

**Field Research Experiences in Agroecology & Sustainable Food: ENVS 130C**  
**Syllabus & Information, Summer 2024**

**Course number and title:**

ENVS 130C: Field Research Experiences in Agroecology & Sustainable Food

**Instructor:**

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**Office hours:**

- While in Santa Cruz (Jul 8-31): Tuesdays, 3-4pm, or by appointment
- While in Fresno, Davis, and Berkeley (Aug 1-21): Thursdays and Fridays, 3-4pm, or by appointment

**Class time and location:**

This course is part of the Agroecology Field Quarter, which integrates the following three Environmental Studies (ENVS) Department courses and a lab for a total of 17 units: ENVS 133C ENVS Agroecology Practicum; ENVS 130A Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture; ENVS 130L Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Laboratory; ENVS 130C Field Experiences in Agroecology and Sustainable Food. The program is a full-time, 7-week residential and traveling course that will take place July 8<sup>th</sup> through August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The whole 7-week period is meant to be a field study, based mostly in hands-on experiential learning activities on the land, with visits to academics, farmers, and community-based organizations that are leading Agroecology research, extension, and farming operations.

This land-based, practice-focused, in-person program runs Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 8am to 3pm, with the remaining time dedicated to unstructured discussions, readings, and assignments. Rest and recuperation for students, staff, and faculty will be taken seriously. Some travel will occur on weekends. In-person participation in the entire 7-weeks of residential travel is required.

Program schedule: July 8<sup>th</sup> through August 23<sup>rd</sup>

- 4 weeks on the Farm at UCSC and surrounding regional community-based organizations and farms
- 1 week in the Fresno area at the Ag Experiment Station and regional community-based organizations and farms
- 1 week in the Sacramento area and UC Davis Student Farm, and regional community-based organizations and farms
- 1 week in the East Bay and UC Berkeley Student Farms, and regional community-based organizations and farms

**Course description and learning objectives:**

Agroecology can be defined in many ways. Agroecology is a social movement inherently linked to the food sovereignty movement. Agroecology is a production practice that uses ecological and traditional knowledges to sustainably manage agricultural systems. Agroecology is a research practice aimed at examining the ecological, cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions of food production and distribution. Many people use the term agroecology in all of these ways. In this class, we will focus on agroecology as a research practice. Together we will explore what it means to be an agroecologist, what research is or can be, and how agroecology research might contribute to a more livable world.

In this class, students will gain a multidimensional understanding of agroecology through study on and off campus, at research locations, from interdisciplinary readings, from interacting with field trip hosts, from engaging with one another, and, perhaps most importantly, from examining their own personal histories. Students will participate in research projects and learn about methods, study design, and data analysis. The course will include a variety of activities such as lectures, discussions, field trips, guest lectures, and field experiences related to agroecology and sustainable food systems.

There are four main learning objectives for this course:

1. Gain an understanding of the ecological, social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of agriculture and food systems in California;
2. Learn about the history and current state of agroecology research;
3. Gain an understanding of scientific inquiry associated with agroecology and food systems;
4. Explore the ethical dimensions of agroecology research.

**Course Evaluation / Grading:**

Your grade will be based on several forms of evaluation including: (A) class attendance and participation; (B) in-class activities; (C) site assessments; D) turning in several drafts of a personal essay, including a final version. The breakdown by percentage (and points) for each of these items is listed below. Your overall grade will be calculated as follows (A+, 100-97%; A, 96-93%; A-, 92-90%; B+, 89-87%; B, 86-83%; B-, 82-80%; etc.) based on your earned points total. There will be no extra credit opportunities.

Item	% of grade	Points
A. Class attendance and participation	20	200
B. In-class activities (8)	24	240
C. Site assessments (6)	24	240
D. Personal essay	32	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1000</b>

***A. Class attendance and participation (200 pts, 20% of final grade)***

Each student in the class should attend class regularly and be an active participant. There are many ways to be an active participant – for example, if you are uncomfortable speaking in class, you may provide me with written questions that will be discussed or answered during that class or another class period. Points will be assigned based on days attended and days arrived on time (100 pts) and level and quality of participation in class discussions, peer review, etc. (100 pts).

