

NFS 2195 – Foods for Planetary Health Spring 2024 Syllabus

Meeting Day/Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30-4:45pm

Location: Lafayette Hall L211

Credits: 3

Instructor: Dr. Ashley McCarthy

Office: Marsh Life Sciences 122

Email: ashley.mccarthy@uvm.edu

Office Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the key opportunities, challenges, and tradeoffs inherent to developing dietary patterns that align with planetary health. To do so, the course will incorporate the environmental, health, social, and economic pillars of sustainability in exploration of major foods, dietary patterns, and food systems. Students will learn how to evaluate different sources of information and data related to sustainable dietary patterns and engage in thoughtful discussions about key topics related to the growing interest in aligning human and planetary health. By the end of this course, students will be able to critically evaluate different strategies for developing sustainable diets both at the societal level and in their own lives.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course students should be able to meet the following objectives:

1. Describe the history of the sustainable diets and planetary health movements
2. Describe the key challenges and tradeoffs inherent to aligning the four pillars of sustainability within dietary patterns
3. Engage thoughtfully and critically in debates surrounding sustainable dietary patterns
4. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the primary methods used to measure sustainability in food systems and the advantages and disadvantages of each
5. Critically evaluate information and evidence about sustainable dietary patterns from a variety of sources including academic publications, traditional media, and social media
6. Demonstrate an ability to write clearly and concisely
7. Develop personal tenets for incorporating sustainable practices into your own diet

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly and actively participate in discussions and class activities. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. **Please do not come to class if you are sick.**

- Religious holidays: The official policy for excused absences due to a religious holiday is as follows: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should *submit in writing to their instructors by the end of the second full week of classes* their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Faculty must permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up this work.
- If you have a health issue or personal circumstance that will affect your attendance or participation for multiple class meetings, please work with Student Health Services

(SHS), the Dean's office, or Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to coordinate accommodations. These offices communicate with instructors when academic flexibility is required.

Participation: Students are expected to complete any readings, videos, podcasts, or other assigned materials before class. This is a highly interactive class and students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities actively and respectfully.

Professionalism: Students are expected to behave in a professional manner in the classroom and when communicating with Dr. McCarthy. Cell phones should be silenced or turned off. Students should arrive to class on time; chronic tardiness will negatively affect your participation grade.

Classroom Conduct and Environment: I am deeply committed to creating a learning environment in which a diversity of opinions is welcome and accepted as part of a learning experience. In this class, we will work together to develop a learning environment that is inclusive and respectful. As a learning community we will seek to encourage and appreciate expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs in the spirit of Our Common Ground. Meaningful and constructive dialogue is encouraged in this class. To achieve this, all students are expected to respect their peers and Dr. McCarthy by listening to different perspectives. Respect for individual differences and alternative viewpoints will always be maintained in this class. Conduct that substantially or repeatedly disrupts the ability of faculty and instructors to teach and the ability of students to engage may result in my asking a student to temporarily leave the classroom. [See Undergraduate Catalogue - Classroom Code of Conduct \(p. 443-444\).](#)

Using Sources: Students are expected to use proper citations and sources on assignments. Though some aspects of the assignment may provide an opportunity for you to give your opinion on a topic, many assignments require research and sources that should be properly cited. Please use the APA citation style for all assignments. If you need assistance, the library has many resources and the Purdue Owl (<https://owl.purdue.edu>) has helpful guides.

Potential Changes During the Semester: The University of Vermont reserves the right to make changes in the course offerings, mode of delivery, degree requirements, charges, regulations, and procedures contained herein as educational, financial, and health, safety, and welfare considerations require, or as necessary to be compliant with governmental, accreditation, or public health directives.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
Weekly assignments	60% (7.5% each)	Wednesdays throughout the semester
Final project check-in 1	7.5%	March 20 th
Final project check-in 2	7.5%	April 10 th
Final project	25%	May 8 th

Submitting Assignments and Late Assignments: All assignments will be submitted through Brightspace. All assignments are due promptly on the day noted in the syllabus and late assignments will be docked 10 percentage points for every day they are late. Assignments submitted more than 5 days after the due date will not be accepted unless you have received prior permission from Dr. McCarthy.

