Global Issues: Critical Topics, Expert Lecturers  
Friday, April 21, 9am – 5pm

Join the NYU School of Professional Studies Center for Global Affairs in an examination of critical issues with global repercussions. This daylong seminar features five experts who, in lectures of 75 minutes each, probe the ramifications and contours of today’s most important topics, ranging from cybercrime and the rise of Asia, to the Middle East and the role of women in global affairs. Each semester’s selection of topics reflects the most pertinent issues. For those interested in a deeper understanding of today’s controversies, conflicts, and challenges, this new seminar series questions, enlightens, and offers insights not generally available outside graduate seminars.

This spring’s seminar will explore a variety of issues related to *Food and Global Affairs*.

| Fruits of the Silk Road: Archaeobotany of Central Asia  
| Robert Spengler, Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU  
| 9:00 – 10:15 am |

The Silk Road was the largest commerce network of the ancient world; it linked the disparate ends of Eurasia and in doing so connected the imperial centers of East and South Asia. With the increased application of modern scientific archaeology, specifically archaeobotanical methods, in Central Asia over the past decade, it is becoming clearer just how profound the impact of these trade routes was in shaping world history. This flow of cultural traits through Central Asia during the past four and a half millennia was a major driving force in the development of, among other aspects of culture, cuisines across the Old World. Notably for this talk, the spread of specific crops and crop varieties through the mountain valleys of Central Asia directly altered farming systems across Europe and Asia, introducing crops, such as millet, to Europe and wheat to China. Archaeobotanically tracing the path that plants followed on their long journey across the Old World, helps us understand how these foods ultimately reached our dinner plates today.

ROBERT N SPENGLER III is currently a Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) through New York University. He is also the laboratory director of the Paleoethnobotany Laboratory at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena, Germany. He recently wrapped up research in Berlin, Germany, as a Volkswagen and Mellon Foundations Postdoctoral Fellow jointly appointed at the German Institute of Archaeology (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, DAI), in the Eurasia Department and Freie Universität, Berlin, during which time he also retained his affiliation with Washington University in St. Louis in the Anthropology Department where he held a post as a Research Associate the previous year. He defended his PhD at Washington University in St. Louis in March of 2013. His research has focused on archaeobotanical studies across Central Asia from time periods spanning from the fourth millennium B.C. to the first millennium A.D., and he has run investigations in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, China, and Mongolia. This year, while at ISAW, he is finishing editorial work on a book titled *Fruits from the “Sands: Artifacts of the Silk Road on Your Dinner Table”*. 
From Ghetto Fare to Haute Gourmet: The Marketing of Immigration
Jennifer Berg, Clinical Associate Professor and Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, Steinhardt, NYU
10:30 am – 11:45 am

A contemporary, social and cultural analysis with historical elements of twentieth century immigrant New York City life, this talk first examines popular street food consumed by New York City's Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side during the early twentieth century. The talk illustrates how bagels and knishes to deli sandwiches and cheesecake, mirror the socio-economic climb of eastern European Jews from the end of mass migration in the 1920s until present day using food as the “lens” through which I examine this group's acculturation and socio-economic trajectory.

JENNIFER SCHIFF BERG is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at NYU Steinhardt where she serves as the Director of Graduate Food Studies. This talk is based on her early dissertation work " From Pushcart Peddlers to Gourmet Take-Out: New York City's Iconic Foods of Jewish Origin" which she defended in 2005. Her current oral history project is a gender analysis of oral history of undocumented Mexican bakers. Prior to academic life at NYU, Dr. Berg was a caterer, baker, line cook and food entrepreneur.

The Meaning of Sugar
Michael Krondl, Food Writer and Historian
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Of all the globally traded commodities, there is none that has come to mean so many different things for its consumers and producers. The talk will explore the many meanings of sugar through the ages. From a food esteemed in religious traditions to an ingredient demonized as immoral, from a symbol of conspicuous consumption to a marker of poverty, sugar is a quintessential floating signifier.

Michael Krondl is a food writer and historian. He is the author of Sweet Invention: A History of Dessert as well as associate editor of the Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets. He teaches at the New School and the New York City College of Technology. For more information see, http://michaelkrondl.net/

Can We Feed the World and Save the World?
David Kanter, Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies, NYU
2:15 pm – 3:30 pm

There will likely be 10 billion of us on this planet by 2050. Not only will this mean -3 billion more mouths to feed, it will also put increasing pressure on the Earth’s already fragile ecosystems and the myriad environmental processes that sustain us. This challenge is perhaps best embodied in our relationship with one particular element of the periodic table: nitrogen. Nitrogen is central to life on this planet: it is one of the building blocks of DNA, fueling plant and animal growth. It is also central to agricultural production, particularly given our increasing reliance on synthetic fertilizer. However, about half of the nitrogen that we apply to agricultural land is lost to the environment. And the unique chemistry of the nitrogen cycle means that one atom of nitrogen can exacerbate several environmental pollution problems - from water and air pollution, to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion. Consequently, how we manage our increasingly complex relationship with nitrogen will likely determine whether we can both feed the world and save the world.
DAVID KANTER is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at NYU. His research examines the interconnected challenges of nitrogen pollution, food security and sustainable development, with a particular focus on: 1) the scientific, socioeconomic and legal dimensions of returning to a safe planetary boundary for nitrogen; and 2) balancing the multiple, and often competing objectives of sustainable agricultural intensification – from agricultural productivity to human wellbeing. David uses an interdisciplinary set of research methods to investigate these issues, from Earth Systems and economic time series modeling, to expert elicitation and legal analysis. Prior to this post, he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at The Earth Institute at Columbia University. He received his BSc in Chemistry and Law from the University of Bristol in the UK and his MA and PhD in Science, Technology and Environmental Policy from Princeton University.

Preventing Famine in Complex Emergencies: Case Study South Sudan and Somalia
Jens Rudbeck, Clinical Assistant Professor, NYUSPS Center for Global Affairs
3:45 pm - 5:00 pm

On February 20, the UN declared a famine in parts of South Sudan. With more than 100,000 people on the brink of starvation and a million children suffering from acute malnutrition the food crisis in the central part of the country had reached catastrophic levels and unless immediate action was taken the international community would have a human disaster of unimaginable scale on their hands. The famine in South Sudan was the second time over the past six years that the UN has declared famine in sub-Saharan. In 2011, a famine in Somalia killed an estimated 260,000 people. The famines in South Sudan and Somalia were the result of larger social disintegration caused by civil war, economic collapse and refugee crises. This session explores the questions: what is a famine? Why do they occur? And what can be done to prevent the recurrence of famine in Africa’s complex emergencies.

JENS RUDBECK served as a lecturer in the International Development Program at Roskilde University, Denmark and in the Department of Political Science at University of Copenhagen, Denmark before moving to New York in 2008. His primary areas of expertise are international development aid, political conflicts and political reforms in Africa, and social movements in developing countries. In addition, Rudbeck was a researcher at the Intra-State Conflict Program at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute where his work mainly focused on political struggle and regime change in sub-Saharan Africa. He also has served as a member of the Danish Military Intelligence Service academic network on conflicts in Africa. At NYU-SCPS, Rudbeck is the coordinator of the human rights and humanitarian assistance concentration and teaches such courses as Developing Countries in the Global Economy and Political Economy of Development.