Department of Geography, Planning & Environment
Faculty of Arts and Science

GEOG 323 & URBS 337 – Urban Agriculture

General Information

Term: *Fall 2026*
Prerequisites: *GEOG 220 or URBS 230*
Credits: *3*
Class time: Wednesday & Friday from *2:45 – 4:00 PM*
Classroom: *LS 207 SGW*

Instructor Information

Name: *Erik Chevrier, Ph.D.*
E-mail: *urbanagriculture@erikchevrier.ca*
Course Website https://erikchevrier.ca/course/urban-agriculture-fall-2026
Office hours: *Wednesday 4 – 5:30 PM (by request)*

Important Dates

Last day to register:	**Monday, September 21, 2026**
Last day to withdraw (refund):	**Monday, September 21, 2026**
Last day to withdraw (DISC):	**Monday, November 16, 2026**
Mid-term break:	**October 10-16, 2026**

Territorial Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community. (Indigenous Directions Leadership Group, Feb. 16, 2017) This course focuses on food and culture from decolonial, social justice perspectives. Students are encouraged to read the Red Paper on Land Back by the Yellowhead Institute.

Course Description from Academic Calander

This course examines the history and practice of producing food in cities. Students will explore the tensions between the politics, economies and ecologies that organize urban food production and the everyday ways people raise and access food in varied urban contexts. The course also critically evaluates food-based social movements: their limits, possibilities and connections to wider struggles for socio-economic justice.

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to…

- Critically analyze theoretical and practical approaches to urban agriculture and situate them within larger food systems
- Evaluate the strengths, limitations, and trade-offs of urban agriculture across ecological, social, economic, and political dimensions
- Explain key agroecological processes, including soil health, plant–microbe relationships, biodiversity, ecological complexity, water management, and seasonal cycles
- Compare diverse models of urban farms and gardens, including indoor and outdoor systems, annual and perennial production, SPIN farming, permaculture, foraging, mushrooms, and ecological pest management
- Apply diverse and social economy approaches to understand, map, and imagine more ethical and food-sovereign community food systems
- Analyze labour, land, social justice, decolonial, and Indigenous perspectives relevant to urban agriculture and food sovereignty
- Develop practical skills for growing food in urban and peri-urban environments using agroecological and ecologically resilient approaches
- Evaluate strategies for productive, ecologically resilient, and socially appropriate urban food production rather than treating yield as the sole measure of success
- Recount key developments in the history of urban agriculture in Quebec and Canada and relate them to contemporary food movements
- Connect practical experience in urban agriculture with course concepts through critical, situated, and autoethnographic reflection

Instructional Method

This course will be given in person. Each class will begin with a short lecture and discussion led by Erik Chevrier, Ph.D. He will introduce themes, provide additional examples and/or offer critical perspectives related to the weekly topics but not covered in the readings. The course will include a variety of pedagogical styles, including lectures, discussions, guest speakers, field trips, community service learning and experiential learning. Across these activities, class discussions will also consider Indigenous relationships to land and food, labour, and other questions that cut across the weekly topics. Students are expected to read the required texts before class and engage with each other through interactive activities and critical discussions.

Course Content

This course takes a critical look at how urban agroecology can support food-sovereign urban communities. Agroecology is approached not only as a way of growing food, but also as an ecological practice, a way of producing and sharing knowledge, and a process of social and political transformation. Students will examine food systems through multiple lenses, analyzing the ecological impacts of industrial agriculture—such as biodiversity loss, disrupted carbon cycles, water overuse,

and pollution—alongside social and economic issues including food insecurity, rising food costs, reliance on migrant farm labour, and the challenges faced by small- and medium-scale farms.

Alongside this critical inquiry, the course emphasizes practical approaches to building campus–community food sovereignty. Students will explore strategies for creating resilient urban food systems and gain hands-on experience by participating in local urban farms and gardens. Throughout the course, they will consider what urban agriculture can and cannot accomplish, for whom, and under what ecological, economic, political, and social conditions.

The course begins with an overview of theoretical perspectives, including food systems analysis, diverse economies, and ecological complexity. It then shifts to the practical work of designing, growing, and maintaining urban farms and gardens, including attention to soil, biodiversity, water, labour, and the relationships that sustain food production. In the final weeks, students will resituate this knowledge within broader discussions of land, seeds, and urban planning, before concluding with lessons on harvest preservation and a collective food festival.

