

Sociology of Food and Health

Course Code: COS-SL304 (5 credits)

Spring 2024, Period IV

University of Helsinki

Personnel

Dr. Maya Hey, instructor

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Emilia Laine, teaching assistant

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Pre-requisites & Fine Print

SOSM-SL302, Key concepts in sociology (or equivalent) or permission from the instructor.

Students cannot miss more than 20% of the course (i.e., 1.5 classes).

Meeting Times & Location

04 April 2024 – 02 May 2024

on Mondays 10:15 AM–11:45 AM

on Thursdays 12:15 PM–1:45 PM

Location: P518, Porthania

Please see page 4 of this syllabus for a detailed calendar and the course plan.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to discuss, analyse, and contextualise contemporary issues related to food/health from a sociological perspective.

Course Description

This course will examine current and ongoing issues in food and health. We will analyse how, when, and where food/health interact, and we will employ critical and intersectional approaches to who exactly benefits from food/health interventions. Special attention will be given to sustainability, scale, and the role of science and technology. Concepts such as consumption, distinction, and healthism will be discussed through topics such as probiotics, veganism, coffee/tea trade, and biotechnology.

Evaluation

All assignments are explained in detail in print (see the Assignments tab in Moodle) and during class.

Assignment 0			= 10 points
Assignment 1	15 points for Part A,	10 points for Part B	=25 points
Assignment 2	15 points for Part A,	10 points for Part B	=25 points
Assignment 3	15 points for Part A,	10 points for Part B	=25 points
Assignment 4	10 points for Part A,	5 points for Part B	=15 points
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TOTAL			100 points

Of note: Assignments 1 through 3 are the same task; just the readings to reference are different. Additionally, Part B of Assignments 1 through 4 will always be completed during class time. Rubrics will be provided for each assignment.

Assignment Overview

Assignment 0. Letter of Introduction.

Description: introduce yourself

Assigned: Thursday 04 April 2024, explained in class

Due: Sunday 07 April 2024, via Moodle

Assignments 1, 2, and 3. Synthesis Essays and Reviewer Feedback.

Description for Part A: use the readings to synthesize an argument.

Description for Part B: provide constructive criticism for a peer's argument.

Synthesis based on Reading Package 1

Assigned: Monday 08 April 2024, explained in class

Due: Thursday 11 April 2024, Part A before class, Part B by the end of class

Synthesis based on Reading Package 2

Assigned: Monday 15 April 2024, explained in class

Due: Thursday 18 April 2024, Part A before class, Part B by the end of class

Synthesis based on Reading Package 3

Assigned: Monday 22 April 2024, explained in class

Due: Thursday 25 April 2024, Part A before class, Part B by the end of class

Assignment 4a/b. Written/Creative Project and Presentation.

Description for Part A: tackle a current issue in food/health in a written or creative project.

Description for Part B: share your project with the class.

Assigned: Monday 29 April 2024, explained in class

Due: Thursday 02 May 2024, Part A before class, Part B by the end of class

Readings

All reading packages will be made available on Moodle. The required readings are in bold; all others are suggested readings in case you would like additional background. You may use these readings for the assignments above, and you may supplement your assignments with other readings you find.

Reading Package 1. Required reading = 30 pages.

- **Josee Johnston & Shyon Baumann (2010) Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape. See Chapter 1. Foodies, Omnivores, Discourse. Pp.30-41 (12 pages) - digitally available on Helka.**
- **Peter Naccarato & Kathleen LeBesco (2012) Culinary Capital. See Chapter 1. Defining Culinary Capital (11 pages) digitally available on Helka.**
- **Pierre Bourdieu (1984) Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste. See Chapter 3. Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles, pp. 169-175. (7 pages) [available here](#).**
- Poulain, J.P. (2017) Sociology of Food. See especially Part Two.
- Fischler, C. (1988) Food, Self, and Identity, [available here](#).

Reading Package 2. Required reading = 29 pages.

- **Allison and Jessica Hayes-Conroy (2013) Doing Nutrition Differently. See Introduction, pp.1-7 (7 pages) digitally available on Helka.**
- Alissa Overend (2020) Shifting Food Facts. See Chapter 1. Western genealogies of healthy eating, pp. 14-28.
- **Alissa Overend (2020) Shifting Food Facts. See Chapter 5. False meat divides (22 pages) digitally available on Helka.**
- Metzl, J. and Kirkland, A. (2010) Against Health. See especially the introduction.
- Erving Goffman (1956) The presentation of self in everyday life. See especially the introduction and chapter 1, [available here](#).

Reading Package 3. Please select one of the bolded texts = approx. 22-24 pages.

- **Julie Guthman and Charlotte Biltekoff (2023) Agri-food tech's building block: narrating protein, agnostic of source, in the face of crisis. (22 pages) [available here](#).**
- **Julie Guthman (2019) Wilted. See Chapter 1. California Strawberry Assemblages (24 pages) digitally available on Helka.**
- Huhmarniemi, M. (2024) Berry-picking culture and conflicts in Finland, digitally available on Helka.
- **Julie Guthman (2011) Weighing In. See Chapter 2. How do we know obesity is a problem? (22 pages) digitally available on Helka.**
- Sabrina Strings (2019). Fearing the Black Body: The Racist Origins of Fat Phobia.

Reading Package 4.

- Lourentzatos, R. (2021) Avocado Mania: The Rise and Costs of Our Obsession with Avocados.
- Reymond, S. (2016) Vegetarianism/Veganism: A Sociological Analysis.
- Barn, T. (2016) Being and Becoming: A Narrative Inquiry into Teenage Girls' Online Discussion of Eating Disorders.
- Mosleh, D. (2014) The Biomedical and Holistic Practices of the Continuum of Healthism.

Course Plan

To Complete Before Class	On the Meeting Day	Assignments
Read Course Syllabus.	<u>Thursday. 04 April 2024.</u> -course overview -course expectations/survey -tips for reading/writing	Assignment 0 explained. Assignment 0 due Sunday, 07 April midnight.
Reading Package 1.	<u>Monday. 08 April 2024.</u> -lecture on Reading Pkg 1 -what makes good feedback?	Assignment 1a/b explained.
Assignment 1a due before class.* *Bring a printed copy with you.	<u>Thursday. 11 April 2024.</u> -peer review exercise -Assignment 1b due in class.	
Reading Package 2.	<u>Monday. 15 April 2024.</u> -lecture on Reading Pkg 2. -Assignment 1 returned.	Assignment 2a/b explained.
Assignment 2a due before class.* *Bring a printed copy with you.	<u>Thursday. 18 April 2024.</u> -peer review exercise -Assignment 2b due in class. -status check	
Reading Package 3.	<u>Monday. 22 April 2024.</u> -lecture on Reading Pkg 3. -Assignment 2 returned.	Assignment 3a/b explained.
Assignment 3a due before class.* *Bring a printed copy with you.	<u>Thursday. 25 April 2024.</u> -peer review exercise -Assignment 3b due in class.	
Reading Package 4.	<u>Monday. 29 April 2024.</u> -guest lecture by Emilia Laine -Assignment 3 returned.	Assignment 4a/b explained. Optional assignment explained.
Assignment 4a due before class.	<u>Thursday. 02 May 2024.</u> -Assignment 4b due in class.	