# Food Security & Resilient Communities: Food Systems Theory & Practice

**Spring 2017**
**ALCE 5984, Virginia Tech**
**CRN 19642**

## Course Overview

This graduate-level course is a critical and interdisciplinary exploration of current issues related to food security and the emerging field of food systems. This course will focus on the concepts and discourses of community food security, food sovereignty, food justice, and agricultural sustainability from local, regional, and international perspectives. Topics include but are not limited to: conceptual frameworks and community-based strategies to address food system and health equity; social change and food security, and the role of university-community partnerships to cultivate possibilities for more resilient and just food systems. The [Appalachian Foodshed Project](#) and the [Stories of Community Food Work in Appalachia](#) initiative provide course participants with a theoretical and practical backdrop for class discussion, narrative research and storytelling, and engagement with food and farming scholar/practitioners in the region. Participatory learning and critical pedagogy are core course approaches.  Graduate student standing (3H, 3C).

## Learning Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, course participants should be able to:

— Define, analyze, and articulate theories and practices pertaining to food systems and community development
— Define and critique conceptual and programmatic approaches to enhancing food security local, regionally, and internationally.
— Define and critique scholar/practitioner participation as change agents in the food system.
— Integrate food system concepts and strategies into personal and professional practice for socially just ends.

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| **Schedule:** | Thursday 4-7 PM |
| **Location:** | Litton Reaves 244 |
| **Professor:** | Dr. Kim L. Niewolny |
| | Virginia Tech, Department of Agricultural, Leadership, & Community Education |
| | 282 Litton Reaves Hall (0343) |
| | Email: *niewolny@vt.edu* |
| | Office:  540-231-5784 |

## Justification for Course

> "This commentary is not an attempt to definitively develop a healthy food system model. I think this is neither possible nor practical. Rather, it is my intention to portray the process of moving toward a healthy food system as a wicked problem while suggesting a set of guidelines under which we can proceed to identify strategies for markedly improving the situation."     ~Michael Hamm, 2009

In this graduate course, we will together identify, analyze and address the intersectionality of food systems politics from gender, racial, and class perspectives and the many discourses and practices that inform these politics. From this lens, we will explore the complex and often challenging issues related specifically to food security and community resiliency—as a wicked problem. Transformative education and participatory development agendas are at the heart of this dialogue for social change and equity.

A major component of this course is to explore the learnings from the Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP), a USDA-NIFA, AFRI grant project. For over 5 years, AFP partners have worked together to address the critical issue of community food security in West Virginia and the Appalachian areas of North Carolina and Virginia through a regional research, outreach, and educational effort. As part of the AFP, the *Stories of Community Food Work in Appalachia* initiative was launched to create and share narratives or "stories" that express the diverse experiences of people working for food systems change, and include the voices of practitioners from across this region related to community and economic development; farming systems; health and nutrition; environmental advocacy; and social justice. The stories are co-created to highlight individual and collective voices in the journey of his/her/their work. The stories include projects, such as the creation of a CSA-food pantry partnership, the development of novel structures for community organizing, the establishment of new food hubs, youth and senior advocacy for food access, and the impact of school and community gardens. In this course, we will continue this work by reading and learning from these narratives while collaborating with community stakeholders to create new ones.

*Stories of Community Food Work in Appalachia* site: **http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/niewolny/**

Visit the AFP at:  **www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org**

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# Course Assignments

— Assignment guidelines are posted in Canvas.
— Assignments are due in class on the day stated on the syllabus calendar, unless otherwise noted.
— All assignments and guidelines are subject to change.

## Participation

This course is philosophically based using participatory learning principles. Complete and committed participation is a core principle in which the course operates. We will be using a variety of methods and techniques to implement our course—as a group of learners. This will require course participants to adhere to democratic decision making throughout the semester.  This process is foundationally rooted in respectful and critical dialogue. Each participant will have an opportunity to critique their course participation through a written assignment at the end of the term.  This critique will contribute to 20% of your course grade.

*What you can expect:*

— Participants will be expected to choose, assign, and read course material with close attention to concepts and ideas for application in course discussions and assignments.
— Participants will be expected to draw upon newly learned (and previously obtained) skills and strategies to organize and lead class discussions and activities.
— Participants will be expected to develop and implement course assignments using Scholar as our conduit for resource sharing (see below).
— Participants will be expected to learn and follow a consensus model for decision making.
— Participants will be expected to be patient, courteous, and sincere throughout the learning process.

