

WINTER J-TERM
AFS105G: FOOD FROM THE SEA
January 2 – January 16, 2026
Online (asynchronous) – 3 credits

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Barbara Somers, **Email:** bsomers@uri.brightspace.com. Office Hours: For a Zoom meeting, appointments can be scheduled through ([Starfish](#)). I am available through Brightspace messages regularly Monday – Thursday during the day and will respond within 24 hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Seafood from capture fisheries and aquaculture plays a critical role in feeding the world, shaping economies, and sustaining ecosystems. Meeting the growing global demand for seafood requires balancing nutrition, economic viability, ecological health, and ethical considerations. This 3-week Grand Challenge course will also introduce you to the full journey of seafood—from how it is harvested or farmed, to how it is processed, distributed, and consumed.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: The objective of this course is to equip you to critically analyze and evaluate fisheries and aquaculture systems across production, management, nutrition, and sustainability. By applying interdisciplinary principles, you will assess real-world seafood challenges and propose evidence-based strategies for a more sustainable global food future.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The course is broken into 3 themes: learning outcomes 1 and 2 are related to seafood production; learning outcomes 3 and 4 are related to seafood economics; learning outcomes 5 and 6 are related to seafood consumption.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- (1) Analyze the scale and significance of global fisheries and aquaculture production by comparing key species, production regions, and their implications for global food systems and food security.
- (2) Evaluate methods of fish capture and aquaculture production to assess their sustainability and ethical trade-offs.
- (3) Assess the role of seafood supply chains in ensuring traceability and economic viability, identifying strengths and vulnerabilities across stages of production.
- (4) Apply knowledge of post-harvest processing to analyze how spoilage and preservation techniques influence seafood quality, safety, and waste reduction.
- (5) Examine the contribution of seafood to human nutrition by interpreting data on macro- and micronutrients in relation to global population needs.
- (6) Interpret and critique how different uses and modifications of seafood products shape consumer choices, cultural practices, and market trends.
- (7) Analyze threats to the sustainability of seafood systems and propose evidence-based strategies to mitigate ecological, economic, and social impacts.

These course outcomes will be assessed by way of your answers to weekly quizzes, discussion forums, and weekly reading assignments.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE: There are no prerequisite skills needed for this course except basic competency in mathematics, reading comprehension, and writing.

COURSE COMPONENTS: This course is composed of four graded elements: Reading assignments (25%), weekly quizzes (20%), discussion forums (25%) and course project (30%). There are no exams in this course.

REQUIREMENTS AND POINT DISTRIBUTION	Weight
1 quiz each week at @ 50 points each *You will complete one quiz per week in Brightspace.	20%
2 initial discussion board posts per week @ 10 points each Minimum of (2) comments to classmate's posts @ 15 points *You will complete two discussion board post (and offer comments on (2) of your classmates' posts every week).	10% 15%
3 reading assignments per week @ 12 points each *You will complete three assignments each week.	25%
Sustaining the Future of Seafood Project *This is a scaffolded project with an assignment due each week.	30%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE: A, 93-100; A-, 90-92; B+, 87-89; B, 83-86; B-, 80-82; C+, 77-79; C, 73-76; C-, 70-72; D+, 67-69; D, 61-66; F, 60 or below.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS: There is no textbook required for this course. All reading assignments will be posted on Brightspace and come from a variety of sources.

However, a useful reference is the FAO report entitled: The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2024. The link to it is provided in Brightspace in the START HERE section.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES: Computer access to the Internet is required to system, Zoom, Microsoft, and Google Drive platforms. Announcements for the course will also be posted on Brightspace, so please check it frequently and *make sure you have the correct email address associated with your Brightspace profile* (i.e., the one you frequently check). Recommended browsers (those with the most QA testing effort against them) are Google Chrome, Safari, and Mozilla Firefox. The mobile versions of these browsers also work well with most operations in Brightspace. Internet Explorer is not recommended.

ONLINE LEARNING

This course is divided into 3 units with 3 learning modules per week. Each learning module contains the learning outcomes for that lesson, readings, discussion forums, videos, and any other important content. To begin this course, click the "Start Here" tab, read the syllabus and course schedule, etc. These items will act as your map to this online course. See the end of this document for specifics on course schedule and topics.

