



## PSCI-ENV-GEOG 380: The Politics of Urban Agriculture: From Victory Gardens to Neoliberalism

### Course Syllabus Spring Semester 2023

**Instructor:** Viviana Lorenzo, PhD, and Zachary Nowak, PhD

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 18 seminar hours and 36 practicum hours

**Prerequisites:** none

**Class Hours:** TBA

**Office Hours:** by appointment after a class or via Zoom (see Moodle site)

**Email:** xxx

**Course Type:** seminar & service learning practicum

**Lab Fee:** USD\$ [to be determined with Institute staff]

### Course Description

What do gardens in cities do for people? What are the political structures at the global, national, and local levels that promote urban gardens? Urban gardening is a favored solution to society's ills to theorists across the political spectrum from neoliberals to radicals—but is it all it's meant to be?

Urban agriculture is a catch-all term that covers community gardens, vegetable plots at prisons, didactically-minded gardens in schoolyards, gardens planted illegally on vacant lots, high-tech hydroponic companies, and farmers' markets. Students will learn about how these different spaces differ across variables like legality, goals, and actors. If urban space is inherently limited and if politics is a way to decide the use of limited resources, then urban gardens are deeply political. We will debate whether urban agriculture is an excellent way for city dwellers to reduce hunger, improve public health, and assert their control over urban space, or whether it's just another subtle manifestation of neoliberalism. A core goal of this course, above and beyond the content, is to develop research skills useful for other courses: how to read an article in 20 minutes, how to plan research, etc. The course meets once a week for the classroom portion of the class; students will spend three hours a week in The Umbra Institute's campus garden, Orto Sole, or in another urban garden in the city center.

**Note:** *Students are strongly advised to take ENV 355 - Green Cities: A Sustainable Future as an accompanying course with this one.*

### Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define what constitutes urban agriculture;

- *Articulate* the key debates in the literature about urban agriculture projects;
- *Identify* measurable collective and individual actions in urban agriculture and their possible beneficial health effects;
- *Engage* in experiential learning activities and practice systematic research and ethical scholarship;
- *Communicate* their learning with and to others using 21st-century tools.

### Course Materials

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

### Assessment

Attendance	10%
Weekly Moodle Quizzes	25%
Course Journal	25%
Office Hours	5%
Community Engagement Presentation	5%
Final Paper	30%

### Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

### Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

### *Attendance (10%)*

Attendance is an important part of this course. You have two “sick days,” per Institute policy. As long as you are at all the other meetings, you will receive the full 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

### *Weekly Moodle Quizzes (25%)*

Students will be assigned two short quizzes every week, each of which will be due before class time and will not be reopened. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class’ policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author’s argument and assessing sources.

### *Course Journal (25%)*

Students will need a notebook, which they will use as a personal space through which to reflect on course material and ideas. In-class assignments (e.g. summaries of assigned readings, analyses of primary sources, mental maps, reflections, predictive exercises) will be regularly scheduled and graded twice throughout the semester, i.e. before the mid-semester break (Week 7) and at the end of the course (Week 12). Each of these checks is worth 12.5% of your grade, for a total of 25%. See the full prompt on Moodle for more information.

### *Office Hours (5%)*

Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It also might help for you to ask questions about the various assignments or discuss a paper idea. In this course, you get 5% of your grade for coming one time before Week 9 to the office hours of either instructor.

### *Community Engagement Presentation (5%)*

Part of this course is a community-engagement project in Orto Sole, Umbra’s campus garden. You will work in groups and deliver a final presentation in Week 13. A full prompt will be available on Moodle.

### *Final Paper (30%)*

The final exercise for this class is to write a paper that combines the literature on urban agriculture with a proposal for future research in Orto Sole (or other urban gardens in Perugia) or, alternately, a plan for a future community-engaged project. A full prompt will be available on Moodle.

### **Extension & Submitting Late Work**

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

### *Attendance & Lateness Policy*

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. Students are allowed two “sick days,” which do not need to be justified. However, it is considered common courtesy to inform the instructor of your absence when possible. It is the students’ responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class). Each additional absence—even

for another illness—will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). Missing a co-curricular field trip also lowers a student's final grade by half a letter grade. It is the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

If a student misses a class, it is ultimately their responsibility to find out what has been missed. Ideally, they should find out what they missed from a classmate. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies with a doctor's certificate and approved by the Director, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Consistent lateness (or leaving class early) is a sign of disorganization and lack of respect both for your instructor and for your fellow students. Umbra instructors are empowered to count three late arrivals as the equivalent of an absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

### **Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

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## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

#### **Introduction to the Class**

Seminar Meeting: *Overview of the course, introductions, and some introductory discussion of what urban agriculture is.*

#### Readings for the week:

McClintock, Nathan. "Radical, Reformist, and Garden-Variety Neoliberal: Coming to Terms with Urban Agriculture's Contradictions." *Local Environment* 19, no. 2 (February 7, 2014): 147–71.  
[note especially McClintock's typology on page 150]

### WEEK 2

#### **Introduction to Urban Agriculture**

Seminar Meeting: *Overview of the course, introductions, and some introductory discussion of what urban agriculture is.*

#### Readings for the week:

Nowak, Zachary. "How To Read A Journal Article Well (And Quickly)"  
Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Read pages 1-19.

