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

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Course Description
Growing food in the city is an expanding practice in communities with and without food security. Herald of 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 will be our 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, ecological health considerations, personal wellbeing, 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 on the following pages.

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.
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
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. Online postings about the upcoming readings have a deadline of 2 pm on Mondays. Your participation will be assessed by the quality of your input on the readings. Integration of ideas and response to the opinions of others is the objective.

Discussion Administration and 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 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 be posted on CANVAS for everyone.

Paper/Project (40) with Proposal (5) and Presentation (5)
Proposal - Submit a short proposal that identifies and outlines the topic of your paper/project, its goals and explains why it is of interest. The due date is anytime up to Friday, Oct. 20th
The proposal should be 250-400 words in length plus whatever space is needed for at least 3 focal references. Keep the proposal within the specified length. Email it as a doc file to mhunter@umich.edu. The plan is to return the proposal with comments within a week of receiving it. NOTE: A project can be done in a team if approved.

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 Detroit based on what has been successful in another/other cities; economic realities of alternative food systems; a case-study of another city 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 for the bulk of your interpretation.
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, whether a paper or visual project, must include discussion of precedents or theory that support the promise of your vision. If you choose to do a project rather than a paper, the format is subject to approval.
Format is subject to approval. It must include a discussion of precedents or theory (with associated references) that support the promise of your vision.

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.
COURSE SCHEDULE and READINGS to prepare for the week’s discussion

Opening day – Sept 5  
Topic: For and by the people? The nature of food systems emerging within urban settings

Week 1 – Sept 12  
Topic: Can urban agriculture can be a durable component of the long-term vision for Detroit and other post-industrial cities?  

Week 2 – Sept 19  
Topic: Detroit’s Food System  
Leonard. 2015. Growing capacity- How many urban farms to meet the demand for local food? http://aglaw313.org/

Week 3 – Sept 26  
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. 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 3  
Topic: Community Empowerment and Equity  
GUEST SPEAKER: Malik Yakini, Executive Director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network  
News: NPR 2016 Moving Farmers Market Drew More Poor Shoppers in Flint

Week 5 – Oct 10  
Topic: Building Social Capital: participatory and organizational perspectives  
4th Annual Fast Food for Thought 6 – 7pm in Dana (room TBA)  
GUEST SPEAKER: Lindsay Piaseck, Co-director of Keep Growing Detroit  
News: Wason 2015 Detroit Food Academy
Week 7 – Oct 24

**Topic: Urban ecosystem approach to sustainable farming**


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Week 8 - Oct 31

**Topic: Economic perspectives from small operations to urban food system**

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Devida Davison, Executive Director of Food Lab Detroit


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Week 9 – Nov 7

**Topic: Building a sustainable urban food network**

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Dan Carmody, President, Eastern Market Corp.


Rooftop Garden Grows in Brooklyn (short story & 3 min video)

News: Crain’s 2016 Food hubs create buzz in state’s distribution system.

TBA

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Week 10 – Nov 14

**Topic: Impact of urban agriculture on health and wellbeing: nutrition, toxins, restorative impact**

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Babar Qadri, Huda Free Clinic & Urban Garden, Detroit


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Week 11 – Nov 21

**Topic: How culture & aesthetics influence the successful integration of farming and urban life**


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Week 12 to 14 – Nov 28, Dec 5, Dec 12

**Student Presentations & Class Discussion; Retrospective discussion of your views and visions for urban agriculture 10 years from now.**