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TIME COMMITMENT: I expect you to work on course material for an estimated approximate time of **8 hours** each week. These are time estimates, and some students may spend more or less time than is estimated. My calculations are as follows:

- ~2 hours to the weekly reading assignment and associated questions.
- ~2 hours to the discussion forum.
- ~1 hour to the weekly knowledge quiz, including study time and taking the quiz.
- ~ 3 hours to the Future of Seafood project.

IMPORTANT: Due to the timing and constraints of the J-term this year (starts on a Thursday, 15 days total), there is something assigned and something due every day. There are times when 2 things will be due on the same day. I attempted to stagger these due dates the best I could working with a 5-day week. This schedule will require frequent interaction with the course material throughout each unit. Every week you will have nine things due:

- 1) 3 reading assignment(s) with associated questions.
- 2) 2 initial discussion forum posts and (2) responses to classmates per discussion.
- 3) a knowledge quiz based on materials from the entire unit.
- 4) a weekly deliverable related to the Future of Seafood Project.

Note: You can always do assignments early, i.e., you do not have to wait until the last minute!

READING ASSIGNMENTS will generally be 10-15 pages and include short-answer questions associated with the material. These questions are meant to guide your reading and point out some important information. For more information on reading assignments, please refer to the “Start Here” tab of the course where you will find a section outlining details along with a grading rubric.

DISCUSSION FORUMS will focus on one or more readings and lecture content. You will be required to provide responses to a prompt that I give (by starting a new thread), then respond to 2 other classmates by replying to their threads. When creating your discussion post, your goal is to **analyze the concept, apply it to facts or examples, and advocate for a position or recommendation**. This demonstrates your ability to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Your post should move beyond a summary; it should show how you are using what you’ve learned to interpret, critique, or apply the material. All replies to peers should follow the **3CQ strategy**, which helps move beyond simple agreement and promotes deeper engagement. For more information on discussion forms, please refer to the “Start Here” tab of the course where you will find a section outlining details along with a grading rubric.

QUIZZES (WEEKLY) are designed for few reasons: (1) to help you review your understanding of the material, and (2) to provide the foundation for topics from the following week. You will have **60 minutes** to complete the 30 T/F, multiple-choice or short answer questions once the quiz has been opened on Brightspace. **Check the dates for quizzes on the calendar and make sure you complete all the required units work ahead of time. Once you start a quiz you cannot pause it and finish later.**

SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF SEAFOOD PROJECT (WEEKLY)

This project will have you investigate a real-world topic related to global seafood production and sustainability. Working independently, you will select one of three provided focus areas. Through a sequence of scaffolded assignments—a proposal (Week 1), a detailed outline and draft slides (Week 2), and a final recorded presentation (Week 3)—you will build research, analytical, and communication skills.

The final deliverable is a 5–7-minute recorded presentation in which you **MUST** appear on camera explaining your slides, figures, and data interpretations. The project emphasizes critical thinking, effective use of visuals, and the ability to connect scientific evidence with sustainability frameworks in seafood systems.

COURSE POLICIES

LATE ASSIGNMENTS will be accepted and graded, but points will be taken off your grade based on the lateness criterion in all assignment rubrics within Brightspace.

BRIGHTSPACE OR EMAIL MESSAGES - I will do my best to respond to emails within one business day. This means if you email me Friday or Saturday night with questions about the assignment that is due, I most likely will not respond until Monday. Please use Brightspace to communicate with me as I receive a lot of email at my personal email address and may miss yours. That address is bsomers@uri.brightspace.com.

AI POLICY

AI use permitted but only with acknowledgement

It's very important that you understand exactly how AI tools work and how to use them in ways that do not limit your own work and creativity, and do not perpetuate harmful (or false) ideas and discriminatory thinking frameworks. All assignments are designed as "human only" so that you can practice essential skills like reflection or analysis and get into a state of creative flow without algorithmic interference. However, for some assignments, you may choose to utilize AI tools to assist you. You must acknowledge using it. Any *ideas*, *language*, or *code* that is produced by AI must be cited, just like any other resource. You must include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI which contains the following information:

- What tool was used
 - How was it used
 - How did it help you learn
 - How did it hinder your learning
 - What would you do differently next time
- You should be aware that AI has limits. Therefore, you must also critically review and refine the AI's output to ensure the final work accurately reflects your own understanding and meets the academic standards expected by the university.
 - Using AI is like collaborating with a peer, where it's important to communicate each contribution to the project. Any text generated using ChatGPT-3 should include a citation such as: "Chat-GPT-3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). "What text was in your query." Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>" Material generated using other tools should follow a similar citation convention.
 - Failure to properly document or cite use of AI will be considered a violation of the university's [Academic Requirements in the University Manual](#) (see 8.27.10 – 8.27.22).

