

**Ending Hunger in Philadelphia**  
**A Problem Solving Learning Course**  
**Sponsored by the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program**  
**Thursday 1:30-4:30**  
**Joe Tierney**  
**Leadership Hall Conference Room, 3814 Walnut Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

The United States government reported that in 2008, “49.1 million people lived in food-insecure households, including 16.7 million children. Of these individuals, 12.1 million adults and 5.2 million children lived in households with very low food security.”

The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger reports that over 400,000 Philadelphians participate in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and that an additional 150,000 residents qualify for SNAP, but have not applied.

Who is trying to help these hungry Philadelphians? Does a SNAP benefit provide a healthy meal for an entire month? What are the existing emergency food programs in Philadelphia? How would you strengthen emergency food programs? Should the government increase its involvement in financing and running emergency food programs? Should religious and other non profit organizations, rather than government, feed the hungry? Should government and non-profit organizations, and perhaps even for profit organizations partner in these efforts. Is the University of Pennsylvania involved in any anti-hunger programs? Do any of these programs use volunteers?

*Ending Hunger in Philadelphia* is a problem solving learning course sponsored by the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program. The course will encourage students to study in depth the hunger relief efforts in Philadelphia and make recommendations on how to strengthen that system. Students are free to make any recommendations they see fit. Students will not be evaluated on what is recommended (i.e., I have no preset right answer that I expect you to discover), but on how you develop and defend those recommendations.

*Ending Hunger in Philadelphia* will require students to get out of the Penn bubble, out of Van Pelt, off of the Internet and in to the community where they will see first hand the hunger problem in Philadelphia. The course has relatively little reading, but will require students to conduct original research, provide community service and engage the problem in as up close and personal manner as possible.

In order to more fully appreciate the problem of hunger in Philadelphia and to make more informed recommendations about strengthening the emergency food efforts in the city, you will have several required encounters with the people and organizations working to alleviate the problem. Students will experience what its like to shop on a SNAP budget and attempt to complete the application form that SNAP recipients must complete. In addition, students will provide 12 hours of community service, observe a school lunch program, make site visits during class time to two of the leading anti-hunger organizations in Philadelphia, and join in a dialogue with several of the city’s leading anti-hunger experts who will visit class.

The culmination of the course will be a class paper that presents a plan for ending hunger in Philadelphia.

## EXPERIENCING (SOME) SOLIDARITY WITH SNAP RECIPIENTS

SNAP is the anti-hunger program formerly known as Food Stamps. Although it isn't possible to experience hunger as part of the course, it is possible to have you experience some of the administrative hurdles faced by SNAP recipients and to food shop a SNAP budget.

- Complete the SNAP eligibility form. During the third class meeting, students will have twenty minutes to complete the eligibility form (no peeking at the form beforehand!). Anyone who completes the form in that time frame will receive a special award from the Fox Program.
- Shop on the weekly SNAP food budget of (approximately) \$30. Students will report to the class on their experience including whether the purchased food would get you through a week and whether it is nutritious. The Fox Program will provide \$30 cash to each student and we'll donate what you purchase to a local feeding program.

## SITE VISITS

On October 7 during the regular class period we will visit the Philabundance warehouse. We will tour the facility, meet the staff and interview members of their leadership team.

On October 14 during regular class hours we will visit the center city offices of Manna. As with Philabundance, we will tour the facility, meet the staff and interview members of their leadership team.

In addition to the aforementioned site visits, the task groups are required on their own time, to visit one of three schools to observe the lunch protocols and interview members of the school food service. I'll arrange the visits, but students are expected to make these visits outside of class time.

Task groups are also expected to make other site visits that are related to their specific assignments.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Students are required to provide a total of 12 hours of community service at SHARE or the University City Hospitality Coalition (UCHC). The UCHC provides meals on 6 different nights at various locations in University City. We will discuss the logistics of this service requirement during the first class meeting. Service work must be completed by the Thanksgiving Break.

## SPECIAL GUESTS

Several outstanding special guests have agreed to spend time with us.

