Name and Title: Michael Kessler, Assistant Professor – Ethics Society & Law program, Director – Trinity One
Department: Trinity College

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Sustainable Food Systems

Number of 299Y Spots: 4 Number of 399Y Spots: 2

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY:
Trinity College is embarking on a 5-year project to study the way we interact with food on our campus. The purpose of this course is to study food systems from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students will engage with three research questions: 1) How to efficiently grow food in small urban spaces, 2) How nutrition affects society, and 3) How to change our food production systems to reduce waste. These questions will be approached from ethical, social scientific, and scientific perspectives. Students will work with research and community partners and will be expected to contribute to the ongoing work on sustainability at Trinity College and across campus. Students will learn how to build on existing results, refine research questions, work in a team-learning environment, and perform both empirical and theoretical literature reviews.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION:
Students will have weekly meetings during which they will report on current work and be assigned new tasks for the week ahead. Students will also participate in related academic programming at Trinity, connected to the Trinity One program, the Ethics Society & Law program, and the International Relations program. Students will also be involved in field trips, conferences, and other co-curricular activities. Field trips will take place on Saturdays and will include, for example, a sustainable agricultural initiative called The New Farm. At The New Farm, students learn about soil science, carbon sequestering strategies, land ecological restoration and organic production. Another example is the UTSC permaculture farm and St. George urban agricultural plots, where they will learn about student-lead initiatives to produce and distribute healthy foods on campus. Students will participate in Urban Agriculture Week and Frosh Week, to showcase current urban agriculture initiatives and educate students on food waste reduction. Each student will be responsible for an independent study. Currently, the proposed studies include: 1) nutrient and toxicological soil analysis of potential campus urban agriculture sites, 2) food waste management and student awareness initiative, 3) research of local food safety, policy and distribution, 4) garden design for nutrition and cultural diversity, 5) integrating spatial and socioeconomic factors in urban agriculture to promote food security, and 6) the mental wellness factors associated with food production and nature immersion.
MARKING SCHEME (assignments with weight and due date):
Weekly Discussion Questions & Reports – 15% (weekly)
Field Work Journal – 15% (end of each semester)
Literature Review – 15% (mid semester 1)
Research Proposal (written) – 15% (late semester 1)
Research Presentation (oral) – 5% (early semester 2)
Research Paper (draft) – 10% (mid semester 2)
Research Paper (final) – 25% (end semester 2)