Other notes about AI

- As a rule, do not trust anything AI says. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is wrong unless you either know the answer or can check in with another source.
- If you provide minimum effort prompts, you will get low quality results. You will need to refine your prompts to get good outcomes. This will take time and practice.

Be thoughtful about when this tool is useful. Don't use it if it isn't appropriate for the case or circumstance.

CLASSROOM PROTOCOL: For this online course, Brightspace is our "classroom." Please refer to the [Brightspace YouTube video tutorials](#) before you get started and refer back to them as a resource as needed while you complete this course. In the online learning environment, "attendance" is measured by your PRESENCE in the site as well as your CONTRIBUTIONS to the site. The importance of regular logins and active participation cannot be overstated.

Students who will miss more than one assignment must discuss it with the instructor in advance. Students should also consider withdrawing from a course if they fall behind in the first week. Taking an online course does not mean you can submit the work whenever you would like. There are still due dates. Also, I do not allow students to submit all the work from the course on the last day of the J-term. Each week/unit builds upon the next, so it is important to keep up with the assignments and submit things in the week they are due.

****Instructors may, but are not obligated to, accommodate students under extraordinary circumstances, but the student must request accommodation and provide requested supporting documentation.**

COURSE NAVIGATION: Given the fast pace and intensive nature of a 3-week J-Term course, you must plan to work on class requirements every day. I recommend reserving **2-3 hours** each day for your coursework. On most days of the session, you will have either a quiz, a discussion board post, or a reading assignment due by the end of day. Weekly you will have a project assignment due.

You should review the due dates for these tasks and begin working on the weekly module as soon as possible each week. Click through the modules, review the module content, and complete the readings, videos, and tasks embedded within these pages. Each module starts with an overview of the learning unit, as well as a summary of what is due for that unit. Again, **all of the tasks are embedded in the modules (as well as the information that you need to complete them)**. However, you can also quickly access these tasks by clicking on the “Discussion”, Quizzes, “Assignments” tabs at the top of the Brightspace homepage. **Do not attempt to complete any tasks without first reviewing the due dates, and the content in the module.**

Our course can be accessed at Brightspace <https://brightspace.uri.edu> . Once you are on the AFS105G Brightspace homepage, you will see several items. On the left-hand side of the screen is a calendar of due dates. You must check this calendar often, to keep up with the required work. **The dates on the calendar are target due dates, meant to keep you on track so that the work doesn’t pile up. You will quickly become overwhelmed if you do not budget your time accordingly to meet deadlines. If things are going to be late, I would like to be informed in advance with a reasonable explanation. A decision will be made regarding point deductions for late submission.**

ACCESSING THE UNIT MODULES: Within the banner of our Brightspace homepage, you will see the term “Course Home.” If you click on that term, you will see an overview of the course content for the 3-week session. You can also access this content by clicking on the “Content” link at the top of the Brightspace homepage. All the required readings, assignments, quizzes and discussions are arranged in a series of learning modules labeled by “UNIT” on the left-hand side of the screen.

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Course Home Content Assignments Discussions Quizzes Classlist Grades Class Progress Course Tools Help More

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Unit 1

Starts Dec 27, 2023 12:01 AM

Welcome to Food from the Sea! This unit starts off using a wide lens to examine global and regional trends in seafood production and consumption as an introduction to the course. Unit 1A classifies & compares various production methods in wild capture fisheries & aquaculture, and outlines potential environmental impacts. Lastly Unit 1B looks back at historical seafood production in New England & a common management tool used in wild capture fisheries.

Upload / Create Existing Activities Bulk Edit

Unit 1 Overview & Learning Objectives ✓
Web Page

Unit 1 Checklist ✓
Checklist

Unit 1 Topic Reading Materials (Seafood Production Trends) ✓
Web Page

Unit 1 Reading Assignment 1 ✓
Assignment

Due Jan 2, 2024 11:59 PM Starts Jan 1, 2024 8:00 AM

Seafood production trends

Please review the Unit 1 Topic Reading Materials. Take your time with this and look at each graph closely. Once you have spent some time with it, please read the attached peer-reviewed paper entitled, *The future of food from the sea* (only read the first 5 pages, or according to the document, pages 95-99; do not read the Methods section) and please answer the following questions (submit them as a text submission):

1. Choose at least 5 terms or phrases you didn't know in the *The future of food from the sea* attached reading and define them.
2. Why are aquatic foods uniquely positioned to contribute to global food and nutrition security? In other words, what characteristics does seafood have that land-based foods do not have?

