Urban Agriculture  
Fall 2018  EAS 554 (3 cr)

**Meetings:** Tuesdays 6:00-9:00 pm in 3556 Dana Bldg.

**Instructor:** Dr. MaryCarol Hunter  
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**Course Description**  
Growing food in the city is an expanding practice in communities with and without food security. Heralded by some as a viable and sustainable supplement to conventional food systems, urban agriculture has many challenges to implementation. This course explores the motivations, benefits and difficulties of farming within the city.

Throughout the semester we will return to this question: Can urban agriculture be a durable component of the long-term vision for Detroit and other post-industrial cities? The question provides a platform for creative, interdisciplinary consideration of whether and how urban agriculture can provide a socially acceptable and realistic approach to city-building, community building, and human wellbeing.

To balance current theory with practical application, we will use scholarly papers, organizational reports and popular reports. Guest speakers - local leaders deeply involved with urban agriculture in the region, will offer their insights on practical aspects of implementation.

Topically, we’ll learn how urban farmers and relevant infrastructures are navigating the issues of equitable land access, community empowerment, growth of sustainable urban food networks, small‐scale economics, policy development, environmental and human health, and how cultural diversity and aesthetic expectations influence outcomes.

**Course Format**  
Each weekly meeting will include a lecture from me or a guest speaker - local leaders deeply involved with urban agriculture in the region. To balance current theory with practical application, we will read and discuss a selection of scholarly papers, organizational reports, plus timely news stories and video. See Course Schedule, Readings and Assignments below.

**Late Assignment Policy**  
For the sake of fairness to all students in the course, deadlines will be strictly enforced. Unless you’ve made prior arrangements, lateness will impact your grade. If you have trouble completing a particular assignment, this must be discussed with me before the deadline. At the end of the semester, students will be assigned a letter grade on the basis of the work that has been completed. “Incompletes” will be given only in extenuating circumstances under special permission.

**Academic Honesty:** All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic career. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe; ignorance of what constitutes dishonesty is not an acceptable defense.

**Etiquette** Our classes will open with lecture, sometimes from a guest speaker. Please, it is very important to arrive and be settled on time. It is also very wise to avoid eating in the classroom. Please arrange your schedule to accommodate a respectful welcome for our speakers who typically are the first activity. **Class begins at 6:00 pm straight up.**
**Evaluation** Since informed discussion is an effective method for integrating multiple viewpoints, the assignments below are designed to help you learn how to engage in exploratory and constructive syntheses. You have the opportunity to earn up to 100 points.

**Class participation via online discussion (30 points): up to 3 points for weekly contributions for each of 10 reading sets** A thorough reading of assigned papers is the pre-requisite for meaningful discussion. Discussion will begin before the class meets with a Canvas Discussion Thread.

* Each week you will make at least 2 Canvas posts.
  
  The **1st** is a brief but thoughtful comment about some aspect of the week’s readings. This is **due before 12:00 pm on the Monday before class.**

  The **2nd** is a conversational response to the comments from other people in class. This response is **due before 4:00 pm on the day of class.**

Your participation will be assessed by the quality of your input about the readings. Integration of ideas and response to the opinions of others is the objective.

**Discussion Leader Team assignment with White Paper (20 points)** Once during the semester you will be a member of a team that will coordinate discussion of the week’s topic with a set of insightful questions and prompts based on the assigned readings. Be creative in your approach to facilitating good discussion. The discussion plan must be vetted by me no later than 24 hours before class; it is advisable to begin this process at least a week ahead of time. The team will have the week following the discussion to write a thoughtful and concise synthesis about outcomes (3 pages). Submit the white paper by 5pm on the following Tuesday. After review, the paper will shared with everyone through CANVAS posting.

**Paper/Project (40) with Proposal (5) and Presentation (5)**

**Proposal** - Develop a short proposal that identifies and outlines your topic, its goals and a comment on why it is of interest. The proposal should be 250-400 words long (500 words for team proposals) plus whatever space is needed for at least 3 focal references. Due before Friday, Oct 19th at 10pm.

