What is a food system? What does the current global food system look like? What discrepancies exist between recommended food consumption and what is actually available, affordable, accessible, and culturally appropriate? What policies and economic factors have facilitated the current global food system to become, in many ways, toxic to human health, the environment, and livelihoods? What actions can be taken to achieve a healthier, more sustainable food system?

This new course will explore systems thinking as it pertains to agriculture and food, attempt to define sustainability within the context of the global food system, examine the current state of the global food system from farm to fork, and analyze its impacts on health. The course will also examine several policies, programs, and proposals aimed at creating a healthier, more sustainable global food system.

The class format will involve class discussions, lectures, presentations by classmates, and several guest lectures given by issue experts from national and local food, nutrition and agriculture-related organizations. Assignments will include two short papers (one describing a food system problem and one examining policies and proposals aimed at solving that problem); one case-study on an organization or program related to food justice, food sovereignty, and/or community food security; and short weekly discussion posts based on class readings, current events, editorials or opinions in blogs, volunteer experiences, and other life experiences.

Weekly class topics include:
1) Global Food Consumption
2) Power and Production
3) From Farm to Table
4) Free Trade and the Re-shaping of the Global Food System
5) Famine and the Global Food Crisis
6) Sustainable Agriculture/Local and Regional Food Systems
7) Food Justice, Food Sovereignty, and Community Food Security
8) Ending World Hunger? Technology/Biotechnology or Permaculture
9) The Farm Bill and the Child Nutrition Act
10) Other Topics in Food Policy

This class will be taught by Martelle Esposito, MS, MPH, part-time faculty member in the Department of Exercise Science at the School of Public health and Health Services. If you have any questions about the course, please contact her at mesposito@gwu.edu.