

EATING MEDIA: Food's Power as Medium and Message

Julie Levin Russo, PhD
Sarah Williams, PhD

Fall 2024 | 12 credits | Sophomore/Junior/Senior

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Tuesday

12:00-2:50pm

Lecture/Viewing/Discussion

Wednesday

9:30am-12:50pm

Seminar, Media Workshops

Thursday

9:30am-2:50pm

Farm and Food Practicum

First Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 1, 12pm in SEM2 B1107

SAVE THE DATE

[Northwest Chocolate Festival](#) field trip to
Bellevue – Saturday, October 5

STUDENT FEE

\$80 covers day pass for the NW Chocolate Festival, supplies for food labs, and a bound coursepack of assigned readings.

LINKED FALL COURSE

Bittersweet: Preparing to Study Cocoa and Permaculture in Trinidad is a required 4-credit course with Sarah Williams for students interested in the winter study abroad program (open to all students).

Anticipated Credit Equivalencies

- 3 – Food Studies: Mediated Tastes
- 3 – Farm Practicum: Field to Flavor
- 3 – Media Studies: Social Media Analysis
- 3 – Media Arts: Video for Social Media

OPTIONS FOR FIRST-YEARS: [Edible Campus](#) (Food) | [Exploring the In-Between](#) (Media)

Contact → russoj@evergreen.edu
williasa@evergreen.edu



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Farm and Food Practicum, Organic Farm
Opportunities for skill building in food production, marketing, and social media.

Food Labs, Sustainable Agriculture Lab
Opportunities for field to flavor cooking, tasting, and story making, including social media documentation practices.

Media Workshops

Opportunities to learn basic technical and artistic skills involved in creating image and video posts on **Instagram** using a smartphone. Material for developing a mini social media project about our food system will be drawn from Practicum and Food Lab activities.

Producing, preparing, and consuming food may seem the most organic of human activities. We may think of media as technological and artificial. But **can we separate our experiences of food from its representation**, or from the feelings and ideas it transmits to our bodies? And in what ways does the (human and multispecies) agency of eating transmit to food its meaning and forms? In this program, we will explore the specific **audiovisual languages of food that have developed on social media**, such as: food photography, recipe tutorials, gardening and foraging guides, expressions of culture, identity and the cultivation of taste, gastrotourism, humor, influencers, branding, advertising, aesthetics, corporate productions, and more. These communication forms not only take food as their subject, but also shape individual and social practices around food. In particular, we will emphasize the ways food (and its representation) is deeply embedded in individual and social experiences of gender, race, class, and other differences, including historical and contemporary forms of colonialism. We will be prompted to think about **food as a medium in itself**, but also as that which made and continues to make us human.

Eating Media will include weekly **SEMINARS** involving reading, discussing, and writing about critical texts. Materials will focus on **core concepts in social media and food studies**, as well as topical selections and case studies. We will view and discuss numerous examples of image and video posts about food on social media to develop media literacies and media analysis skills. Readings will help us understand **how power, inequality, and resistance are embedded in the histories and systems of both media and food**. We'll consider, for example, how eating a raw oyster is like reading. With "eating media" we're tasting while simultaneously having our taste tasted.

POTENTIAL READINGS FROM

Food Instagram: Identity, Influence, and Negotiation (Zenia Kish and Emily J. H. Contois)

Food and Social Media: You Are What You Tweet (Signe Rousseau)

Identity and Ideology in

Digital Food Discourse (Alla V. Tovares and Cynthia Gordon)

Digital Food: From Paddock to Platform (Tania Lewis)

The Taste of Water: Sensory Perception and the Making of an Industrialized Beverage (Christy Spackman)

Cocoa (Kristy Leissle)

Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (Sidney Mintz)

Food - Media - Senses (Christina Bartz, Jens Ruchatz, Eva Wattolik)