Assignments are designed to bridge theory and practice. Students will engage with critical food theory, collaborate with community-based urban agriculture initiatives, and reflect on their experiences in the field.

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Course Schedule and Required Readings			
Week	**Date**	**Topic**	**Assignments and/or Readings Due**
1	**Sept 9 & 11**	**Introduction to Urban Agroecology and Course**	Tornaghi, C. Dehaene, D. (2021) Resourcing an Agroecological Urbanism Political, Transformational and Territorial Dimensions Chapter 1 – Food as an Urban Question, and the Foundations of a Reproductive, Agroecological Urbanism
2	**Sept 16 & 18**	**Examples of Urban Agroecology: Loyola Farm Tours** **Farming Cooperatives**	Egerer, M., Cohen, H. (2020) Urban Agroecology Interdisciplinary Research and Future Directions Introduction – The Role of Agroecology in Cities
3	**Sept 23 & 25**	**Examples of Urban Agroecology: Lachine and Senneville Farm Tours** **Agroecology and Ecological Complexity and Biodiversity**	Egerer, M., Cohen, H. (2020) Urban Agroecology Interdisciplinary Research and Future Directions Chapter 1 – An Expanded Scope of Biodiversity in Urban Agriculture, with Implications for Conservation Chapter 2 – Complex Ecological Interactions and Ecosystem Services in Urban Agroecosystems Chapter 3 – Climate Factors and Climate Change in Urban Agroecosystems

4	**Sept 30 & Oct 2**	**Critical Overview of Food Systems**	Egerer, M., Cohen, H. (2020) Urban Agroecology Interdisciplinary Research and Future Directions Chapter 9 – Co-Producing Agro-Food Policies for Urban Environments: Toward Agroecology-Based Local Agri-food Systems Tornaghi, C. Dehaene, D. (2021) Resourcing an Agroecological Urbanism Political, Transformational and Territorial Dimensions Chapter 8 – The Transformative Potential of Agroecological Farmers: An analysis of participatory food system strategies in Nicaragua and England
5	**Oct 7 & 9**	**Diverse Economies of Agroecology**	Tornaghi, C. Dehaene, D. (2021) Resourcing an Agroecological Urbanism Political, Transformational and Territorial Dimensions Chapter 3 – Commons and Commoning for a Just Agroecological Transition: The importance of de-colonising and de-commodifying our food systems Chapter 7 – The Potential of Bio-Intensive Market Gardening Models for a Transformative Urban agriculture: Adapting SPIN Farming to Brussels Chapter 9 – Conjugating Social and Solidarity Economies in Chiapas Mexico: Redesigning food systems for economic, social, and ecological virtuous circles

	Oct 14 & 16	**Mid-Term Break – No Classes**	
6	**Oct 21 & 23**	**Healthy Soil**	Tornaghi, C. Dehaene, D. (2021) Resourcing an Agroecological Urbanism Political, Transformational and Territorial Dimensions Chapter 6 – Soils, Industrialized Cities and Contaminants: Challenges for an agroecological urbanism Egerer, M., Cohen, H. (2020) Urban Agroecology Interdisciplinary Research and Future Directions Chapter 4 – Restoring Soil and Supporting Food Sovereignty across Urban–Rural Landscapes: An Interdisciplinary Perspective
7	**Oct 28 & 30**	**Seeds, Land and Food Sovereignty**	Egerer, M., Cohen, H. (2020) Urban Agroecology Interdisciplinary Research and Future Directions Chapter 7 – From Individual Seeds to Collective Harvests: Urban Agroecology as Political Action Chapter 8 – Surveying the Landscape of Urban Agriculture's Land Politics: Civic, Ecological, Heritage-Based, Justice-Driven, and Market-Oriented Fields