Rachel Cahill, former policy director of the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger. Ms. Cahill will give the class an overview of the hunger relief efforts in Philadelphia.

Anne Ayella, Nutritional Development Services (NDS), Catholic Social Services. Ms. Ayella works for an organization that delivers 10 million prepared meals per year. Ms. Ayella will discuss the operational issues involved with delivering such enormous quantities of food, the regulatory barriers that they face and their relationship with other members of the emergency food community. Ms. Ayella is widely cited as one of the founders of the emergency food system in Philadelphia.

Erinn Hill, Chief Operations Officer, Nutritional Development Services. Ms. Hill is responsible for NDS' school lunch and school breakfast program.

Yvette Jackson, Regional Administrator - Mid-Atlantic Region, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Ms. Jackson will join us on November 18 to discuss the city, state and federal involvement in food relief efforts.

A who's who of the anti-hunger community. On December 13 (our last class) three "stars" of the local food community will join us for class to hear your recommendations for ending hunger in Philadelphia.

## TASK GROUPS

Students will be assigned to one of three task groups. The tasks groups will focus on 1) policy 2) operations and 3) Penn's anti-hunger work, the health consequences of hunger and the nutritional aspects of the anti-hunger efforts. **Students will be randomly assigned to one of these three groups.**

Among other assignments the policy group will provide a brief history of government-funded feeding programs including the rationale for their existence and eligibility criteria for participation. The policy group will document where hungry people live in Philadelphia and the demographics of who is hungry. The policy group will also place Philadelphia in the context of other cities and how our city compares in its response to hunger.

The operations group will document the existing feeding programs in the City of Philadelphia. The documentation should include the number of meals served, cost, place of delivery and staffing. The operations group needs to include government, non-profit, for-profit and volunteer efforts. The operations group will also have to examine whether there are seasonal variations in the feeding programs.

The third group is responsible for documenting 1) Penn's anti-hunger work 2) examine the health consequences of hunger and 3) examine how to incorporate healthy eating practices in anti-hunger programs.

We will use weeks 10, 11, 12 to discuss and debate the recommendations that we plan to make in week 13 to our group of advisors.

Each task group will be expected to:

Collect data. This task may include using existing data sources as well as collecting original data. For example, the policy group can use existing sources to document whether there are hungry people in America and to provide background regarding the history of federal relief efforts while the third task group may have to do some original work to document the anti-hunger efforts in which Penn students are currently participating.

Conduct interviews. Each TG is required to interview 10 people who are active in their assigned area. For example, the operations group should interview staff who run anti-hunger programs.

Meet with the instructor on a regular basis. I'll schedule at least three meetings with the task groups at which I'll advise you on your task group assignments.

\*\*\*Present your work to the class. Task groups will be expected to report to the class on a regular basis. I place a premium on quality class presentations and will deduct points from the task group grade if the presentations are incomplete or poorly prepared.

I reserve the right to adjust task group assignments based on the progress that each group is making.

## REQUIRED READINGS

There are two required books for the class. *How Hungry is America* by Joel Berg and *Free for All: Fixing School Food in America* by Janet Poppendieck

Students are also expected to carefully review the web sites of the organizations that we visit and the websites of the organizations for whom our special guests work. I'll also occasionally distribute government and think tank reports that you'll be expected to read.

## GRADING

Community Service (40 points). Students are required to spend 12 hours working in a soup kitchen or food pantry. Students will receive a pro rata reduction in their grade for any missed hours of service.

Reflection Papers (40 points). Students are required to write two 3-5 page reflection papers.

- Reflection paper #1 (20 points) due October 7. Students should reflect on one of their personal encounters with hunger. This reflection could focus on their service work, experience shopping for food on a SNAP budget, or some other direct encounter that you have had with hunger.
- Reflection paper #2 (20 points) due November 4. Students should reflect on their exposure to the organizations running hunger relief efforts. In your opinion are those organizations focusing on what they should focus on? What appears to be going well? What challenges are they facing?

Task Group Work and class participation (50 points). Students will be evaluated for their active participation in class discussions, contributions to their task group and the quality of the presentations that their task group makes in class.