### WEEK 3

#### **Urban Ag in the Past**

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Bassett, Thomas J. "Reaping on the Margins: A Century of Community Gardening in America." *Landscape* 25, no. 2 (1981): 1–8.  
Moore, Sarah. "Forgotten Roots of the Green City: Subsistence Gardening in Columbus, Ohio, 1900-1940." *Urban Geography* 27, no. 2 (March 1, 2006): 174–92.  
"Beantown Farming: 10 Urban Agriculture Projects in Boston." Food Tank (blog), February 15, 2014.  
[here]

### WEEK 4

#### **Farmer's Markets**

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

Meeting 2: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Hoover, Brandon. "White Spaces in Black and Latino Places: Urban Agriculture and Food Sovereignty." *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 3, no. 4 (2013): 109–115.  
Guthman, Julie. "'If They Only Knew': Color Blindness and Universalism in California Alternative Food Institutions." *The Professional Geographer* 60, no. 3 (August 2008): 387–97.

#### Assignments:

XXXXX

## WEEK 5

### Gender, & Race

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Reynolds, Kristin. "Disparity Despite Diversity: Social Injustice in New York City's Urban Agriculture System." *Antipode* 47, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 240–59.

Riley, Liam, and Alice Hovorska. "Gendering Urban Food Strategies Across Multiple Scales." In *Cities and Agriculture*, edited by Henk De Zeeuw, 336–57. New York: Routledge, 2015.

## WEEK 6

### Identity & Good Food

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Rubio, Bruno. Bruno Rubio interviewed by Zachary Nowak. Interview by Zachary Nowak. MP3 recording on phone, July 9, 2016. Ms. N-2283 Subseries VII.B. Massachusetts Historical Society. "History." Fenway Victory Gardens (blog). Accessed January 24, 2019. [here]

Ott, Cindy. "Making Sense of Urban Gardens." *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* 15, no. 3 (August 1, 2015): 18–27.

## Semester Break

## WEEK 7

### Institutional Gardens—Schools to Jails

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Pudup, Mary Beth. "It Takes a Garden: Cultivating Citizen-Subjects in Organized Garden Projects." *Geoforum, Rethinking Economy*, 39, no. 3 (May 1, 2008): 1228–40.

Allen, Patricia, and Julie Guthman. "From 'Old School' to 'Farm-to-School': Neoliberalization from the Ground Up." *Agriculture and Human Values* 23, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 401–15.

Flanagan, Caitlin. "Cultivating Failure." *The Atlantic*, January 1, 2010. [here]

## WEEK 8

### Policy & Therapy

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

Meeting 2: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Bartling, Hugh. "A Chicken Ain't Nothin' but a Bird: Local Food Production and the Politics of Land-Use Change." *Local Environment* 17, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 23–34.

Adevi, Anna A., and Fredrika Mårtensson. "Stress Rehabilitation through Garden Therapy: The Garden as a Place in the Recovery from Stress." *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 12, no. 2 (January 1, 2013): 230–37.

Hawkins, Jemma L., Kathryn J. Thirlaway, Karianne Backx, and Deborah A. Clayton. "Allotment Gardening and Other Leisure Activities for Stress Reduction and Healthy Aging." *HortTechnology* 21, no. 5 (October 1, 2011): 577–85.

#### WEEK 9

### Workshop for Final Project

#### WEEK 10

### Commercial & Guerilla Gardening [The State, The Market, & Legality]

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Schindler, Sarah. "Unpermitted Urban Agriculture: Transgressive Actions, Changing Norms, and the Local Food Movement." *Wisconsin Law Review* 82, no. 1036 (2014): 369–96.

City of Boston. "Article 89 Made Easy." City of Boston, 2015. Read page 1-36  
watch: "Ron Finley: A Guerrilla Gardener in South Central LA | TED Talk." [here]

#### WEEK 11

### Community Gardens?

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

Eizenberg, Efrat. "Actually Existing Commons: Three Moments of Space of Community Gardens in New York City." *Antipode* 44, no. 3 (June 1, 2012): 764–82.

Cumbers, Andrew, Deirdre Shaw, John Crossan, and Robert McMaster. "The Work of Community Gardens: Reclaiming Place for Community in the City." *Work, Employment and Society* 32, no. 1 (February 1, 2018): 133–49.

#### WEEK 12

### Final Wrap-Up

Seminar Meeting: *Brief description of this day's content*

#### Readings for the week:

[readings]

#### WEEK 13

### Special Academic Events Week

TBA