NETIQUETTE FOR ONLINE COURSE

- Be polite and respectful of one another.
- Avoid personal attacks. Keep dialogue friendly and supportive, even when you disagree or wish to present a controversial idea or response.
- Be careful with the use of humor and sarcasm. Emotion is difficult to sense through text.
- Be helpful and share your expertise. Foster community communication and collaboration.
- Contribute constructively and completely to each discussion. Avoid short repetitive “I agree” responses and don’t make everyone else do the work.
- Consider carefully what you write. Re-read all e-mail and discussion before sending or posting.
- Remember that e-mail is considered a permanent record that may be forwarded to others.
- Be brief and succinct. Don’t use up other people’s time or bandwidth.
- Use descriptive subject headings for each e-mail message.
- Respect privacy. Don’t forward a personal message without permission.
- Cite references. Include web addresses, authors, names of articles, date of publication, etc.
- Do not send large attachments unless you have been requested to do so or have permission from all parties.
- 2-word postings (e.g.: I agree, Oh yeah, No way, Me too) do not “count” as postings.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Your access to this course is important. Please send me your Disability, Access, and Inclusion (DAI) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodation. If you have not yet established services through DAI, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodation in the classroom. DAI is located in room 302 of the Memorial Union, 401-874-2098, <http://uri.edu/disability>, or email dai@uri.edu.

UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

Universities require certain statements in all course syllabi because they provide essential information about policies, resources, and student rights. These include topics such as accessibility, academic integrity, student support services, and campus safety. To simplify access, many of these required statements can now be viewed through a single QR code provided below. By scanning the code, you can quickly access the full set of policies and resources in one place.

Scan the QR Code to view the following statements in full:

- Viral Illness Precaution Statement
- Excused Absences
- Anti-Bias Syllabus Statement
- Disability, Access, and Inclusion Services for Students
- Anti-Discrimination Resources
- Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO)
- Title IX.
- Providing equal access for students with disabilities
- Disability, Access, and Inclusion Drop-In Hours



ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

We understand that college comes with challenges and stress associated with your courses, job/family [responsibilities and personal life](#). URI offers students a range of services to support your mental health and wellbeing, including the [URI Counseling Center](#), [MySSP \(Student Support Program\) App](#), the [Wellness Resource Center](#), and [Well-being Coaching](#).

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT & ACADEMIC HONESTY

Understanding the culture of source management and attribution in academia is a process of learning and relearning, with increasing complexity over time. Our goal is to better distinguish between intentional plagiarism or cheating and making mistakes. URI's Student Handbook web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/ provides guidelines concerning academic honesty in this regard. Additional assistance is available at the [Writing Center](#) and the [Academic Enhancement Center](#). *Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source.*

ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT CENTER – STEM & BUSINESS TUTORING

Get peer tutoring for many 100 and 200 level STEM, Business, Nursing, and Engineering courses. Choose weekly or occasional sessions through TracCloud or visit the Drop-In Center in Carothers Library LL004. Learn more at the STEM & BUS Tutoring – Academic Enhancement Center. Meet one-on-one with a peer academic coach to build habits and strategies around time management, goal setting, and studying. Contact Heather Price (hprice@uri.edu) for more information. [Click here for more details](#).

UCS 160 and UCS 161 are 1 credit courses designed to improve your academic skills and strategies. Consider enrolling in one of these courses! Contact David Hayes (davidhayes@uri.edu) with any questions or to schedule a professional staff academic consultation. [Click here for more details](#).

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER

Receive peer writing support at any stage of your writing process. Schedule in-person or online consultations through TracCloud or stop by Roosevelt Hall Room 20 –new location! Learn more at the Writing Center – Academic Enhancement Center

CENTER FOR CAREER AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

The [Center for Career and Experiential Education](#) (CCEE) supports undergraduate students with career education and preparation through [one-on-one advising](#), 24/7 [online resources](#), [career events](#), year-round [career education](#), [community engagement courses](#), [recognition of prior learning](#), the [ITR Internship Program](#), and pre-health [career pathways](#).