***B. In-class activities (240 pts, 24% of final grade)***

The term “in-class activities” is used here to account for variation in coursework according to what students are exposed to throughout field visits. In-class activities will consist of a combination of (1) readings conducted and reading responses written during class time, and (2) field journal entries written during class time. For reading responses, students will be provided with printed readings and guiding prompts during class time and will be given adequate time to engage with the reading before responding to the prompts. Responses should be submitted as hard copies to the instructor during class time (unless photos of handwritten responses are requested in order to keep digitized records). For field journal entries, students will be provided with journaling prompts and will be given adequate time to write written responses to the prompts during class time.

All in-class activities will be graded based on thoughtfulness, creativity, and completion. Each entry should be at least one handwritten page long, and students may write in paragraph format, poetic form, or bullet points. You may include drawings or diagrams. There are 8 in-class activities listed on the syllabus; each is worth 3% of your final grade (30 points).

***C. Site assessments (240 pts, 24% of final grade)***

During Week 4, we will learn about the Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Using this tool as well as our own collective insights about agroecology, we will develop a site assessment tool to evaluate various food producing sites that we visit in the remainder of the course. Students will be provided with templates for site assessment and, during class time, students will be asked to complete site assessments for several of the food producing sites that we visit.

Site assessments will be graded based on thoughtfulness and completion. 6 of your site assessments will be graded; each of the 6 site assessments is worth 4% of your final grade (40 points).

***D. Personal essay (320 pts, 32% of final grade)***

During Week 2, we will read Levins Morales’ (2001) essay entitled “Certified Organic Intellectual.” In this essay, Levins Morales writes about how she and her interlocutors build theories about the world *based on their lived experiences* rather than based on knowledge

gained at academic institutions. They use their “homemade theory” to challenge official knowledge, which is often produced by research institutions and other powerful social institutions made up historically by people who are not women of color. Ultimately, she argues that, regardless of whether or not we have academic degrees, we *all* have rich lived experiences that give us knowledge about food systems and about the world at large.

For this assignment, Levins Morales’ essay will serve as inspiration for your own writing project. Your final product will be included in a zine that your instructional team will print and distribute back to you at the end of the course. Development of your essay will take place as 3 assignments that are outlined below. All together, these assignments are worth 32% of your final grade. Due dates are listed below.

First, in Week 3, you will be asked to write a ~1000-word, first draft essay about how you yourself were a Certified Organic Intellectual even before you began agroecology coursework at UC Santa Cruz – perhaps before you had even heard the term “agroecology.” In particular, you will describe your knowledge of food systems based on where and how you grew up. How did you understand where your food came from? What stories were passed down to you about your relationship with land and cooking? How did you learn to prepare food? What were your favorite or least favorite foods, and how did they taste, smell, look, and feel? ***Be creative, be sensual*** – this is an opportunity for you to showcase your unique knowledge about food systems based on your own lived experience.

Later, in Week 3, you will edit your essay down to a shorter (length TBD) second draft. You will then complete a final draft by August 17.

1. First draft essay, ~1000-words (100 points; 10% of final grade) – due July 22
2. Second draft essay (length TBD) (100 points; 10% of final grade) – due July 29
3. Final draft essay (length TBD) (120 points; 12% of final grade) – due Aug 17

In-class exercises and will use peer-review so that students can help each other with preparation of the final product. Please come to class prepared for each of these days – if you do not, it will be your loss.

All assignments should be turned in under the appropriate assignment tab on Canvas under Assignments > Personal Essay. Assignments should be turned in before class time on the day that they are due.

#### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES:**

##### ***Deadline and absence policy:***

The due dates for all assignments (proposal components, field journal entries, reading journal entries) and the final exam are absolute. Any assignments submitted late will be subjected to a 5% deduction in grade if turned in after class has started, and a 5% deduction in grade for each additional day late (including weekends). If extenuating circumstances occur, contact me

BEFORE the due date. In general, the only acceptable reasons for missing a deadline are illness and family emergencies. Please send me an email about your issue. I do not need doctor's notes, photos, or information about funerals. I trust that if you tell me you miss class or a due date for a serious reason, that you are telling the truth.

***Email etiquette:***

Please allow me 48 hours to reply to your email (or more time over weekends). If I do not reply within 48 hours, please feel free to send me another email. Emails that do not include an appropriate salutation ("Dear Aysha", "Hello Professor", etc...) or that are addressed inappropriately ("Hey dude, what's up!?") will be ignored. Please email me if you think you will miss class due to a legitimate excuse, but I do not need documentation for this. I trust you to be honest. Please do not email me asking what you missed in class, though you are free to ask clarifying questions after you check in with a classmate.