*Participation written assignment generally includes:*

— Length of the participation reflection paper should be 2 pages using 12-point font and one inch margins. Please use double-spacing.  Please adhere to APA formatting.
— In the conclusion of the paper, include a "participation" grade you would give yourself using the Letter Evaluation Scale (A-F) found on page 4 in your syllabus.
— This reflection paper should be written as a WORD document and emailed directly to niewolny@vt.edu by 5pm on May 5th.

## Critical Reflection Responses

Students will develop weekly reflective responses to the topic of discussion based on weekly readings Reflective statements should fill two pages (double-spaced; 12-point font; one inch margins) in length and capture and critique main points of the reading(s). Include a list of references in addition to your two-page response. These written responses will be collected each week for review and returned the following week. These responses are designed to be used to organize your thinking and prepare you for critical dialogue with your peers.  You may be asked to share your responses with other students as part of class activities.  No late responses will be accepted.  This assignment contributes to 25% of your final grade.

**Facilitation**

Course participants will be expected to lead portions of class by directly relating "student choice readings" and thematic issues relevant to the course. Each participant will be expected to: 1) choose and disseminate one reading by 5pm on the Friday the week before his or her assigned facilitation; 2) lead the class in an interactive session using student selected readings; and 3) provide a written critique of his/her/their (co)facilitation one week after. Co-facilitation might be required due to the number of course participants.  A common expectation for all facilitators includes being prepared to lead a critique of the readings, challenge peers to think about application, and foster interactive discourse.  The assignment contributes to 20% of your final grade.

**Community Food Work Narrative**

Drawing upon *Stories of Community Food Work in Appalachia* project, your final assignment for the course will include: 1) conducting a 60-90-minute narrative-based interview with a food system practitioner, 2) transcribing the interview, 3) editing this interview for readability, 4) and analyzing your narrative by referring to course themes and literature. The final assignment is due by 5pm on May 5th, as an electronic copy and hard copy.  This assignment contributes to 35% of your course grade.

The interview should be conducted with someone who is a scholar/practitioner of food systems and community development that contributes to the making of "community food work."  You have the choice to collaborate with Appalachian Foodshed Project practitioners or relevant food system practitioner /scholars who live and work in our region.  A list of practitioners will be provided to you; however, you are also welcomed to identify someone on your own that you would like to learn from/with.  To that end, individuals who are not involved in the AFP may be an option.

## Course Evaluation

- Final grades are based upon a percentage of total points out of 100.
- Assignments are due in class, hard-copy, unless otherwise noted.
- All items are subject to change.

| Assignment | Points |
|---|---|
| Participation (20%) | 20 |
| Facilitation (20%) | 20 |
| Critical Reflection Responses (25%) | 25 |
| Community Food Work Narrative (35%) | 35 |
| **Total Possible Points** | **100** |

| Evaluation Scale | |
|---|---|
| A | 100-93.0 |
| A- | 92.9-90.0 |
| B+ | 89.9-87.0 |
| B | 86.9-83.0 |
| B- | 82.9-80.0 |
| C+ | 79.9-77.0 |
| C | 76.9-73.0 |
| C- | 72.9-70.0 |
| D+ | 69.9-67.0 |
| D | 66.9-63.0 |
| **D-** | **62.9-60.0** |
| F | **< 60.0** |

## Course Schedule and Main Course Topics

**PLEASE NOTE**: A detailed course schedule with assignments will be built with student input over the semester.  All dates, topics, & speakers are subject to change.

| Week 1 |
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**January 19**     **Course & Participant Introductions**
- Food Systems, Food Security, and "Wicked Problems"
- Introduce Critical Reflection Response (CRS) Assignment

**READ:**
- Hamm, M.  (2009)
- AFP Website: www.appalachianfoodshedproject.org
- Stories of Community Food Work site: http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/niewolny/
- Virginia Tech IRB: http://www.irb.vt.edu/

| Week 2 |
| --- |

**January 26**     **Setting the Table**
- Food Systems and Community Food Work
- Stories of Community Food Work
- Introduce CFW Narrative Assignment

