Overview

After two centuries of increasingly intensive urbanisation, people are more disconnected from food production than they have ever been before. A minority of the world’s population grow food, and in highly urbanised countries that minority is vanishingly small. Less than 0.01% of Australians are employed in agriculture of any kind. Modern agriculture is industrialised and food production corporatized. However, across the globe, there is a growing movement to reconnect with food production and to critically examine how food reaches our tables. Researchers and food activists are highlighting the social, cultural, ethical and environmental costs of modern food production, and exploring alternatives to industrial food systems.

This course will introduce students to a broad range of legal and policy issues, at both domestic and international level, that relate to food. Drawing on the expertise of multiple teachers, topics may include:

- Regulatory models that affect food production and distribution, including international covenants on food security and food aid, environmental laws, patents, trademarks, cultural heritage laws, biotechnology and health standards, animal rights, consumer laws and local government/planning law;

- Biotechnology and food production, including the demise of historical prohibitions on agricultural patents and public interest litigation around patenting life forms; the distinction between discovery and invention and its consequence; the distinction between open-pollenated seeds, hybrids and GMOs; contemporary developments in agribusiness and biotech patenting; plant variety rights; seed saving and farmers’ rights;

- The environment and food, including the environmental impact of nutrient and pesticide pollution, biodiversity loss and deforestation, water overuse, carbon emissions and waste; legal and regulatory regimes designed to
respond to these challenges, illustrated through case studies such as the pollution of the Great Barrier Reef by agriculture run-off; the regulation of water use in agriculture (70% of the world’s water) and in the food chain (two thirds of our total water footprint), including legal rights to surface and groundwater, water planning, allocations, efficiency approaches, markets, pricing and enforcement;

- Aboriginal science and rights to food, including an Indigenous Knowledges perspectives on science, agriculture and property rights to water, land, plants and animals, and data sovereignty; the regulation and use of this knowledge, including global initiatives around biopiracy; access and benefit sharing agreements; creative commons licensing; traditional knowledge databases; regional WIPO initiatives;

- Diverse legal models of enterprise in the food sector, particularly those that link production and distribution in innovative ways; the intersection between the sharing economy and the food system; the potential for innovative domestic models to help realise food-related international Sustainable Development goals;

- Urban agriculture, including the challenges of reconnecting overwhelmingly urban populations with food growing and production; legal rights to access land through public and private law; grassroots activism, community groups, allotments and guerrilla gardening, in Australia and overseas.

Interactive classes on a range of issues will give students a broad understanding of laws and policies that relate to food. Classes may vary from term to term, depending on staff availability. A research essay on a self-selected topic will allow students to develop food research skills, as well as an in-depth understanding of a single area.
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Conditions for Enrolment

Prerequisite: Completion of 78 UOC in LAWS courses.
Equivalent Courses

JURD7716 6 UOC
Food Law
Course Outline

To access course outline, please visit:

LAWS3216 Course Outline
Fees

Commonwealth Supported Students  $1370
Domestic Students  $5550
International Students  $5550

DISCLAIMER

Please note that the University reserves the right to vary student fees in line with relevant legislation. This fee information is provided as a guide and more specific information about fees, including fee policy, can be found on the fee website.

For advice about fees for courses with a fee displayed as "Not Applicable", including some Work Experience and UNSW Canberra at ADFA courses, please contact the relevant Faculty.

Where a Commonwealth Supported Students fee is displayed, it does not guarantee such places are available.
Pre-2019 Handbook Editions

Access past handbook editions (2018 and prior)

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Authorised by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
CRICOS Provider Code 00098G
ABN: 57 195 873 179