The [Handshake](#) platform connects students to on- and off-campus jobs as well as internships. Our [Career Education Specialists](#) (CES) are available to meet with students all year long, as early as their first-year, both in-person and virtually. They assist with career exploration, resume and cover letter development, interview preparation, job and internship search, and more. Through active reciprocal relationships with employer and community partners, we develop an impressive workforce talent pipeline that contributes to the Rhode Island economy, community, and beyond. For more information, visit us on the first floor of Roosevelt Hall, at the [Center for Career and Experiential Education | #RamsGetJobs – University College for Academic Success](#) or call 401.874.2311.

URI ONLINE RESOURCES

Visit the [URI Library's website](#) for lots of useful resources! Contact the [Research Help Desk](#) for assistance locating sources, and visit the [Interlibrary Loan page](#) to access additional books, articles, and other materials outside of our collection.

WHEN LIFE HAPPENS ON ITS OWN TERMS

Occasionally, life reminds us we are not in control of everything that happens around us or in control of what directly happens to us. If you find yourself in need of help, just remember nothing lasts forever, so keep your head up and do your best to take it one day at a time. URI has resources available to support you if you need it! Here is a short list:

- Food insecurity affects up to 30% of college students. That means you might not have enough food to get through a day or week, you don't have money to purchase groceries or personal products, or you are primarily eating foods that don't provide a lot of nutrition because they're all you can afford. This can all impact your academic success.
- [Rhody Outpost](#) provides URI students who are food insecure with emergency food services and resources. The Outpost is housed at the Dining Services Warehouse at 10 Tootell Road, between Flagg Road and West Alumni Avenue. We are open every Friday from 3-5:30. Any student in need is welcome to visit the Outpost after filling out a [brief form](#). If you have any questions, contact barbara_sweeney@uri.edu, or 401-874-5633. We want to help all students succeed and make URI a place with #NoRamHungry.
- Dean of Students offers resources to help you navigate and succeed in college, even when your outside life is challenging. Call 401-874-2098 or find more contact info [here](#).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.

If you have read this syllabus, then you are on the right track to succeed in this class!

DISCLAIMER: The contents of this syllabus are subject to change at the instructors' discretion.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Overall Course Learning Objectives		Theme
1	Describe the scale and significance of fisheries and aquaculture (seafood) production, as well as the species that are harvested	Seafood Production
2	Explain the methods used to grow and/or capture fish, and concepts of sustainable production	
3	Distinguish key attributes of seafood supply chains that are vital to traceability and economics	Seafood Economics
4	Discuss post-harvest processing of seafood, including factors contributing to spoilage and preservation techniques	
5	Recognize the importance of seafood in providing macro- and micronutrients for a growing human population	Seafood Consumption
6	Interpret how different uses and modifications of seafood products impact human consumption	
Weekly Course Learning Objectives		Objective
Unit	At the end of this unit, you will be able to:	
Pre Course	Utilize Brightspace to participate in introductory discussion	1
	Understand course objectives, structure, and content	1
1	Explain patterns of global and regional seafood production	1
	Identify major species harvested or farmed	1
1	Define and compare methods of fisheries & aquaculture production	2
	Analyze environmental impacts of fisheries & aquaculture production	2
1	Outline historical timeline of seafood harvest methods & status	2
	Define maximum sustainable yield and classifications	2
2	Distinguish key attributes of seafood supply chains that are vital to traceability	3
	Explain why seafood supply chains are complex and involve lots of different stakeholders	3
	Define seafood traceability and its core functions	3

2	Describe basic seafood economics principles	3
	Give examples of seafood subsidies and trade agreements	3
	Compare and contrast value chain analyses for seafood	3
2	Define the basic steps in post-harvest seafood processing, particularly related to spoilage and handling	4
	Discuss sustainability standards for seafood processing plants: food safety, social accountability, environmental responsibility	4
2	Evaluate post-harvest seafood preservation techniques and technologies	4
	Discuss different value-added seafood products: how they are prepared and consumed	4
3	Explain food insecurity and its relationship to seafood	5
	Identify and examine the primary macronutrients in seafood	5
3	Identify and examine the primary micronutrients in seafood	5
	Describe how micronutrient deficiencies differentially affect people	5
3	Utilize Food Central database for determining seafood nutrients in seafood species most consumed	5
3	Give examples of what seafood is used for non-human consumption	6
	Discuss seafood reduction processes and social-ecological impacts	6
3	Describe how genetically modified organisms are entering the seafood sector	6
	Analyze ecological, economic, and social impacts of genetically modified salmon	6