**READ:**
- Slocum, R. (2007)
- Gottlieb, R. &Joshi, A. (2010):  Ch. 10, "An Emerging Movement"
- **Text:**  Sumner, J. (ed.) (2016): Introduction & Ch. 7, "Learning through story as political praxis: The role of narratives in community food work"
- **Narrative:** McCabe Coolidge

CRS DUE

| Week 3 |
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**February 2**     **Food Security Definitions and Discourses**
- Household Food Security
- Community Food Security
- Food Sovereignty

**READ**:
- Holben, D. H. (2002)
- Hamm, M. & Bellows, A. (2003)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (2009)
- Patel, R. (2009)
- **e-Text:**  Thomas, C. (2014): Ch.1, "Voices of Hunger in America"

**Optional Reading:**  Grantmakers in Health (2012)

CRS DUE

*Week 4*

**February 9**     **Growing Food, Sustainable Agriculture, & Food Security**
- Agroecology and sustainability
- Food security and the Green Revolution
- Global food security and food production
- Visit by Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, NSCU

**READ:**
- Holt-Giménez, E., & Altieri, M.A. (2013)
- Holt-Giménez, E., Shattuck, A., Altieri, M., Herren, H., Gliessman, S. (2012)
- Godfray, H. C. J., Beddington, J. R., Crute, I. R., Haddad, L, Lawrence, D., Muir, JF., Pretty, J., Robinson, S., Thomas, S.M., & Toulmin, C. (2010)

**Optional Reading:** Fischer, R. A., Byerlee, D., & Edmeades, G.O. (2009)
**CRS DUE**

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*Week 5*

**February 16**     **Social Change and Community Resilience**
- Community-based Food System Assessments
- Whole Measures for a Community Food System
- Visit by Kelli Scott, Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Introduce Facilitation Assignment

**READ:**
- Abi-Nader, J. A., et al. (2009)
- D'Adamo-Damery (2016). "Appalachian Virginia Community Food Security Assessment"
- Broad, G. (2016). Ch. 3. "In a Community Like This"
- **Narrative:** Kelli Scott

**Optional Readings:**
- Pothukchi, K. (2007)
- Stevenson, Ruhf, Lezberg, & Clancy (2007)

**CRS DUE**

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*Week 6*

**February 23**     **Food Justice & Food Security (PART 1)**
- What / How Food Justice?
- Food In/security and Access

**READ:**
- **Text:** Alkon, A., & Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability.* **(chapters 1-6)**
- **Narrative:** Diana Manee

**CRS DUE**

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|---|---|
| *Week 7* | |
| **March 2** | **Food Justice & Food Security (PART 2)** |
| | • Food Justice/Security in the Region |
| | **READ:** |
| | • **Text:** Alkon, A., & Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability.* **(chapters 7-15)** |
| | • **Narrative:** Karen Day |
| | **CRS DUE** |

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|---|---|
| *Week 8* | |
| **March 9** | *No Class (spring break)* |

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|---|---|
| *Week 9* | |
| **March 16** | **Guest TBD** |
| | **READ:** **TBD** |
| | **CRS DUE** |

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|---|---|
| *Week 10* | |
| **March 23** | **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation** |
| | **READ:** **TBD** |
| | **CRS DUE** |

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|---|---|
| *Week 11* | |
| **March 30** | **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation** |
| | **READ:** |
| | **CRS DUE** |

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| *Week 12* | |
| **April 6** | **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation** |
| | **READ:** |
| | **CRS DUE** |
| *Week 13* | |
| **April 13** | **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation** |
| | **READ:** |
| | **CRS DUE** |
| *Week 14* | |
| **April 20** | **Student Choice (s) and Facilitation** |
| | **READ:** |
| | **CRS DUE** |
| *Week 15* | |
| **April 27** | **Reflections and Course Celebration** |
| | **READ:** |
| | • **Text:** Sumner, J. (ed.) (2016):  Afterward:  Food 360: Seeing out way around learning about food" |
| *Final* | |
| **May 5** | **Final Assignments** |
| | • **Community Food Work Narrative Assignment due by 5pm—** *<u>electronic and hard copy</u>* |
| | • **Participation Response due by 5pm—send submission as a WORD file via email to <u>niewolny@vt.edu</u>** |

## Course Materials

► **Required Texts: These can be acquired through online sources.**

Alkon, A., & Agyeman, J. (eds.) (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

Sumner, J. (ed.) (2016). Learning, food, and sustainability: Sites for resistance and change. Palgrave/Macmillan: New York.

