Graduate Certificate in Food Systems

The Graduate Certificate in Food Systems (GSFS) responds to an escalating need to empower new leaders with the capacity to create innovative solutions to pressing food and agriculture challenges. Building on UC Berkeley’s strength as a multi-disciplinary pioneer in food systems studies, the Certificate in Food Systems prepares master’s and doctoral students to think critically about the multi-level, multi-system factors that affect food production, distribution, and consumption locally, nationally, and globally. This interdisciplinary program complements students’ primary fields of study by addressing the ecological, social, health, political, policy, legal, and economic dimensions of food and agriculture and providing graduates with the necessary theoretical framework and practical skills that can be applied across diverse and emerging food-system challenges.

The GSFS is hosted by the School of Public Health, College of Natural Resources, and Goldman School of Public Policy, and administered by the Berkeley Food Institute. Students from any graduate program at UC Berkeley are eligible to undergo the certificate.

Certificate Website
https://food.berkeley.edu/programs/community-engagement-edu/graduate-certificate-food-systems/

Eligibility and Requirements

Qualified applicants must:
1. Be currently enrolled in a UC Berkeley graduate program
2. In good academic standing: GPA of 3.0 or better

Coursework requirements:
3 courses (totaling a minimum of 9 units), each of which must be taken for a letter grade.
1. Required core course: Transforming Food Systems: From Agroecology to Population Health (3 units, taught each fall)
2. Two elective courses, chosen from the list below, totaling a minimum of 6 units. Courses not on the electives list will be considered on a case by case basis. We encourage students to take all certificate courses outside their primary degrees; however one course can overlap with primary degree requirements.

Application

Completion of the Application for Admission Form is required before completing the certificate core course. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. This application for admission signals a student’s interest in the Graduate Certificate in Food Systems, but does
not guarantee that the certificate will be awarded, nor
guarantee a seat in GCFS-approved courses.

Core Course

“Transforming Food Systems: From Agroecology
to Population Health” is held every fall and taught by
Kris Madsen, Associate Professor in the Joint Medical
Program/Public Health Nutrition and Faculty Director of
the Berkeley Food Institute. The course is conducted as
a weekly seminar with guest lectures by UC Berkeley’s
preeminent food systems scholars and other experts
in the field. It takes a solutions-oriented approach to
addressing the pressing problems in current food systems
through strategies used by the disciplines of agroecology,
policy, law, public health, and business in working to
improve food systems and apply their varied approaches
to real-world case studies. Through weekly readings,
discussions, and problem-solving sessions, students
will gain a broad understanding of food systems and
the leverage points that can be targeted to improve the
health of people and the planet.

Elective Courses

The following electives count toward the Graduate
Certificate in Food Systems. See full course descriptions
here. Note that not every course is offered on a yearly
basis.
1. A,RESEC 241 Economics and Policy of Production,
Technology, and Risk in Agricultural and Natural
Resources, 3 Units (Fall). David Zilberman.
2. CY PLAN C256/PB HLTH C233 Healthy Cities, 3 Units
(Fall). Jason Corburn.
3. ENE RES 275 Water and Development, 4 Units (Spring,
every other year). Isha Ray.
4. ESPM 226 Interdisciplinary Food and Agriculture
Studies, 3 Units (Spring, every other year). Alastair Iles.
5. ESPM 230 Sociology of Agriculture, 4 Units (Fall).
Kathryn de Master.
6. ESPM 261 Sustainability and Society, 3 Units (Fall).
Alastair Iles.
7. ESPM 279 Seminar on Pastoralism, 3 Units (Fall and/or
Spring). Lynn Huntsinger.
8. ESPM 280 Seminar in Range Ecosystem Planning and
Policy, 3 Units (Fall). James Bartolome.
9. LAW 220F, Food Law and Policy, 3 Units (Spring).
Steve Sugarman.
10. MBA 292N Food Venture Lab, 2 Units (Fall). Will
Rosenzweig.
11. NUSCTX 260 Metabolic Bases of Human Health and
Diseases, 4 Units (Spring). Andreas Stahl.
12. PB HLTH 206B Food and Nutrition Policies and
Programs, 3 Units (Spring). Wendi Gosliner or Lia
Fernald.
13. PB HLTH 206D Food and Nutrition Programs and
Policies in Developing Countries, 3 Units (Fall). Lia
Fernald.
14. PB HLTH 214 Eat.Think.Design, 3 Units (Spring). Kris
Madsen and Jaspal Sandu.
15. PB HLTH 266A Foodborne Diseases, 2 Units (Spring,
every other year). Sangwei Lu.
16. PB HLTH 271G Health Implications of Climate Change,
3 Units (Spring). Rachel Morello-Frosch.
17. PUB POL 290 The Social Safety Net, Poverty, and
Income Inequality, 3 Units (Spring). Hilary Hoynes.
18. PUB POL 290 Special Topics in Public Policy: The
Fight for Food Justice: Mass Movement or Consumer
Culture? 3-4 Units (Fall, every other year). Saru
Jayaraman.

Elective Petitions

Students can petition for graduate courses beyond the
standard elective list to count toward the certificate.
Particularly 290 Special Topics and 299 Independent
Study courses will be considered on a case by case basis,
as topics pertain to food systems. Students must submit
the Elective Petition Form at least one month prior
to enrolling in the proposed course. Electives proposed by
petition must be approved before taking class.

Certificate Completion

Students submit the Certificate Completion Form at the
point that all requirements for the Graduate Certificate
in Food Systems are complete. The form must be
submitted by April 15 of your graduating year in order
for the certificate to appear on your transcript. If you
have certificate courses in progress during your final
semester, you can indicate this on the form. Final grades
will be verified prior to award of the certificate.
Completion of the GCFS will be noted in the
memorandum section of your official transcript (not on
the diploma). Certificate will be mailed after July 1st of
your completion year.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosalie Z.
Fanshel at rzfanshel@berkeley.edu.