CHS 131
Healthy Food Access in the US and Los Angeles: The History and Practice of Urban Agriculture

1 Class/Week (3 hours); each class contains a & b sections.
Day/Time:   Mondays 3:00-5:50 p.m.
Room:  61-269 CHS, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
Garden Lab @ the Sunset Canyon Recreation Center (SCRC) Organic Garden during class sessions: 2b, 4a, 5a and 7a.

INSTRUCTOR:  Marianne P. Brown (marianne.p.brown@gmail.com),
Department of Community Health Sciences, School of Public Health
Office:  (Office Hours: before class + by appt.)

OVERVIEW:

This course examines the history and recent revival of urban food gardening – with examples from the Los Angeles area. We contextualize this recent surge in urban gardening by examining its beginnings during the Progressive Era, later with the Victory Garden Movement (VGM) during World Wars I and II, and contrast the VGM with the rise of industrial agriculture during the second half of the Twentieth Century. We explore how current urban agriculture sometimes springs from healthy food/active living and consumer initiatives, at a time when U.S. obesity rates are of great concern, which advocate for access to food which is grown healthfully, locally, in season, and is affordable.

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain the dietary/physical activity factors, federal policies, and marketing of unhealthy food that have contributed to the U.S. obesity epidemic;
2. Identify food and physical activity choices, federal policies, as well as food marketing, that can reduce this epidemic;
3. Describe and analyze the histories of urban gardening in the US/LA: at the family, ethnic group, school, community, and national levels;
4. List/analyze current issues/policy debates that impact urban agriculture in the US/LA;
5. Examine how some of the current urban gardening initiatives spring from - or lead to -- broader movements for social change, and others do not;
6. Differentiate how those who are involved in urban gardening draw upon both common and scientific knowledge;
7. Demonstrate how to site, design, plant, maintain and harvest a small garden plot.
The classroom presentations/discussions will be combined with 4 hands-on gardening labs in the Sunset Canyon Recreation Center Organic Garden.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

This course has 2 papers, and a quiz. The 4 core elements are: discussions shaped by critical readings and guest lecturers, site visits, and practical exercises in the SCRC Organic Garden.

10% gardening “How-To” quiz: how to use garden tools and equipment to maximize effectiveness and to be safe (Session 2a);

20% 5-page paper: comparative analysis of a grocery store & a farmer’s market in the same low income area of LA; guidelines provided (Session 5a);

40% 10-page final project paper: compare and contrast a peer-reviewed article and a report (or article from the mass media) on the same subject related to urban agriculture and health (Session 9a);

10% garden tasks (4 executed in the SCRC OG): documentation (1-2 photos w/text);

20% doing all readings and participation in class and the SCRC Organic Garden
Criteria for Grading:

Attendance (i.e., attend all classes, including the SCRC OG component)

Assignments: In class “How-to-Quiz”: if grade is less than 80% then student will need to demonstrate s/he knows the correct answers prior to hands-on work. Written Assignments: due at beginning of class on due date (1 point [on a 1-10 scale] per day will be taken off for lateness); 5 pp-paper: complies with guidelines handout; 10 pp-paper: gets subject approval from instructor, is well thought out/organized, factual and documented.

Participation in Class and the OG: participates in discussions about readings/presentations and applies knowledge from class in the hands-on learning component.

Please Note: All students must uphold the University of California’s Standards of Student Conduct as administered by the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information, see the Student Guide to Academic Integrity: http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/students/integrity. This site will inform you about the pitfalls of plagiarism and says what kinds of information do not require citation.

WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE:

March 28
Session 1a: Introduction
Introduction to course, instructor, students, materials: Needs Assessment handout for students to fill out regarding their knowledge, interests, opinions, and experience about the class topic.

Session 1b: Access to (Healthy) Food
Guest Speaker: Robert Gottlieb, Recently Retired Director of the Urban Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College

Readings:


“A Seat at the Table for Food Workers,” The New York Times, February 21, 2016, p. 5

April 4  Session 2a: The US Obesity Epidemic: Contributing Factors
Guest Speaker: Professor William J. McCarthy, Department of Health Policy & Management, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health

Fieldwork Assignment: 5-page comparative analysis of a grocery store and a farmer’s market in a low-income area of LA: Handout with paper guidelines provided.