Thomas, C. (ed.) (2014). *Voices of hunger: Food insecurity in the United States*. Common Ground Publishing: University of Illinois. (eBook) (already posted on Canvas)

► **Required Readings: Course-selected readings are posted on our Canvas site.**

Abi-Nader, J. A., A., Harris, K., Herra, H. Eddings, D., Habib, D., Hanna, J., Paterson, C., Sutton, K., Villanuesva, L. (2009). Whole measures for community food systems: Value-based planning and evaluation. In C. F. S. Coalition (Ed.). Portland, OR.

Broad, G. (2016). *More than just food: Food justice and community change*. University of California Press, CA.

Fischer, R. A., Byerlee, D., & Edmeades, G.O. (2009). Can technology deliver on the yield challenge to 2050? Expert meeting on how to feed the world in 2050. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Economic and Social Development Department.

Food and Agriculture Organization. (2009). Rome Principles: World summit on food security. United Nations. Available at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final_Declaration/WSFS09_Declaration.pdf

Grantmakers in Health. (2012). Too few choices, too much junk: Connecting food & health. Issue brief no. 39. Washington, DC. Available at http://www.gih.org

Godfray, H. C. J., Beddington, J. R., Crute, I. R., Haddad, L., Lawrence, D., Muir, JF., Pretty, J., Robinson, S., Thomas, S.M., & Toulmin, C. (2010). Food security: The challenge of feeding 9 billion people. *Science, 327*(5967), 812-818.

Gottlieb, R., & Joshi, A. (2016). *Food justice*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Hamm, M.W. (2009). Principles for framing a healthy food system. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition 4*(3-4), 241-250.

Hamm, M. & Bellows, A. (2003). Community food security and nutrition educators. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 35, (1), 37–43.

Holben, D. H. (2002). An overview of food security and its measurement. *Nutrition Today*, *37*(4), 156–162.

Holt-Giménez, E., Altieri, M.A. (2013). Agroecology, food sovereignty and the new green revolution. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture. 37*(1), 90–102.

Holt-Giménez, E., Shattuck, A., Altieri, M., Herren, H., Gliessman, S. (2012).  We already grow enough food for 10 billion people … and still can't end hunger. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture. 36*(6), 595-598.

Niewolny, K. & D'Adamo-Damery, P. (2016).  Learning through story as political praxis: The role of narratives in community food work. In Sumner, J. (Ed.), *Learning, food, and sustainability: Sites for resistance and change.*  Palgrave/Macmillan: New York

Patel, R. (2009). What does food sovereignty look like? *Journal of Peasant Studies, 36*(3), 663-706.

Pothukchi, K. (2007). Building community food security: Lessons from community projects: 1999-2003. In K. Siedenburg (Ed.). Venice, CA: *Community Food Security Coalition.*

Slocum, R. (2007). Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum, 38*, 520-533.

Stevenson, G. W., Ruhf, K., Lezberg, S., & Clancy, K. (2007). Warrior, builder, and weaver work- Strategies for changing the food system. In C. Claire Hinrichs & T. A. Lyson (Eds.), *Remaking the North American food system- Strategies for sustainability* (pp. 33-62). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

► **Additional Sources:  Below is a sampling of resources to consider for selected readings**

*Projects and Resources*
— Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit. USDA (http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan-electronic-publications-from-the-food-assistance-nutrition-research-program/efan02013.aspx)
— Community Food Security Bibliography, Community First (http://www.carleton.ca/communityfirst/resources/community-food-security-publications/)
— Food Dignity (http://fooddignity.org/)
— Food Desert Locator (http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/index.htm)
— Community and Regional Food Systems Project (http://www.community-food.org/)
— USDA Community Food Projects Grant program (http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/cfp/cfp.html)
— USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), Food Security Projects (http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri_synopsis.html)
— Why Hunger (http://www.whyhunger.org/about/whatWeDo)

*Organizations and Agencies:*
— Community Food Security Coalition (http://foodsecurity.org/category/home/)
— Growing Power (http://www.growingpower.org/)
— Kellogg Foundation (http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/healthy-kids/food-and-community.aspx)
— La Via Campesina (http://viacampesina.org/en/)