Final Report (50 points). Each task group will be responsible for producing assigned parts of the final report. The final report should be 80-120 pages. If I determine that a task group is in danger of not completing their written assignment, I reserve the right to assign work to individual members of the group.

Take-home Final exam (20 points). Students should write a 750 word op-ed regarding the future direction of the emergency food system in Philadelphia. Op-ed is due during the regularly scheduled exam period.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required. Students must inform me in advance if they are unable to attend one of the seminars.

## OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are 10:00 - 12:00 on Thursday. In addition, I encourage you to schedule a meeting or simply drop by my office in Leadership Hall.

## TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### **Week 1 (September 9)**

Introductions

Watch CBS *Film Hunger in America* (45-minutes) followed by discussion

Review Syllabus

## **Week 2 (September 16)**

Rachel Cahill, former policy director for the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (GPCAH). Overview of hunger relief organizations in Philadelphia

Review the Community Service requirement

Overview of national and local anti-hunger efforts

Read Berg pp. 1-98

**Note: Every member of the class must schedule a 15 minute meeting with me by Monday September 20.**

## **Week 3 (September 23)**

**\*\*\*\*Task groups will be announced prior to the September 23 meeting**

SNAP (formerly Food Stamps).

What is SNAP and what can you buy with your EBT card?

Complete SNAP eligibility form.

Task groups will receive their initial assignments and will have 15 minutes to meet during class time.

Read Berg pp. 99 - 190

**Note: Task groups schedule a one hour meeting with the instructor by September 29 to discuss their work plan**

## **Week 4 (September 30)**

Health and nutrition.

Discuss health consequences of hunger

Discuss how to encourage healthy eating habits in anti-hunger programs

Discuss issues to consider when running an anti-hunger program

Eligibility

Operational Procedures (What do you do when a student does not eat their apple?)

**Read Berg 192 - 294**

### **Week 5 (October 7)**

Mandatory Site Visit during Class time to Philabundance <http://www.philabundance.org/>

Carefully review web site prior to the site visit

Read Poppendieck pp. 1 - 83

### **Week 6 (October 14)**

Mandatory Site Visit during class time to Manna <http://www.mannapa.org/>

Carefully review web site prior to the site visit

Read Poppendieck pp. 84 - 189

### **Week 7 (October 21)**

What Role Do School Lunch and School Breakfast Play in Anti-Hunger Efforts?

A. Erinn Hill, Director of the Nutritional Development Program's School Lunch initiatives.

Carefully review web site prior to class <http://www.ndsarch.org/>

B. Task groups report on their visits to school lunch programs.

C. Discuss *Free for All: Fixing School Lunch in America* by Janet Poppendieck

Read Poppendieck pp. 190 - 298

**Task Groups meet with the instructor for one hour outside of class time**

### **Week 8 (October 28)**

A. Anne Ayella, Nutritional Development Services (NDS). Interview NDS about the (non school) work of their organization, which delivers 10 million (yes, 10 million!) prepared meals per year in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

#### **B. Class Discussion of**

- Site visits in week 5 and week 6
- Service work to-date
- Site visits that the task groups have made on their own to the "other" (e.g., share, manna, soup kitchens, etc) parts of the food safety net that we did not visit as a class

### **Week 9 (November 4)**

Each task group has 45 minutes to present the results of their work to-date.

### **SOLVING THE PROBLEM**

#### **Week 10 (November 11) – Policy Week**

Yvette Jackson, Regional Administrator - Mid-Atlantic Region, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Ms. Jackson will join us to discuss 1) the government role in anti-hunger initiatives and 2) what's next for anti-hunger programs

Policy task group will lead a conversation about the policy options for Philadelphia anti-hunger efforts.

#### **Week 11 (November 18)**

- A. Operations group will lead a discussion of the key issues that they are addressing
- B. The Penn and healthy eating group will lead a discussion of the issues that they are addressing.

Happy Thanksgiving (November 25)

#### **Week 12 (December 6)**

Full class length discussion of the content of the final report

#### **Week 13 (December 13)**

**Students present their final report to an assembled group of special guests.**