Food Systems

The Graduate Certificate in Food Systems (GCFS) is hosted by the School of Public Health, Rausser College of Natural Resources, and Goldman School of Public Policy, and administered by the Berkeley Food Institute (https://food.berkeley.edu/for-students/graduate-certificate-in-food-systems/) in response to an increasing need for innovative solutions to pressing food and farming challenges. Students from any graduate program at UC Berkeley are eligible to earn the certificate.

The GCFS builds upon UC Berkeley's strength as a multi-disciplinary pioneer in food systems studies and prepares Masters and Doctoral students to think critically about the multi-level, multi-system factors that affect food production, distribution, and consumption. The core course complements graduate students' primary fields of study by providing the necessary theoretical framework and practical skills for systems thinking that can be applied across diverse and emerging food and farming challenges, while connecting students across departments.

Complete the Application for Admission Form (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jcD4sIRfcjjJr7nmRnGdFqm74XSTO9TT0hprpQ-9S2A/edit/) and submit for approval. You are encouraged to apply prior to taking the core course, though it is not required. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Completion will be noted in the memorandum section of your official transcript (not on your diploma), in addition to a physical certificate signed by the deans of Berkeley Public Health, Rausser College of Natural Resources, and Goldman School of Public Policy.

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

Coursework requirements comprise of a minimum of 9 units, including:
1. Required core course: **PB HLTH 207 Transforming the Food System: From Agroecology to Population Health (3 units, taught ONLY in the fall)**
2. Elective courses, chosen from the approved list on the application form (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jcD4sIRfcjjJr7nmRnGdFqm74XSTO9TT0hprpQ-9S2A/viewform/?edit_requested=true). Courses not on the electives list will be considered on a case by case basis, if 25% of the core content focuses on food systems.

We encourage students to take all certificate courses outside their primary degree; however one course can overlap with primary degree requirements. **All requirements must be completed prior to graduation** in order for the certificate to appear on your transcript. If you have any questions, please contact the GCFS administrator at **gcfs@berkeley.edu.**

Core Course

PBHLTH 207 Transforming Food Systems: From Agroecology to Population Health (https://classes.berkeley.edu/content/2024-fall-pbhlth-207-001-sem-001/) is held every fall and taught by Kristine Madsen, Professor in the Joint Medical Program/Public Health Nutrition. 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 with Berkeley's leading food systems experts, 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.

The Graduate Certificate in Food Systems provides a unique opportunity for making connections with students from across the campus with a shared interest in food systems. Typically students from ten different Berkeley degree programs participate in the core course; together they make an interdisciplinary intellectual community not typically found within students' primary degree programs.

The core course and certificate provides an integrated and structured overview of food systems such that graduates understand complex "production webs," how each aspect of these systems feeds into and depends on other aspects, and how different disciplines (ecology, business, policy, law, public health) have approached challenges in food systems. Through the certificate, students are exposed to multidisciplinary experiences and trained in analytical and applied skills. Thus, students who complete the certificate are better contributors to the multidisciplinary teams that are increasingly leading food systems changes. Further, students will be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of various strategies (e.g., legal, political, or market-based) that they might pursue as they work to improve food systems during their careers.