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— National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, ATTRA
   (https://attra.ncat.org/index.php)
— Heifer International (https://attra.ncat.org/index.php)
— Wallace Center (http://www.wallacecenter.org/)
— World Health Organization (http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/)
— World Food Programme, United Nations (http://www.wfp.org/about)


*Journals:*
— Agriculture, Food & Human Values (http://www.afhvs.org/journal.html)
— Community Development Journal
   (http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/cdj/about.html)
— Culture and Agriculture (http://cultureandagriculture.org/)
— Sociologia Ruralis
   (http://www.ruralsociology.eu/WebRoot/1036578/Page.aspx?id=1058609)
— Food Policy (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03069192)
— Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development
   (http://www.agdevjournal.com/)
— Journal of Community Practice (http://www.acosa.org/jcponline.html)
— Journal of Food Distribution Research (http://fdrs.ag.utk.edu/journal.html)
— Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition (http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/WHEN)
— Journal of Regions, Economy and Society (http://cjres.oxfordjournals.org/)
— Journal of Rural Studies (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/07430167)
— Journal of Rural Social Sciences (http://www.ag.auburn.edu/auxiliary/srsa/index.htm)
— Journal of Rural and Community Development (http://www.jrcd.ca/index.php)
— Renewable Agriculture & Food Systems Journal
   (http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayJournal?jid=RAF)
— Rural Sociology (http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0036-0112&site=1)


## Course Policies

*Be prepared*. Evaluation criteria of course work comprises accuracy, depth, and comprehensiveness; logic and organization of thought and writing; and clarity of writing and presentation.  In all submitted work, course participants must present convincing arguments with suitable research and literature.  It is also an important course expectation that participants come to each class with sufficient command of the reading assignments to discuss them in depth.   This means that during every class session, each of us will have read the material assigned and be prepared for class discussion and activities.

*Written Work Policy*. The American Psychological Association's (APA) *Publication Manual* (6th edition) is the recommended style manual for written work.  Papers and written assignments with minor grammar violations and *Publication Manual* requirements will be marked accordingly. Written work comprising serious composition and/or citation violations will not be reviewed. As part of Virginia Tech's Principles of Community, participants should avoid using sexist, gender-exclusive, racially prejudiced, and other forms of discriminatory language in all course work.

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***Attendance is required.*** Course participants are expected to come to class each week. Please contact the instructor by email or office phone if you cannot attend class. Absences will only be excused in the event of medical illness, immediate family emergency, religious holiday, or an approved professional event. In the event of a planned absence, such as a professional obligation or religious holiday, participants are expected to inform the instructor at least one week prior to the date of nonattendance. More than one absence could result in course failure. Be courteous to others by arriving on time to class and silencing and putting away cell phones.

***Quality counts more than quantity.*** Engaged and courteous participation by all course participants is expected. It is essential that all participants actively contribute to class discussions and activities, while exercising respect and restraint.

***Late assignments cannot earn full credit.*** <u>Five points</u> will be deducted for each calendar day an assignment is turned in past its due date up to one week, unless otherwise noted. Course incompletes are available only for medical emergencies (i.e., personal and immediate family).

***Policy on Academic Integrity.*** Each participant in this course is expected to abide by the *Virginia Tech Honor System*. It is a university-wide expectation that written work submitted by a participant in this course for academic credit will be the participant's own. For full information on the Graduate Honor System, visit [http://ghs.graduateschool.vt.edu/](http://ghs.graduateschool.vt.edu/)

***Learning Needs.*** Any participants with special needs are encouraged to consult with me about those needs. Please consult with me as soon as possible so that we can work together to make the necessary accommodations. Anything you discuss with me will be held in strictest confidence. Additional information about assistance for special learning needs for all Virginia Tech students can be located at the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 250 S. Main Street, Suite 300; Mail Code (0185); 231-0858 (V); 231-0853 (TTY); [www.ssd.vt.edu](www.ssd.vt.edu).

***Principles of Community.*** Students are to adhere to Virginia Tech's Principles of Community in all aspects of the course (see next page).

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# Virginia Tech's Principles of Community

*http://www.vt.edu/diversity/principles-of-community.html*

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*Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:*

∝   **We affirm** the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.

∝   **We affirm** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

∝   **We affirm** the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.

∝   **We reject** all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.

∝   **We pledge** our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).