Weekly Assignments: There are 10 weekly assignments due each Wednesday at 11:59pm starting on January 24th. Only 8 of the weekly assignments will count towards this portion of your final grade. This means that I will drop the two lowest scores when calculating your grade. This structure is designed to allow you flexibility in completing your coursework and provide an opportunity to make up for a poor grade on one assignment.

Final Project: Details about the final project will be provided within the first few weeks of class. The objective of the final project is to help you develop personal tenets, supported by scientific evidence, for making your own diets more sustainable.

Intellectual Property Statement/Prohibition on Sharing Academic Materials: Students are prohibited from publicly sharing or selling academic materials that they did not author (for example: class syllabus, outlines or class presentations authored by the professor, practice questions, text from the textbook or other copyrighted class materials, etc.); and students are prohibited from sharing assessments (for example homework or a take-home examination). Violations will be handled under UVM's Intellectual Property policy and Code of Academic Integrity.

University Resources and Help

- Howe Library: For help with research projects, finding journal articles, citing sources, and more, ask a librarian. You may ask questions by phone, e-mail, chat, or text, or make an appointment for an individual consultation with a librarian.
https://library.uvm.edu/help/ask_a_librarian/
- UVM Tutoring Center: https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/tutoring_center
- UVM Writing Center: <https://www.uvm.edu/uwi/writingcenter>
- Technical support for students: Please read this technology checklist to make sure you are ready for classes. <https://www.uvm.edu/it/kb/student-technology-resources/>. Students should contact the Helpline (802-656-2604) for support with technical issues.

ADDITIONAL UVM POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Student Learning Accommodations: In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing ADA accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS), the office of Disability Services on campus for students. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly recommended to discuss with their faculty the accommodations they plan to use in each course. https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student_accessibility_services

UVM's policy on disability certification and student support:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/disability.pdf>

Religious Holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time. <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/religious-holidays>

Academic Integrity: The policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating. <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Grade Appeals: If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy: <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf>

Grading: For information on grading and GPA calculation, go to <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/grades>

Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf>

FERPA Rights Disclosure: The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/ferparightsdisclosure/>

Promoting Health & Safety: The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community. There are many student support services available to UVM students. You may find the following to be helpful throughout the semester and your time at UVM.

- Center for Health and Wellbeing: <https://www.uvm.edu/health>
- UVM Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS) Office: <http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/psych/>
- C.A.R.E. If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at <https://www.uvm.edu/studentaffairs>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module	Class Schedule	Due Dates
Module 1: Background and introductory material	January 17	
	January 22	
Module 2: Methods for evaluating sustainable diets	January 24	Weekly Assignment 1
	January 29	
	January 31	Weekly Assignment 2
	February 5	
Module 3: Where do we produce foods for a sustainable diet?	February 7	Weekly Assignment 3
	February 12	
	February 14	Weekly Assignment 4
Module 4: What foods are included in a sustainable diet?	February 19 (No Class)	
	February 21	Weekly Assignment 5
	February 26	
	February 28	Weekly Assignment 6
	March 4	
Module 5: How do we produce, process, and package foods for a sustainable diet?	March 6	
	March 11 (No Class)	
	March 13 (No Class)	
	March 18	
	March 20	Final Project Check-In 1
	March 25	
Module 6: How do we address food and packaging waste?	March 27	Weekly Assignment 7
	April 1	
	April 3	Weekly Assignment 8
	April 8 (No Class)	
Module 7: Who works in a sustainable food system?	April 10	Final Project Check-In 2
	April 15	
	April 17	Weekly Assignment 9
Module 8: Synthesis and reflection	April 22	
	April 24	Weekly Assignment 10
	April 29	
	May 1	