

## SOCIOECONOMICS OF FOOD: Your Plate, Perception, and Planet

**Preferred Time:** 10:20 am – 11:40 am

**Preferred Date:** Tuesday

**Location:** Hickman Hall 113 (<https://goo.gl/maps/zu96RE3kh5eMQLhw7> )

Course website: <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>

### Instructors:

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### Seminar Descriptions

Both science and experience suggest that our diet directly correlates with our brain function and how we feel. When we eat nutrient-dense foods, our brains function on a higher level – meaning we can learn, think, and memorize information in a greater capacity. An appropriate diet improves cognitive function and overall wellness. Yet, mindful eating is influenced by socioeconomic factors and behavioral factors.

In this seminar, students will explore and learn about issues related to food and health such as: a) the impact of food on personal health; b) innovative and sustainable agriculture that supports the environment; and c) the way food access and affordability impact the social determinants of health. This seminar will also discuss the potential health complications and environmental consequences related to our current eating styles and introduce the concept of mindful eating.

The course hopes to be an adventure where students are empowered to explore, observe, and document their eating behaviors and their connection to food through self-discovery and active learning. This information may lead the students to become inspired to work with their community to address issues of food justice.

The following activities are planned for this course. Students will:

- Enjoy exciting hands-on experiences such as a potential life-changing Healthy Eating Challenge, where students will learn about how to make positive behavioral changes in relation to their diet. Students will use the Healthy Eating Challenge as a tool to help understand the behavior change process to help move toward a healthier lifestyle.

- Have a guided tour of the Neilson Dining Hall, where students have the opportunity to not only discover a wide array of dietary options and resources for promoting health eating, but also explore many behind-scene aspects relating to food procurement, food safety measures, and food waste.
- Tour the student-run organic farm at Rutgers Gardens where students can learn about new methods in agriculture and receive materials to grow their own plants for food.

**Learning Goals**

- Recognize the connection between food and individual well-being and then set SMART goals to move toward healthy lifestyle changes
- Explain sustainable, regenerative, organic, and locally grown foods to become an informed consumer
- Explore and discuss ways to raise awareness about the issues of food justice and social determinants of health for people living in economically disadvantaged communities
- Develop a shift in mindset and skills in critical thinking to make informed decisions about fueling one’s body and brain
- Gain confidence and improve efficiency in personalized, experiential learning

**Requirements**

Come to class – Participate – Experiment – Converse  
 Complete weekly brief journaling and end-term reflection project

**Materials**

Assigned readings will be available on the Canvas course website

**Grading**

This is a **pass/no credit course**. More than two unexcused absences will result in a no credit grade. An “incomplete” grade will not be assigned in this course.

Attendance & participation in class	70%
Weekly brief journaling	20%
End-term reflection project (see the detail below for its requirements)	10%

**Course Outline**

<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Content</b>
#1 9/5/23	<b>Class Introduction</b> Overview of Agricultural, Food, and Health Discuss topics of interests from the students Student information survey
#2 9/12/23	<b>Mindful Eating</b> Invited Speakers: Joseph Wieliczko, PsyD Hands on activity: Mindful meditation
#3	<b>Exploration tour to the Nielson Dining Hall</b>

9/19/23	Hand-on activity: Food portion sizes
#4 9/26/23	<b>Food Consumption, Healthy Eating Challenge, and Food Industry</b> Hands-on activity: Design a healthy meal plan
#5 10/3/23	<b>Accessible, Sustainable, and Environmentally Responsible Agriculture</b> Field Trip: Visit the student run organic farm at the Rutgers Gardens Invited Speakers: Alexander Sawatzky Hands-on activity: Grow your own sprouts and/or hydro-farmed food
#6 10/10/23	<b>Lifestyle medicine: The importance of goal setting and Smart objectives in behavioral modification</b> Hands-on activity: Design SMART objectives
#7 10/17/23	<b>Food and Your Health (effect of food on brain function and wellness)</b> Invited Speaker: Adi Benito, MD and Novneet Sahu Hands-on activity: Nutrition simulation for Healthy You
#8 10/24/23	<b>Health beyond the Food: Reducing Toxins in our Food, Water, and Food Preparation</b> Invited Speaker: Aly Cohen Hands-on activity: Safe cleaning Spray
#9 10/31/23	<b>Inequality on Food-Related Issues</b> Hands-on activity: How to read food labels and use Nutrition Apps?
#10 11/7/23	<b>Celebration</b> Student discussion about their reflection projects Discuss how to keep your SMART objective sustainable for the future What to change/improve for future seminar course

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE SELF-REFLECTION REQUIREMENT**

Reflection can be in format of a student's choice, elaborating one's experience in this course:

- A short paper (1-2 pages, single space, font size 12)
- Infographics project (1-2 pages)
- Video (2-3 minutes)
- Other format of your own choice

Several items are required to include:

- What did you learn?
- What did you expect to learn but did not achieve?
- How do you plan to apply what you learned in navigating your Rutgers journey and improving your wellness and the wellness of others?

#### **Healthy Eating Challenge**

After touring the dining hall and receiving some additional information, students will create a healthy eating plan. While completing the challenge, daily self-reflections will be helpful for students to learn the concept of "how you feel is data." Students will also have an opportunity to learn about goalsetting and SMART objectives and how they facilitate behavioral change.

#### **Absence Policy**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Because Byrne seminars are only one credit, students should not miss more than two class meetings. If you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to the instructors.

### **Disability Services**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines> . If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is a major offense at Rutgers University. You are responsible for understanding the academic integrity policy and following these principles. Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. Please see the following websites relating to academic integrity at Rutgers:

Academic integrity site: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Academic integrity policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Guide to proper citation: [https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid\\_plagiarism](https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism)

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### **Statement on Diversity**

This course is designed to cater to the diverse learning needs of students coming from various backgrounds. We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment that values a wide range of perspectives. Recognizing that students may require varying levels of support, our course materials are thoughtfully structured to encourage mutual learning, interaction, collaboration, self-reflection, critical thinking, and the formulation of evidence-based respectful arguments. We embrace and celebrate diversity, firmly believing that collaborative student engagement enhances the educational experience for all. If you possess a documented learning difference that impact your ability to achieve your full potential, we encourage you to reach out to us at your earliest convenience. We are here to explore accommodations that can facilitate your successful completion of this course. Additionally, you can contact the Office of Disability Services at 848-202-3111.