**Paper** - Develop a synthetic interpretation of some aspect of urban agriculture of interest to you. A few examples include: methods for activating community interest in UA a based on what has been successful in another/other cities; economic realities of alternative food systems; a synthetic review paper that culminates an evidence-based suggestion on how to expand the benefits of UA; a city case-study or comparison of cities where urban agriculture has emerged as an asset to civic life and healthy communities. **The paper must include an application of your ideas to the practice of urban agriculture in Detroit from the perspective of your selected topic.** Research should take you into scholarly arenas. In other words, do not rely on web reports to build your thinking.

A single author paper will be 2,500-4,000 words of thought. This does not include the bibliography or any graphics. The paper must include at least 10 references of which the majority are scholarly papers or organizational reports.

**Project** – In lieu of a synthetic interpretation, you may develop a creative vision about implementation of urban agriculture in Detroit. The product can be communicated in a variety of forms - including visualization, objects, or toolkit. Format is subject to approval. Regardless of format, the project must include a discussion (with associated references) of theory and/or precedents that support the promise of your vision. **Note** - A project can be done as a team if approved.

**Presentation** – Deliver a brief oral presentation on key aspects of your paper/project’s topic. Guidelines on presentation will be provided once the scheduling sequence has been decided.

Paper or project is due on day of your presentation.
EAS 554 Urban Agriculture: COURSE SCHEDULE and READINGS for weekly comment + discussion

Opening day – Sept 4  For and by the people? The nature of food systems emerging within urban settings

Week 1 – Sept 11
Topic: Can urban agriculture be a durable component of the long-term vision for Detroit and other post-industrial cities?

Week 2 – Sept 18
Topic: Detroit’s Food System

Week 3 – Sept 25
Topic: Policy, Law and Equity: Land sovereignty and urban planning for Detroit’s future
GUEST SPEAKER: Nick Leonard, Staff Attorney at Great Lakes Environmental Law Center
Leonard, N. 2016. Do I have an “urban farm” or an “urban garden”? : Proposed amendments to Detroit’s urban Agriculture zoning ordinance.  http://aglaw313.org/

Week 4 – Oct 2
Topic: Community Empowerment and Equity
GUEST SPEAKER: Malik Yakini, Executive Director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network

Week 5 - Oct 9
Topic: Urban ecosystem approach to sustainable farming
Week 6 – Oct 16  FALL BREAK

Week 7 – Oct 23
Topic:  Building Social Capital: participatory and organizational perspectives
GUEST SPEAKER:  Lindsay Pielack, Co-director of Keep Growing Detroit
News:  Peggs, T. 2016. Square Roots x USDA: investing in the next generation of real food entrepreneurs

Week 8 - Oct 30
Topic:  Economic perspectives from small operations to urban food systems
GUEST SPEAKER:  Devida Davison, Executive Director of Food Lab Detroit

Week 9 – Nov 6
Topic:  Building a sustainable urban food network
GUEST SPEAKER:  Dan Carmody, President, Eastern Market Corp.
Rooftop Garden Grows in Brooklyn - link to short story & 3 min video
News:  Crain’s 2016 Food hubs create buzz in state’s distribution system.
News:  Crain's 2018 Eastern Market plan seeks to balance food, other uses.

Week 10 – Nov 13
Topic:  Impact of urban agriculture on health and wellbeing: nutrition, toxins, restorative impact

Week 11 – Nov 20
Topic:  How culture & aesthetics influence the successful integration of farming and urban life

Week 12 to 14 – Nov 27, Dec 4, Dec 11
Student Presentations & Class Discussion; Retrospective discussion of your views and visions for urban agriculture 10 years from now.


Crain's 2016 Food hubs create buzz in state's distribution system.

Crain's 2018 Eastern Market plan seeks to balance food, other uses.


Leonard, N. 2016. Do I have an “urban farm” or an “urban garden”? : Proposed amendments to Detroit’s urban Agriculture zoning ordinance. http://aglaw313.org/


Peggs, T. 2016. Square Roots x USDA: investing in the next generation of real food entrepreneurs


Rooftop Garden Grows in Brooklyn link

Shuman, M.H. Economic Impact of Localizing Detroit’s Food System. Fair Food Foundation, 2007 - fairfoodnetwork.org

Sweetgreen 2016 Meet the Godfather of Urban Farming, Who’s Breeding the Next Generation of People to Feed the World.