8	**Nov 4 & 6**	**Urban Food Planning**	Various Chapters of: Integrated Urban Agriculture: Precedents, Practices, Prospects Chapter 4 – Designing Urban Agriculture Forms: History, Education, Proposals and Projects Chapter 5 – Urban Agriculture Linkages, Patterns, Education and Urban Planning Chapter 6 – Resilient Cities = Carrot City: Urban Agriculture Theories and Designs Chapter 7 – Agricultural Urbanism: Building Sustainable Urban and Regional Food Systems for 21st Century Cities
9	**Nov 11 & 13**	**Urban Permaculture**	Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture Chapter 1 – Introducing the Ecological Garden Chapter 2 – A Gardener's Ecology
10	**Nov 18 & 20**	**Annual Food Production**	Various Chapters of: Carpenter, N., and Rosenthal, W. (2011) The Essential Urban Farmer, Penguin Books. Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture
11	**Nov 25 & 27**	**Perennial Food Production**	Various Chapters of: Carpenter, N., and Rosenthal, W. (2011) The Essential Urban Farmer, Penguin Books. Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture

12	**Dec 2 - 4**	**Food Preservation and Festival**	Tornaghi, C. Dehaene, D. (2021) Resourcing an Agroecological Urbanism Political, Transformational and Territorial Dimensions Conclusion - The programmatic dimension of an agroecological urbanism

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Assignments

Participation (ongoing, 15%)

The participation grade is based on attendance, engagement in class discussions, and active involvement in hands-on food activities and supplemental tasks. Students are expected to attend class regularly, contribute thoughtfully to discussions, and demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings. Participation reflects students' ability to engage critically and collaboratively with course materials, peers, and experiential activities.

Blog Posts (Critical Essays on Urban Agriculture):

Students will write two blogs (600–1000 words each) on topics related to urban agriculture discussed in lectures and/or course readings. The first blog must address critical perspectives in urban agriculture, while the second will focus on building sovereign/sustainable urban foodscapes. Although written in a blog format, posts must be grounded in research rather than personal opinion. Strong submissions will substantively engage with required course readings and appropriate credible sources, integrating them effectively into the analysis. Students with production skills may substitute a video or podcast, pending approval from Erik Chevrier.

Experiential Learning and Autoethnography

For the final project, students will identify an urban agriculture initiative in their community and arrange to contribute at least 8 volunteer hours over the semester. The purpose is to gain practical experience while contributing to the ongoing work of an initiative and learning reciprocally from the people involved. Examples and possible organizations will be discussed in class, including projects Erik is directly involved in (e.g., CultivAction Solidarity Cooperative, Lachine Farms), but students are responsible for contacting an initiative and arranging their own volunteer placement.

Following their volunteer experience, students will write a critical autoethnographic reflection that connects their own participation with course concepts and readings. Rather than researching or evaluating the organization or the people involved, students should critically examine their own situated experience: what they did and learned, how the experience related to their previous assumptions about urban agriculture, what they learned from practitioners, and how practice reinforced, challenged, or complicated ideas encountered in the course.

Table 1: Course Assignments

Name of Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade
Participation	**Ongoing**	**15**
Blog 1 (Critical Perspectives in Urban Agriculture)	**October 9**	**30**
Blog 2 (Building Food Sovereign Campus-Communities through Urban Agroecology)	**November 13**	**30**
Experiential Learning Autoethnography	**December 4**	**25**

More information on university regulations concerning evaluation can be found here. The grading system is described in section 16.1.11 of the Undergraduate Calendar.

Please note that for 200-level courses, instructors in the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment reserve the right to adjust the final reported grades so that under normal circumstances no more than 25% of students registered in a course receive an outstanding grade (A-, A, A+).

Grade to Letter Equivalencies

A+	95 – 100	**B+**	80 – 84.9	**C+**	67 – 69.9	**D+**	57 – 59.9	**F**	0 – 49
A	90 – 94.9	**B**	75 – 79.9	**C**	63 – 66.9	**D**	53 – 56.9	**NR**	No report
A-	85 – 89.9	**B-**	70 – 74.9	**C-**	60 – 62.9	**D-**	50 – 52.9		

Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of extraordinary circumstances and pursuant to the Academic Regulations, the University may modify the delivery, content, structure, forum, location and/or evaluation scheme. In the event of such extraordinary circumstances, students will be informed of the changes.

Class Cancellation

Classes are officially considered cancelled if an instructor is 15 minutes late for a 50-minute class, 20 minutes late for a 75-minute class, or 30 minutes late for longer classes.

