Thank You is always a good idea [10], Favorite Student

Element #1: Salutation
Right off the bat, here’s where you can establish that you view your relationship with your professor as a professional one. Use “Dear,” or if that feels horrifically formal to you, you can use “Hello” or “Hi.” (“Hi” is pushing it. See note about exceptions below.)

Element #2: Honorific
This is the where a lot of students unwittingly poke right at their professor’s sensitive ego and sense of justice in the world. You didn’t think this little word was a super big deal, but it actually is to them. An honorific is a title used to communicate respect for a person’s position. Whether or not you, as a student, actually respect your professor’s authority or position, it’s a good idea to act like you do. The simplest way to do this is to address them as “Professor.” If they have a PhD, you can technically call them “Dr.” but you’re safer with “Professor.” Not all instructors have PhDs (and many won’t even have the word professor in their official job title), but if they are teaching a college class they are inhabiting the role of Professor and can be addressed as such. The bonus of “Professor” and “Dr.” is that they don’t require you to know anything about your professor’s gender identity or marital status. If you call your prof “Mrs.” or “Miss,” lord help you.

Element #3: Name
You might be surprised at how frequently students get their professor’s name wrong. This is not difficult information to look up, people. It’s on your syllabus, it’s on the department website, it’s probably Google-able too. Use their last name. Spell out the whole thing. Spell it correctly. If there’s a hyphen in it, use both names and the hyphen (this really falls under spelling out the whole thing and spelling it correctly, but I get it, it’s a special case and it causes a lot of confusion for some reason even though it is 2016).
Exceptions to #1–3 (do not attempt until you have leveled up to pro emailer status)
You may use a less formal salutation, and address your professor by something other than Professor Last? Name in your email, if, and only if, you have received an email from them where they use an informal salutation and sign it with something other than Professor Last Name. For example, when I was a college professor, I would often sign off on my emails “Prof. P-S” because I knew my last name was long and confusing for people. I then rather liked it when people sent me emails addressed to “Prof. P-S.” But don’t deviate from what they call themselves. NEVER try to use a first name unless you have been given explicit permission to do so. If the prof cryptically signs their emails with only initials, best to stick to Professor Last Name. Do not under any circumstances begin an email with “Hey” because some people get real huffy about that.

Element #4: Meaningless Nicety
It never hurts to say something like “I hope you’re enjoying the beautiful weather today,” or “I hope you had a relaxing weekend,” to start off. It shows that you see your professor as a person who has some kind of life. Professors like it when you see them as people who have lives outside of their classroom (however remotely this may resemble the truth). It doesn’t really matter what you say here, it’s more the ritual of polite interest that counts. If you can make it come off like you genuinely mean it, bonus points for you.

Element #5: Reminder of how they know you
This one is key, especially if it’s the first time you are contacting your professor. You can’t count on them to remember your name from their rosters or to be able to put your face with your name. If there’s something distinctive about you that would jog their memory and make them look upon you fondly, include that. For instance, “I stayed after class to ask you about the reading that one time,” or “I sit in the front row and have blue hair,” whatever. If you haven’t met them yet, explain your desired relationship to them, such as “I am interested in enrolling in your class next semester.” If you’re fairly certain they will know you by name, you can leave this out. But some profs are very bad at remembering names, so you might as well throw them a bone here. (If you are lucky, those profs will be self-aware and empathetic enough not to make you memorize any names for exams in their classes.)

Element #6: The real reason for your email
This is the whole reason you’re sending the email, so make it good. The important thing here is to get in and get out, while remaining courteous. Concisely state what it is you need from the professor without offering a bunch of excuses or going into excessive detail or sounding like you are making demands. If you can’t explain why you’re emailing in a sentence or two, consider making an appointment to meet with the professor in person, in which case your line here will be “I was hoping we could meet to talk about X. What would be a good time for that?” If they can’t meet and just want to discuss it over email, they’ll let you know.

Elements #7 and 8: This is where you prove you’re a wonderful person
There is a t-shirt for sale on the internet that says, “It’s in the syllabus.” Think for a second about why there is a market for this product. A vast number of emails sent to professors by students are seeking information that has already been communicated by the professor. Before even sending the email, you should actually check the syllabus and your notes (and the class website if there is one) to see if your question has indeed been answered there. It doesn’t hurt to ask someone else from the class too — this is why you should try to get at least one classmate’s phone number or email address during the first week. If you’ve actually done all these things and you still have a question, then your contacting the professor will actually provide helpful information to them that they might not have been clear about something.

If you can try to answer your own question, and you turn out to be right, that saves them a little bit of time in their response. For instance, if you are writing to set up a meeting, you could say, “It says on the syllabus that your office hours are Tuesdays at 3pm. Could I come this Tuesday at 3:15?” This also shows that you thought about the whole thing for more than two seconds before deciding to take up their email reading time.
Element #9: Super polite restatement of your request
If you’re asking a question you need an answer to, you can say something like “If you could let me know at your earliest convenience, I’d really appreciate it.” If you need them to fill out a form, or contact someone on your behalf, or do something that requires more action than just answering your email, state that very clearly here. This helps them put it on their to-do list and get it done.

Element #10: Sign-off
If you’re not sure how to sign off an email, “Thank you” is nearly always appropriate. You can do “Best,” or “All the best,” or “Sincerely,” or whatever, but some form of thanks here does double duty as both sign off and expression of gratitude.

The hidden Element #11: The follow-up
If your professor hasn’t responded to your email, and social cues tell you they probably meant to by now, you can send a gentle follow-up. You can format the follow-up using all the elements here, but you can add in “Just following up on my previous email,” right before you get to Element #6. You don’t have to rub it in that they forgot to email you back, they will get the point (and if they genuinely forgot, they might feel bad). If they were not emailing you back on purpose, you probably already annoyed them the first time around, and you might as well be as polite as possible with the follow-up. When is it safe to send a follow-up reminder? You have to gauge this based on how quickly they usually respond to things and how dire your need for a response truly is. If it can wait a week, let it wait a week (or until you see them in person).

Why any of this matters
Learning how to craft professional emails is a skill you can take with you into the so-called real world. A courteous and thoughtfully constructed request is much more likely to receive the kind of response you want. And, let’s face it, professors are humans with feelings who just want to be treated as such. You might think professors who are annoyed by student emails are over-sensitive and lazy (it’s their job to handle this shit, right?). And you might be right. But consider that while you only have a few professors at any one time, they might have hundreds of students. They are possibly getting the same question from ten different people. They might be an adjunct professor who is actually only paid for the hours they spend in the classroom (and they’re not paid very much for that even). They might have experienced a pattern of receiving less respect from people based on their gender or race. Make your email the one they don’t gripe to their friends about. Now you know how.