***Accommodations for students with disabilities:***

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to me in person outside of class (e.g., office hours) within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu/> for more information on the requirements and/or process.

***UCSC Center for Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE):***

The UCSC CARE program serves the UC Santa Cruz community by providing free and confidential support to those impacted by sexual assault, intimate partner/domestic violence, stalking, or sexual harassment. They offer prevention education training and work collaboratively with campus communities to create a culture of respect and empowerment. The CARE office is a confidential space to discuss issues of dating/domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. You can access support from the CARE office by filling out an appointment request form online at <https://care.ucsc.edu/>, by emailing the CARE office at [care@ucsc.edu](mailto:care@ucsc.edu), or by calling CARE at (831) 502-2273. For support outside of CARE office hours, they recommend calling Monarch Services 24/7 crisis line: 1-888-900-4232.

***Title IX:***

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential, counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies, call 911. Faculty and Teaching Assistants are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Office should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment.

**Academic Integrity** (thanks to UCSC's Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning and UC Berkeley's Center for Teaching and Learning for structure & language):

Academic integrity is critical, both online and in person. It is the moral code of academia, the trust that researchers, scholars, and artists put in each other to do what is right and honest, even when no one is looking. There are three key spheres of academic integrity in this class:

**Plagiarism & self-plagiarism:** To copy text or ideas from another source (including your own for other courses and work purchased or copied from others) without appropriate attribution is plagiarism. This also applies to the discussion forums. For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid them, see, for example: <https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources/plagiarism>.

**Collaboration & independence:** Working with peers to dig into the lecture and reading materials and discuss assignments can be enjoyable and enriching. I encourage this effort to build community in the class and to study with others. However, the reading responses and homework assignments should be written independently and reflect your own knowledge and understanding. If your answer to a question on a homework assignment is highly similar to another student's answer because it demonstrates work you did together, you should acknowledge it as such, e.g., "Taryn, Suzanne, and I discussed the Pelletier et al. 2011 paper together over Zoom and this answer reflects that discussion." As a guideline, up to approximately 1/3 of your homework assignments may have such collaboration. Please speak with Aysha or the TAs if you need clarification on this or want guidance for particular situations.

**Artificial Intelligence:** In this class, I ask that you complete your work *without* using AI-generated sources to augment, think through, or write your assignments. If you submit work that appears to have been written using AI sources, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss your thinking and writing process. If, after our conversation, I conclude it's more likely than not that you did not personally complete an assignment you submitted under your name, I may refer you to your college provost for further conversation. If you have questions about AI use and/or proper attribution of other people's work, please come ask me! Scholarly citing is not particularly intuitive, and part of my role is to help you learn those conventions.

Overall, please refer to <https://ue.ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html> for the university's policy on Academic Dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty in this class will be reported to the department, to the Provost of your college, and to the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, and may result in an F on the assignment, dismissal from class with a final grade of F, and even suspension or expulsion from the university, depending upon the severity of the violation.

**Course schedule:**

Notes that class topics and activities **may shift a bit in this dynamic summer class**, based on what we see & experience in the field!

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Due outside of class</b>	<b>Due during class</b>
July 8	Course introduction		
July 9			
July 16	Being certified organic intellectuals		In-Class Activity #1
July 23		Personal Essay First Draft (due <b>7/22</b> by 11:59pm)	In-Class Activity #2
July 30	Evaluating food-producing sites	Personal Essay Second Draft (due <b>7/29</b> by 11:59pm)	In-Class Activity #3; In-Class Activity #4; Site Assessment #1
Aug 1			Site Assessment #2 In-Class Activity #5;
Aug 2			In-Class Activity #6
Aug 8			In-Class Activity #7; Site Assessment #3
Aug 9			In-Class Activity #8; Site Assessment #4
Aug 15			Site Assessment #5
Aug 16			Site Assessment #6
<i>Aug 17*</i>			Personal Essay Final Draft (due <b>8/17</b> by 11:59pm)
Aug 22	Course wrap-up/reflection		
Aug 23			

*\*Class does not meet, but final essay is due!*