AEC 841 - ANALYSIS OF FOOD SYSTEM ORGANIZATION AND PERFORMANCE

Weekly One-Page Papers

Each Friday, please email to me a one-page single-spaced synopsis of key points from the readings covered for that week in the Monday and Wednesday sessions of the class. For topic areas that span more than one week, I will specify which readings to include in a particular week's summary. The paper should (a) critically summarize the most important points you got out of the readings for that week, including any comparisons you want to make between the views expressed by the various authors and (b) discuss the implications of that week's readings for some food system organization or research issue of interest to you.

The papers are limited to 1 page. I won't read anything beyond the first page. And because my eyes aren't that good, we won't even read the first page if you print it in an extremely small font! Keep it to 11 point or larger. Obviously, you can't include all the points raised in the readings in one page. Therefore, the challenge for you will be to identify the key messages you get out of the readings and discuss their significance for the food system organization or research issue of interest to you. A good strategy will be to choose an issue that is consistent with the one you want to examine in your longer research design paper due at the end of the term. That way, the weekly summaries can provide raw material for the longer paper.

The papers are due by the end of the day on Friday, to be submitted electronically (to staatz@msu.edu).

Possible Approaches:

1. Pick a particular point or theme and elaborate on it. Use the reading as a starting point and then bring in your own ideas in a fresh, creative way. Sometimes the best approach is posing your own questions that are not posed in the readings.

2. Identify a common theme in the readings and then bring in some specific insights as to why it is or is not relevant to an industry or subsector with which you are familiar.

What not to do:

1. Do not spend the page just summarizing the readings with a couple of sentences about each reading, even if you do show how they are related.

2. Do not go off onto Planet X with some story that has no relevance to the readings, even if it is an important subject related to the food system. You need to relate your discussion to the readings.