Gardening “How to Work Safely” Quiz administered

Readings:


Session 2b: Garden Lab: Meet at the SCRC OG: the UCLA Dig Collective will give orientation, hands-on work session.

April 11

Session 3a: History of Urban Agriculture in California and Los Angeles (Local examples: Japanese-American truck farms in West LA during the 1930’s-40’s and collaborative projects in Latino and African-American communities in South LA).

Guest speaker: Rachel Surls, Ph.D., Sustainable Food Systems Advisor, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Readings:


Session 3b: Case Study: South LA

Guest Speaker: D’Artagnon Scorza, Founder & Executive Director, Social Justice Learning Institute in Inglewood, California (see website) & School Board Member, Inglewood Unified School District

April 18

Session 4a: Garden Lab: Meet at the SCRC OG

Session 4b: Alternative Approaches: Guerilla Gardening & Biotensive Gardening.

Guest speaker: TBA
Readings:

City of Los Angeles Ordinance No.183474 which allows planting of edible plants in parkways, pp. 1-4


How to Grow More Vegetables (Than you ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine), 7th edition, Jeavons, John, Ten Speed Press, 2006, pp.v-x & 2-9


April 25  Session 5a: Garden Lab: Meet at the SCRC OG

5-page Paper on Grocery Store/Farmer’s Market in Low Income Area of LA due

Project Paper Proposal due

Session 5b: Food Wastage, Farmer’s Market Recovery & Backyard Harvesting

Guest Speaker, Elizabeth Ostrom, Food Forward organization

Readings:

“Fresh Pickings for the Hungry,” Russ Parsons, Los Angeles Times, April 18, 2015.

Food Forward: foodforward.org

Village Harvest: villageharvest.org

World Food USA, United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office of North America: worldfooddayusa.org

“The Economic History of Leftovers,”

May 2

Session 6a: Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO’s) in Food
Student debate pro and con

Session 6b: Seed Saving and Heirlooms
Guest Speaker: David King, Faculty UCLA Extension and Director of the Seed Library of Los Angeles (SLOLA).

Readings:

International Seed-Saving Institute website:


May 9

Session 7a: Garden Lab: Meet at the SCRCOG

**Project Paper proposals returned with comments/suggestions**

Session 7b: School Garden Programs: Where Do they Fit?

Readings:


“The Effects of School Gardens on Students and Schools: Conceptualization and Consideration for Maximizing Healthy
Development,” Ozer, Emily J, Health Education Behavior, 2007; 34:846-863


May 16  Session 8a: Current Food Cultures: indigenous, mass food culture, and “foodies”

Readings:


May 23  10-Page Project Paper Due at Start of Class

Session 9a: Sum up of Class; Student Presentations on their Project Papers

Session 9b: Continuation of student Presentations on their Project Papers and feast!

June 1  Memorial Day Holiday
Course Objectives

- Explain the dietary/physical activity factors that have led to the U.S. obesity epidemic;
- Identify food and activity changes that can reduce this epidemic;
- List/analyze current issues/policy debates that impact urban agriculture in LA;
- Describe the histories, including reasons for, certain garden movements in LA/the US: victory gardens, school, community, etc.;
- Examine how some of the current urban garden initiatives spring from earlier broader movements for social change and others do not have such an agenda;
- Differentiate how those who are involved in urban gardening draw upon both common and scientific knowledge;
- Demonstrate to others how to site, design, plant, maintain and harvest a small garden plot.

MPH Competencies

1 (PH literature)

- Explain the dietary/physical activity factors that have led to the U.S. obesity epidemic;

2 (theories and concepts)

- List/analyze current issues/policy debates that impact urban agriculture in LA;

3 (social, cultural, behavioral impact on health)

- Identify food and activity changes that can reduce this epidemic;

4 (historical power and privilege)

- Describe the histories, including reasons for, certain garden movements in LA/the US: victory gardens, school, community, etc.;

3 (social, cultural, behavioral impact on health)

- Examine how some of the current urban garden initiatives spring from earlier broader movements for social change and others do not have such an agenda;

3 (social, cultural, behavioral impact on health)

- Differentiate how those who are involved in urban gardening draw upon both common and scientific knowledge;

9 (communication)

Demonstrate to others how to site, design, plant, maintain and harvest a small garden plot.