Intellectual Property

Content belonging to instructors shared in online courses, including, but not limited to, online lectures, course notes, and video recordings of classes remain the intellectual property of the faculty member. It may not be distributed, published or broadcast, in whole or in part, without the express

permission of the faculty member. Students are also forbidden to use their own means of recording any elements of an online class or lecture without express permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized sharing of course content may constitute a breach of the Academic Code of Conduct and/or the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. As specified in the Policy on Intellectual Property, the University does not claim any ownership of or interest in any student IP. All university members retain copyright over their work.

Behaviour

All individuals participating in courses are expected to be professional and constructive throughout the course, including in their communications.

Concordia students are subject to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities which applies both when students are physically and virtually engaged in any University activity, including classes, seminars, meetings, etc. Students engaged in University activities must respect this Code when engaging with any members of the Concordia community, including faculty, staff, and students, whether such interactions are verbal or in writing, face to face or online/virtual. Failing to comply with the Code may result in charges and sanctions, as outlined in the Code.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means that every student must be honest and accurate in their work. The Academic Code of Conduct includes rules and regulations students must follow. Unacceptable practices include the following

- Copy from ANYWHERE without saying from where it came.
- Omit quotation marks for direct quotations.
- Let another student copy your work and then submit it as his/her own.
- Hand in the same assignment in more than one class without permission.
- Have unauthorized material in an exam, such as cheat sheets, or crib notes. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE CAUGHT USING THEM - JUST HAVING THEM WILL GET YOU INTO TROUBLE!
- Copy from someone else's exam.
- Communicate with another student during an exam by talking or using some form of signals.
- Add or remove pages from an examination booklet or take the booklet out of an exam room.
- Get hold of or steal an exam or assignment answers or questions.
- Write a test or exam for someone else or have someone write it for you.
- Hand in false documents such as medical notes, transcript or record.
- Falsify data or research results.

PLAGIARISM: The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct (see link below) is plagiarism, which the Code defines as "**the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement**."

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, such as an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, or a paper or assignment completed by another student. It could be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone. It can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. Plagiarism is not limited to written work. It also applies to oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. In simple words: DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT SAYING FROM WHERE YOU OBTAINED IT!

Take care to inform yourself of the rules, regulations and expectations for academic integrity.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) raises significant social, ethical, and environmental concerns. These include its energy and resource use, environmental impacts, privacy and surveillance risks, bias and misinformation, the appropriation of intellectual and creative labour, growing concentrations of technological and economic power, and the potential for AI to contribute to existing inequalities in wealth and access to resources. Its use also raises important questions about how knowledge is produced, whose knowledge is represented, and who benefits from these technologies.

These questions are particularly relevant to this course because urban agroecology asks us to think critically about ecological sustainability, resource use, labour, knowledge, economic relationships, and food sovereignty. We will therefore approach AI as a technology that can be useful in some contexts while also considering its broader social, ecological, economic, and epistemological consequences.

AI may be used as a supportive tool, but it must not replace students' own research, thinking, analysis, interpretation, or writing. Students may not use AI to generate an assignment or substantive sections of an assignment, conduct analysis in place of their own analysis, generate personal or autoethnographic reflections, invent sources or citations, fabricate experiences or observations, or present AI-generated work as their own.

Students are responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and quality of everything they submit, including work developed with the assistance of AI.

Every submitted assignment must end with a brief statement indicating whether AI was used and, if so, how it was used. For example: "I used [tool] to help organize my notes and identify grammatical errors." If no AI was used, students should state: "I did not use generative AI in preparing this assignment."

Students must not upload private or identifying information about community organizations, volunteers, staff, community members, or other people they encounter through their experiential learning activities to generative AI systems. The experiential learning assignment is an opportunity to reflect critically on students' own participation and learning, not to collect or analyze information about the people or organizations with whom they volunteer.

If students are unsure whether a particular use of AI is appropriate, they should ask the instructor before using it.

List of Student Services

Academic and Behavioural Conduct
Academic Code of Conduct
Academic Integrity
Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)
Student Advocacy Centre
Services and Resources
Counselling & Psychological Services
Dean of Students
HOJO (Off Campus Housing & Jobs)
International Students Office
Library Services
Library Citation and Style Guides
NouLa Black Student Centre
Ombuds Office
Otsenhákta Student Centre
Safety and Prevention
Sexual Assault Resource Centre
Student Academic Services
Student Health Services
Student Hub
Student Success Center
Tuition and Financial Aid